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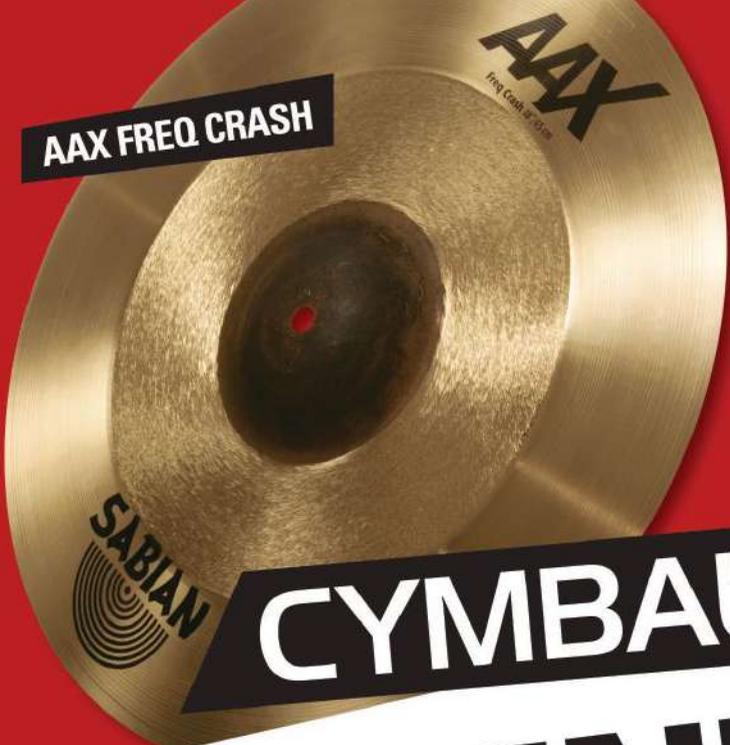
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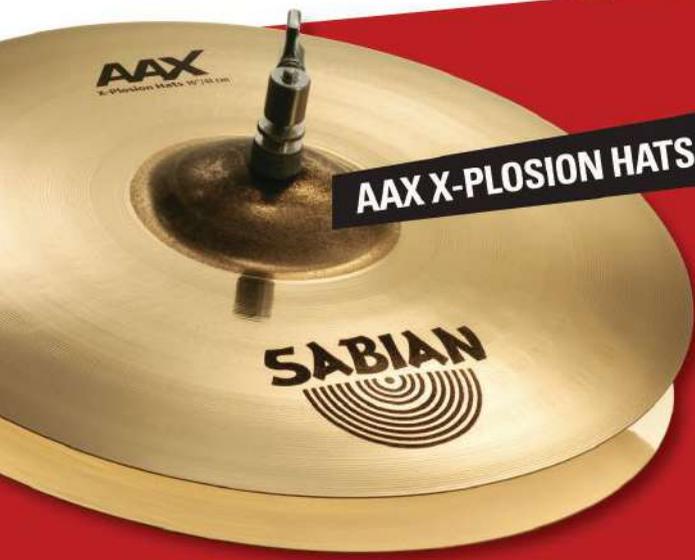
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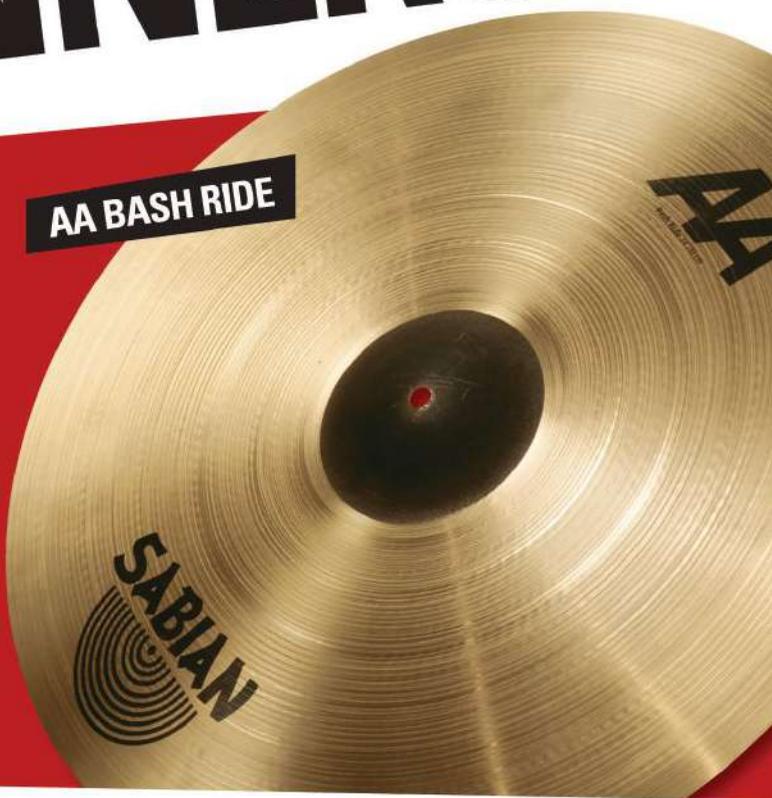
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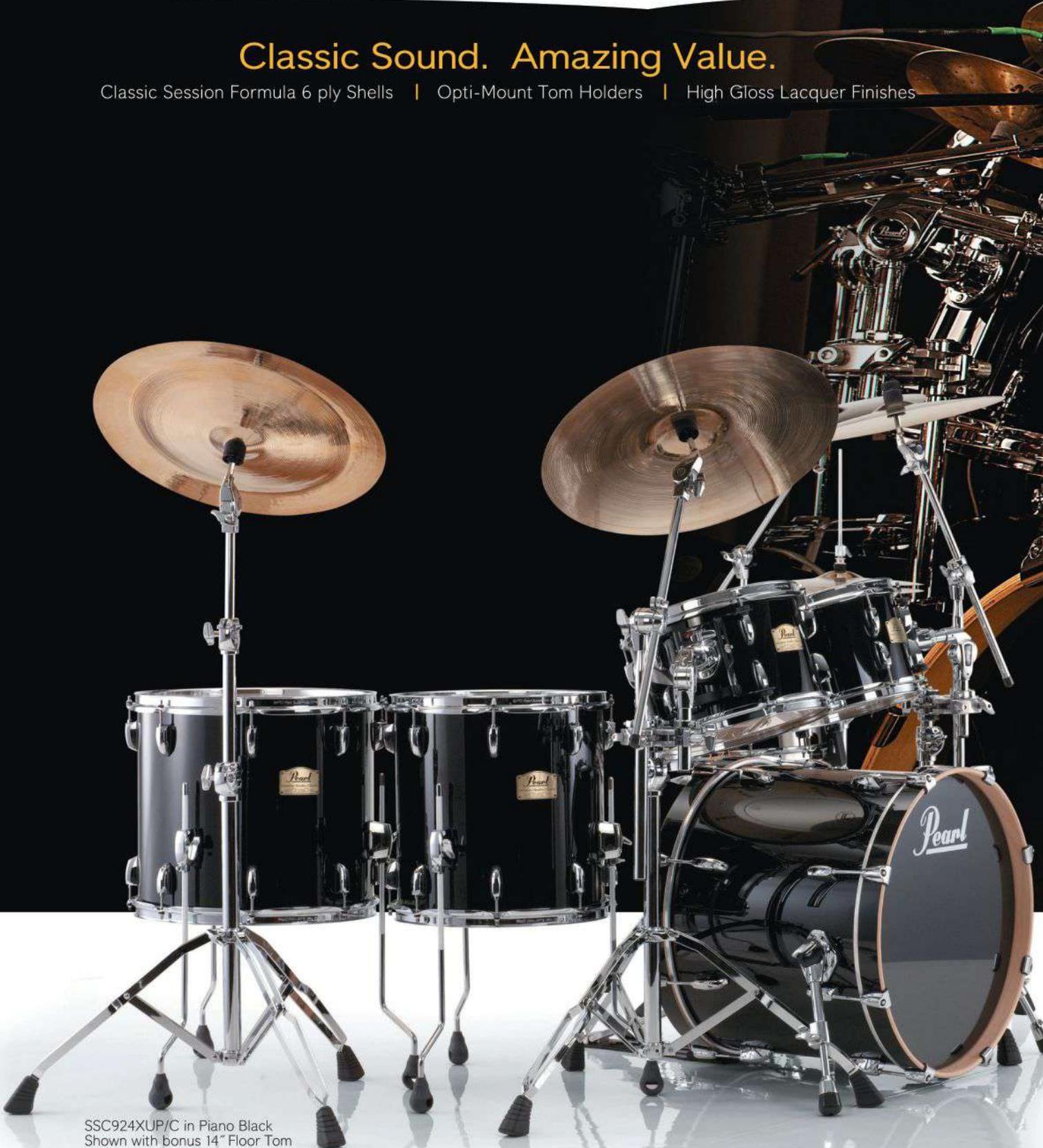


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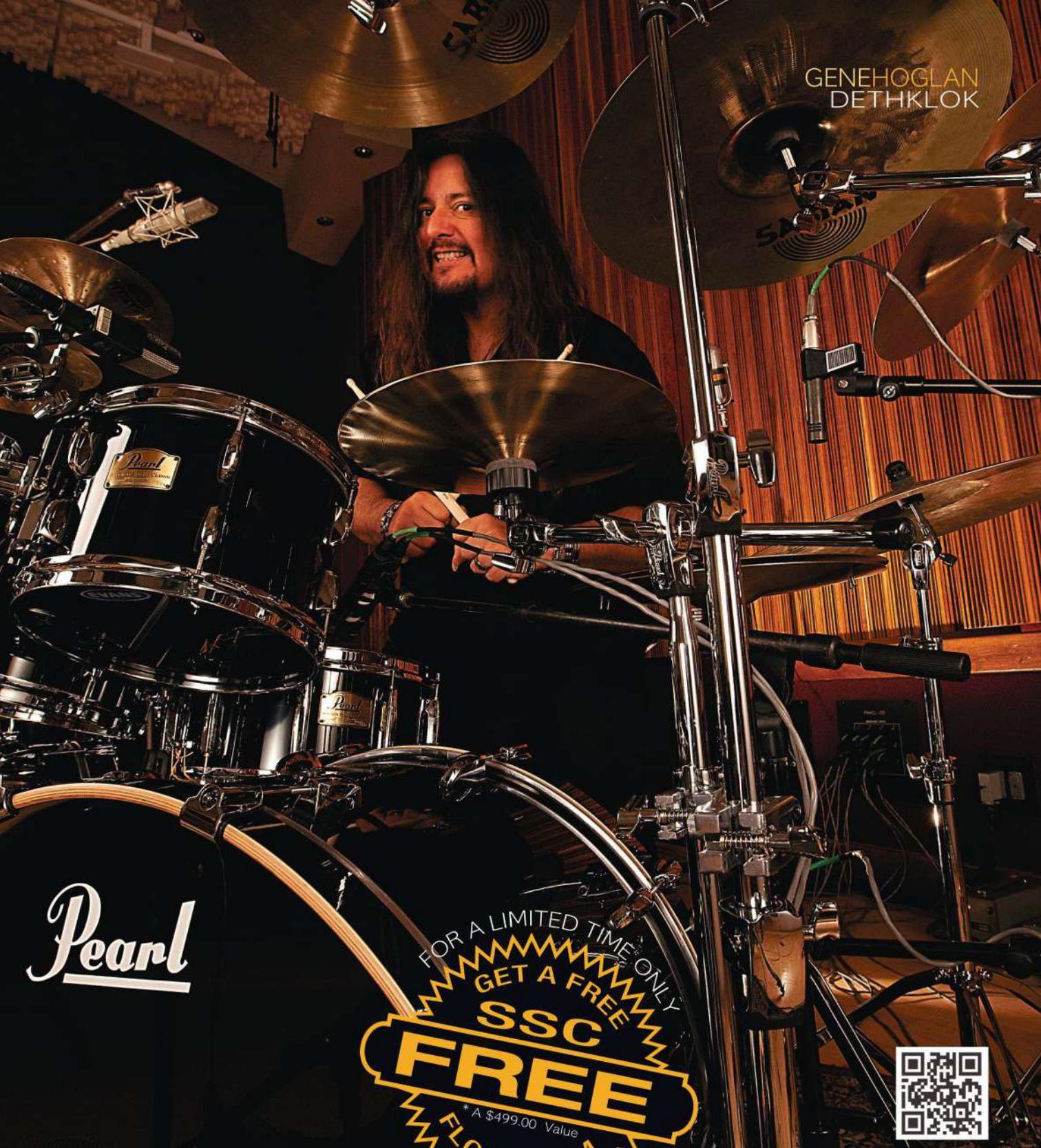
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28 JOEY WARONKER

Two recent debut releases—*Amok* by Thom Yorke's Atoms for Peace and Ultraista's self-titled album—provide endless examples of the sinuous electroacoustic grooves of this cutting-edge yet down-to-earth drummer.

by Michael Dawson

Cover and contents photos by Alex Solca

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by Billy Brennan

The veteran heavy-rock band Clutch reconvened with the famed producer/engineer Machine for the new album *Earth Rocker*. MD was invited to stop by the studio and get a ŷrstand account of what went down.

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Listen for the Tone

I recently paid a visit to an audiologist for the first time since grade school. I was there to get impressions made for in-ear monitors, but the doc also went ahead and did a hearing test to find out how well my ears have held up after twenty-five years as a musician. The results showed that there's some slight damage to my left side (thanks, stage monitors!), but my right ear is still in good condition. The doctor said there was nothing to be too concerned with, but just having him confirm what I'd already suspected had me feeling a bit dejected, like I was missing out on something by not experiencing the entire 20–20,000 Hz auditory spectrum in full stereo. It also didn't help that the left-side impression jammed wax against my eardrum, causing me to feel as though half of my head was submerged in water.

The doctor assured me that the wax would work itself loose, but if it didn't I could break it up with eardrops the next day. Aside from having to finally accept that I have a little bit of hearing loss, I should be back to normal soon. I'm still a bit shaken up, though. One of my greatest pleasures is listening intently to music in my car or on my iPod to discover new layers of nuance, whether in the form of creative mixing and production ideas, unique drum tones, or interestingly placed rhythms. Yet the last thing I wanted to do to boost my spirits during my drive back to the office was turn on the radio or pop in a CD. (No!)

For the past eight or so years, I've used hearing protection whenever I play drums, so I'm used to that slightly muted tone. But it's very weird having the stuffed-up sensation infiltrate my daily life. Not only does it create a sonic barrier during conversations, but it's also dampened my desire to listen to music and to be creative, which is a really terrifying thought. Once I can finally hear clearly again, I plan to head straight to my studio and crank some Coltrane, Hendrix, or Ultraista (you'll read more about that band later). I can't imagine how frustrating it must be for anyone who's dealing with hearing loss on a much more permanent scale. To quote moms everywhere: Eat plenty of vegetables, toss every day...and always wear earplugs!

Okay, lecture over. Let's get to the issue at hand, which was a very fun one for us to put together. Not only do we get to dig into the psyche of one of the most creative and thoughtful drummers out there—this month's cover artist, Joey Waronker—but we also interview Clutch's JP Gaster and producer Machine in the studio while they're tracking drums for the band's new album. There are the usual insightful educational articles, product reviews, and short features as well, and we have our annual NAMM report, which features a ton of sweet new gear for 2013. Hope you enjoy it!



Rob Manzella

Mike Dawson

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PAGING THROUGH THE YEARS

I am a longtime *MD* subscriber, going back to 1977 as a teenager. Yes, I have the first issue, and all the rest since. Recently I have been reading my back issues during downtime in my office, where I keep all those years of *MD* in my library. (I know: Get the DVD collection and dump the mags. Can't do it. Too many memories.) I grab at random an issue going years back, and it's been quite a bit of fun. Not only do I revisit favorite artists and great past columns, but I also see what (and who)

has come and gone. A reminder of risen and forgotten talents. I see novelties and companies long gone and those that have stood the test of time—an interesting view of great ideas, and some not so great. My favorite unexpected outcome? Each issue takes me back to where I was in my career (musician and educator) and my personal life. Many roads traveled and rivers crossed since 1977 from the view of a drummer's throne. Many thanks.

Stephen H. Lauster

KUDOS TO AQUARIAN

While in the process of fixing up an old Rogers drumset from the late '50s/early '60s, I had trouble fitting the drumheads. They were too tight, and the sound was choked. While doing research, I found that only Aquarian Drumheads addressed the difference in vintage and new heads. I sent an email to the company explaining my problem. The following day I received a response from [Aquarian founder] Roy Burns with a telephone number requesting I call him. Mr. Burns spent at least thirty minutes with me. He was able to determine what I wanted to accomplish, and

he shared his experience and knowledge. With his recommendations I was able to achieve my goal. His main focus was not selling his products but helping me get the results I was trying to achieve. Because of his help I now have a great-sounding kit. Where else can you find excellent customer service like that? Thank you, Roy Burns, for your time, dedication, and willingness to share.

Mike Jones

ENDORSER UPDATE

I wanted to drop a quick note to say a huge thank you for mentioning me as one of Yamaha's new endorsers in the Who's Playing What section of the April issue of *MD*. I have every *Modern Drummer* since 1977, and to see my name printed in the pages is a dream come true. While I am honored to be a Yamaha endorser, I am not Travis Tritt's drummer; that honor belongs to my good friend Lejoe Young. I am, however, very proud to be a member of the Trace Adkins Band.

Johnny Richardson

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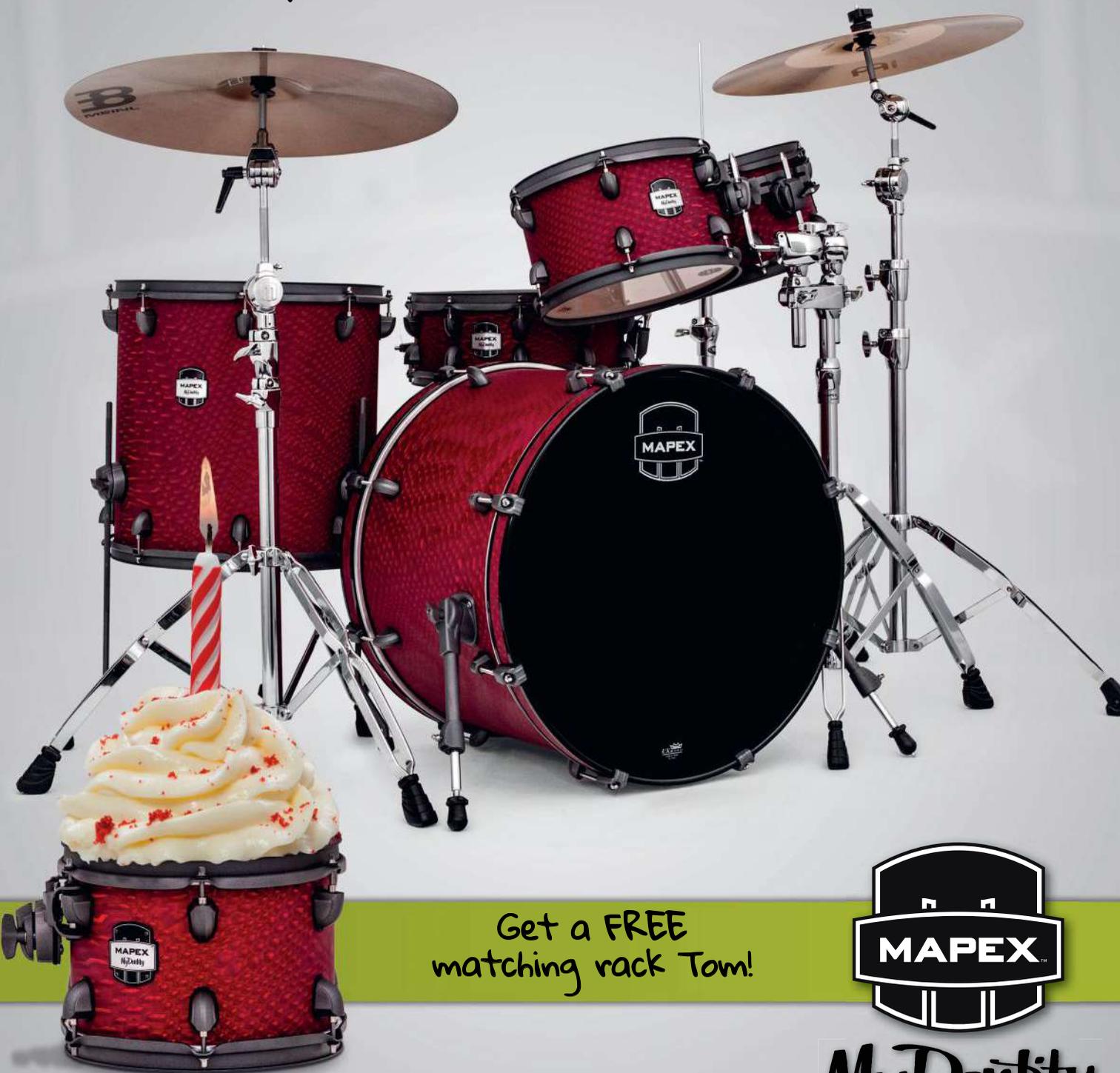
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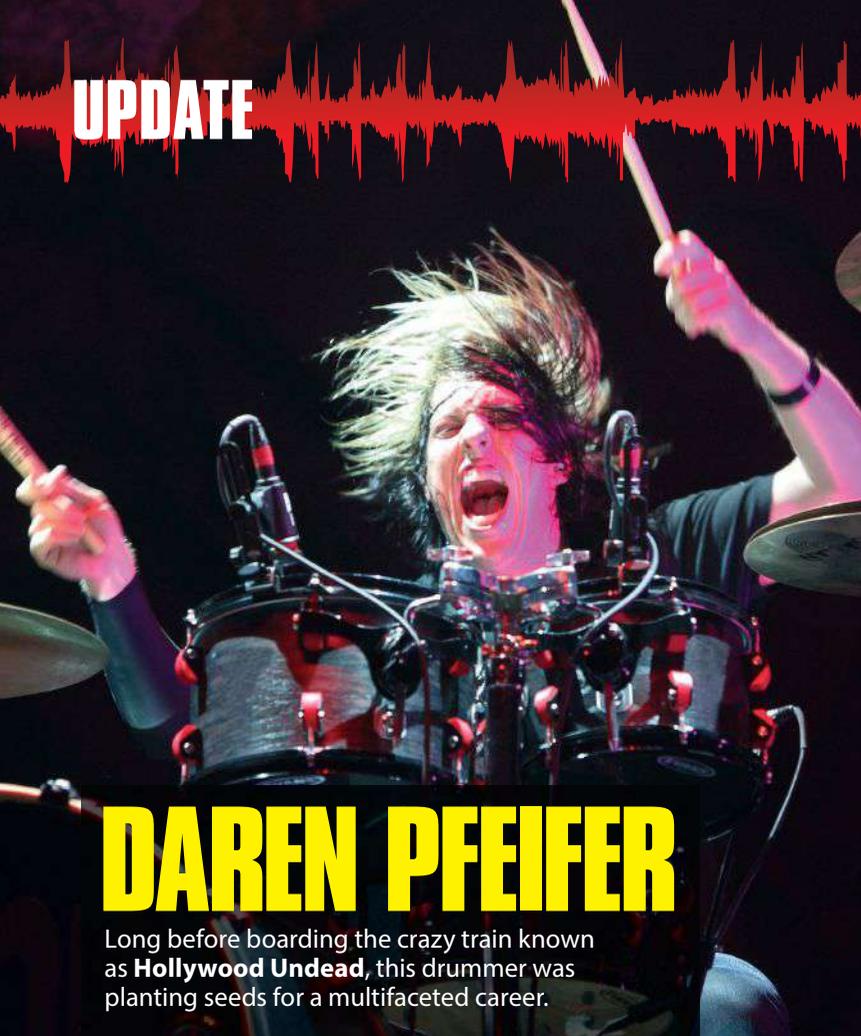


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DAREN PFEIFER

Long before boarding the crazy train known as **Hollywood Undead**, this drummer was planting seeds for a multifaceted career.

Daren Pfeifer knows full well that being able to multitask is worth its weight in gold. The drummer—who shouldn't be confused with Darrin Pfeifer of the ska-punk band Goldynger—has been performing with the famously masked marauders in Hollywood Undead since 2010 and can be heard on the rap-rockers' latest album, *Notes From the Underground*. Pfeifer is also the owner/operator of Knock Box Studio, where he's recorded national commercials for clients like Home Depot, Honda, Lexus, and Nike.

"Playing is a small part of being a successful drummer," Pfeifer says. "You need to be technically proficient, but you also need to understand the build and make of the instrument and what affects your sound—the wood, heads, rims, sticks...everything. Being a modern drummer today means playing appropriately for the gig and having the creativity to challenge yourself." Pfeifer adds that he enjoys the process of working with provided demos, which can sometimes limit a musician's creative choices. "I like those challenges," he explains. "My job is to take an original idea and build on it."

For the past couple of years Pfeifer has been an invaluable asset in the Hollywood Undead camp. In addition to recording and drumming live, he runs the group's backing tracks. "It's cool," he says, "because I build those background tracks in my home studio."

Pfeifer's experiences and skills extend well beyond rock and studio drumming. Daren has performed and recorded with the Waco Symphony Orchestra and Novo Philharmonic, toured with the Madison Scouts and the Lone Star Drum & Bugle Corps, and studied with the legendary drummers John Bergamo and Joe La Barbera. He also wrote the instructional manual *Advanced Pedal Applications: A Comprehensive Study of Pedal Bridging and Multiple-Pedal Setups*. "The key is to keep practicing, learning, and seeking out different avenues, and to figure out what the music needs," Pfeifer says. "Always ask yourself, What can I do to grow as an artist and match that music? Do that, and you'll be on the right track."

Steven Douglas Losey

NEWS



Zildjian artist relations team changes.

Among the bigger buzzes in the drum industry this past year was the retirement of longtime Zildjian artist relations head **John DeChristopher**. We at *MD* wish John the best of luck in his future projects. His shoes will be tough to fill, but Zildjian has ensured that his responsibilities will be more than adequately handled by the current AR staff.

Sarah Hagan, a drummer for twenty years and a ten-year Zildjian vet, will continue to manage the artist relations program on the East Coast, including clinics and events. She can be reached at sarahh@zildjian.com or 781-607-2421. **Kirsten Matt** will continue to manage the Zildjian artist relations program on the West Coast and in Latin and South America, as she has for the past ten years. Contact her at kirstenm@zildjian.com or 877-636-8635. **Tina Clarke**, who has been with Zildjian for eighteen years, will continue to manage the company's artist relations program internationally. She can be reached at tinac@zildjian.com or +44 1344 426555.



XL Specialty founder passes.

Neal Graham, best known for the development and production of the Protector drum case line, passed away on December 23, 2012, at the age of sixty-six. Graham graduated from Ball State University with a degree in music education and went on to teach in several local music programs and perform with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. In 1972, he opened a small drum shop called the Percussion Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana, building drumsets for many artists, including Rush drummer Neil Peart.

In 1981 Graham founded XL Specialty Percussion, where he pioneered the production of rotationally molded drum and percussion cases. Among the noted players who've used his gear are Kenny Aronoff, Stanton Moore, and Dave Weckl. In December 2008 Graham sold XL Specialty to Gator Cases, staying on as the plant's general manager. Due to health issues, he stepped down from his position in December of 2012.

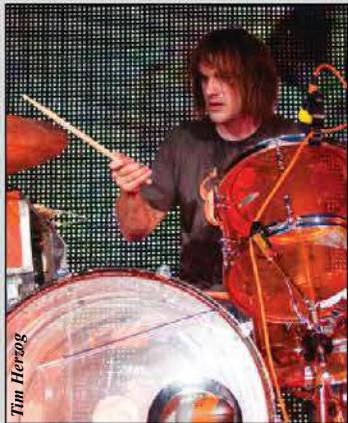
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ON TOUR



Tim Herzog

Kliph Scurlock with the Flaming Lips /// **Steve Gere** with Built to Spill /// **Jim Macpherson** with the Breeders /// This May 4 and 5, an expanded Carolina Rebellion festival returns to the Rock City Campgrounds at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina. Among the drummers appearing at the event are **Greg Upchurch** with 3 Doors Down, **Sean Kinney** with Alice in Chains, **Jason Costa** with All That Remains, **James Cassells** with Asking Alexandria, **Xavier Muriel** with Buckcherry, **Michael "Moose" Thomas** with Bullet for My Valentine, **Robin Goodridge** with Bush, **Abe Cunningham** with Deftones, **Robert Ortiz** with Escape the Fate, **Arejay Hale** with Halestorm, **John Otto** with Limp Bizkit, **Tony Palermo** with Papa Roach, **Matt Cameron** with Soundgarden, **Neil Sanderson** with Three Days Grace, and **Jon Larsen** with Volbeat.

LEAH SHAPIRO

As **Black Rebel Motorcycle Club** tours behind its latest slab of trance-inducing psychedelic rock, the group's rabid fans gladly fall under the spell of the drummer with the gaze of steel.



Specter at the Feast, the latest album by the California neo-psychedelic/garage-rock band Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, honors the memory of bassist Robert Been's father, Michael, a musician who deeply influenced not only his son but also current BRMC drummer Leah Shapiro. Been the elder, who gained notoriety in the '80s as singer and guitarist of the Call ("The Walls Came Down"), passed away in 2010. "He was the first to show me how awful the majority of rock-drumming recordings have been," says Shapiro, who previously toured with the well-known Danish garage band the Raveonettes. "He taught me that you can strangle the life out of the music with excessive editing during postproduction."

Shapiro applies a similar mindset to song construction, saying that sometimes you have to let a track become what it "wants" to become, and that occasionally a drum part can be the catalyst to a composition. This, she says, was the case with "Shadow on the Run," which appears on the soundtrack to the video

game *Batman: Arkham City*, as well as "Funny Games," a transcendent cut from *Specter at the Feast*.

If you're fortunate enough to see Shapiro play live, you'll notice the intense stare she gives as she pounds away on the skins, hardly ever taking her eyes off the audience. Leah laughs when *MD* brings up her death stare. "That's not what I'm normally like," she says with a warm smile. "It's that meditation aspect of drumming. It takes you out of what you're normally aware of because of the trancelike element. There are so many things that can go wrong on stage and take you out of that zone, but you have to let all of that go and stay present."

As she hops on her motorcycle and revs the engine, Shapiro leaves us with one last impression, saying a drummer should not try to eliminate surprise and randomness. "Rhythm is everywhere!" she announces. "And it should not be controlled. It's supposed to have freedom and life."

Armine Iknadossian



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MUST-HAVE GEAR

Equipment the Pros Won't Leave Home Without

This Month: Dream Theater's **MIKE MANGINI**

The most important pieces of gear for me are my Zildjian artist model sticks [wood tip, 16½x.585]. They are abnormally heavy due to the resins soaked into the laminated birch wood. The reason that I prefer my sticks to be so heavy is that the extra weight saves me work and energy. It allows me to produce very strong strokes, with less effort than a lighter stick, at the faster tempos I'm required to play for the type of music I'm involved with.

From a physical perspective, similar-diameter sticks made of hickory are simply much too light for me. They cause me to over-swing. I break them frequently, and I end up gripping them too tightly, which causes hand blisters and wrist pain.

From a sonic perspective, there's a certain *snap* that's achieved when striking a drumhead with intensity. Relative to the "snappy" strokes, the softer ones are less audible during live or studio performances. Without this snap, the guitar, especially, would typically bury a lighter tom stroke in the mix. A rock guitar's wave file looks like a thick stream of sound, almost at a peak level, which takes up a lot of the real estate in the high-mid and higher frequency range. The main advantage of using a heavier stick to produce the snap is that my drum hits, especially on my toms, will be solid and powerful, with plenty of clarity, and won't require editing, sound replacing, or layering of samples in the studio. By avoiding these post-tracking tasks for the mix engineers, a lot of time and money are saved.

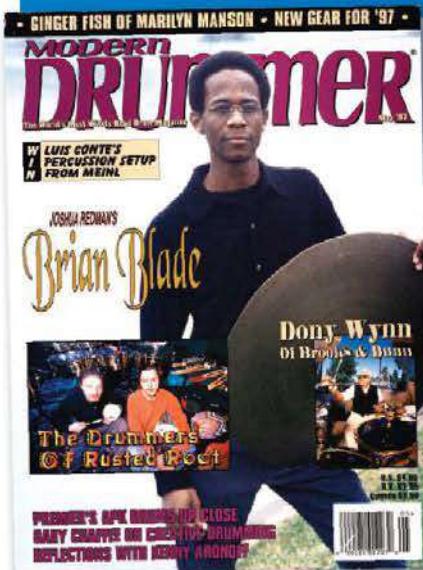


Andrew Regna

My other piece of must-have gear is my Pearl RH-2000 remote cable hi-hat. I simply cannot set up my drums in the apex tom configuration with regular hi-hat stands, because the hi-hat cymbals need to be positioned above the toms.

Interview by Mike Haid

BACK *Through the* STACK



As is often the case when we interview jazz drummers in *MD*, the name Elvin Jones came up in conversation when we spoke with **BRIAN BLADE** for his May 1997 cover story. Blade's comments about the master were particularly insightful.

Elvin is probably the greatest musical influence on me in terms of expression through an instrument spiritually. The times I've seen him or listened to him on recordings or films with John Coltrane, just from the first strike of the cymbal I can't even think drums—it's transcendence. That is something that hopefully through life and blessings I will be able to achieve, that type of realization that the music is much greater than we know.

I listened to the records, trying to isolate every part and portion of what was being

played—how Elvin fit into the weave. I never wrote out his solos. I just learned them in an aural sense, physically trying to achieve a sound with that as a reference. The tone of Elvin's cymbals alone really touches something in your center. I just listened intently over and over, trying to sing it, almost like tabla playing.

Though I love Elvin, I'm not trying to replay what he has played. I want to be true to what I hear at the moment. He is going to come out of my playing, but a lot of musicians have had an impact on me.



TURNING PRO

MD asks three Pro Panelists whether there was a particular moment when they realized they were a professional musician.

“At Berklee I started asking my floor mates what they were doing when they decided to give their life to their respective instrument. These were serious decisions of the heart that I never had to make.”



Jason Powell/Reading

TODD SUCHERMAN

I was fortunate to grow up in an environment with musical parents, including a father who was a drummer, along with older brothers that were musicians. It was a wonderful card to be dealt in life, and I did my first paying gig when I was six years old. Through my brothers and their older friends, I was working quite steadily by age nine, had a little tuxedo and the whole bit. So I was aware of the concept of pleasing employers and bandleaders, knowing standards and various styles, and I was able to read charts.

Music and the drums were my first love. It was all I ever wanted to do. I never wanted to be an astronaut or a fireman. I just wanted to play music and knew intrinsically that I would be doing this forever. It just seemed like a complete bonus to be paid to do it. I spent a year at Berklee in Boston, and one particular night after a few adult beverages with friends, it dawned on me that I never had that moment where I decided to do this. It just always was.

So I became fascinated with the notion that everyone around me had some sort of epiphany where they decided, *I think I'm going to try to be a professional musician*. I started knocking on various dorm-room doors and asked my roommates when and what they were doing when they decided to give their life to the drums, bass, trumpet, or whatever respective instrument they played. I was absorbed and intrigued by their stories, because these were serious decisions of the heart that I never had to make. I was bereft of the experience of standing on the precipice of my future with this heavy decision, or the burden of convincing my parents that I wished for a life in the arts. It was utterly fascinating to hear the varying degrees of drama or heartache in each tale.

So as that evening went on, I became grateful to have had my life decided for me by sheer fate. Music chose *me*, as trite as that sounds. I'm thankful and grateful for this profession, and it's something I never take for granted.



Jill Steinberg

“I became conscious of being a professional musician when I started working with professional musicians. But the big question is: What does it mean to be a professional musician in the first place? To get paid for what we do? Or to play at a professional level?”

—DAFNIS PRIETO

TAKU HIRANO

Although I was supporting myself by teaching and gigging around New England during my college years at Berklee, and being an L.A.-based session/touring musician was my ultimate goal, it wasn't until I did my first tour dates that I felt like I was a professional.

My first tours were all about learning the ropes, assimilating, and taking it all in. Three years later, though, on my first international arena tour, I had my “aha” moment. I was on a world tour with Whitney Houston, and as she sang her hit song “I Will Always Love You” with minimal accompaniment, I stood in my rig almost directly behind her. It was a summer night outdoors in Germany, in a castle courtyard, and watching her sing effortlessly under a spotlight, with a sea of lighters illuminated from the audience, was quite surreal. It struck me, and I told myself to enjoy the moment.

Up until then, I had been so goal-driven and focused on the process that I hadn't realized how far I had come since the practice rooms at Berklee. At that moment I allowed myself to feel like I had arrived at a certain level, and to have a sense of pride about it.



Nitayer/Scribble



Sucherman, pro drummer, nine years old





LEEDY PROFESSIONAL SNARE

I recently acquired a Leedy snare drum from an old friend. After doing some research, I believe what I have is a 1920s Professional model. I'm guessing the shell is mahogany. The skins and wires aren't original, but overall this snare is in very good condition. It even came in its original case. Could you please help me determine the history, age, and value of the drum?
Pierre

"That is a Leedy Professional made in Indianapolis between 1927 and 1929," says Collector's Corner columnist Harry Cangany. "The shell is walnut, and the strainer is the Speedway. Here's the dilemma: The stock wooden Professional came with nickel parts; chrome plating was not available until 1930. I can't tell if your plating is nickel or



chrome. If it's chrome, it was redone. The finish on the shell should be satin, not gloss, unless the metal parts were once Nobby Gold, which is what Leedy called its process of polishing brass hardware to a great shine and then spraying it with a gold-tinted lacquer. If the metal parts were originally Nobby Gold, then the drum could have had a polished finish. Such a combination was called the Tudor.

"I see no mention of a glossy walnut shell with nickel plating as an option in the Leedy catalog. The other choices were black, white, and gold

enamel. When plastic finishes arrived, marine pearl and gold sparkle were the first two, and then came jade green. For all plastic-wrapped drums, Leedy advertised them with Nobby Gold.

"All in all, your drum looks great. Leedy was the first company to explore self-aligning lug inserts and double-angle hoops, and your drum has both. The four-hole lugs were a big improvement over their two-hole predecessors. I would value your drum at \$1,000 to \$1,250, because it seems to be in excellent shape."

Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

THE SINGER CAN'T SING!

I recently auditioned for a cover band. When they asked if I wanted to be their drummer, I jumped at the chance, because they're excellent musicians. The lead singer wasn't at the audition, and the night of our first rehearsal he claimed he had a sore throat and it hurt too much to sing. At the second practice he did sing, and it was awful. He was off key and had no sense of phrasing or timing. We've had about five rehearsals so far, and his singing hasn't gotten any better. I've also noticed that the number of beers my bandmates drink during rehearsal has increased, and they now turn up their instruments to cover the singer's voice. I'm frustrated and confused. Should I stay or should I go?

Did you ever hear the expression "Look before you leap"? I guess that didn't happen in this case, huh?

It's hard to know who or what you'll find when you show up at an audition. The mistake you made was accepting the job without hearing the entire band. Auditions should be thought of as a two-way experience—the band is checking you out, but you're checking them out too. Unless you don't take pride in your drumming or you consider yourself a lousy player, you want to share the stage with quality musicians. I know auditions can be nerve-racking, but train your eyes and ears for little nuances that may spell trouble down the road.

Members showing up late for the audition is one example. A couple of the musicians being more intent on getting drunk or high, rather than listening to your drumming, is another. And always ask questions. Here are my standard six: Did your last drummer quit, or was he or she fired? (Ask the bandleader to explain the circumstances.) How many drummers have you had in the past? How often do you rehearse, and for how long? Where has the band performed? Where do you intend to perform, if at all? Is there an equal distribution of pay among all members?

You're frustrated, confused, and wondering if you should stay or go. Ordinarily in this column I illuminate and offer choices about how to solve a problem. This time I'm going with a straight-up directive: Go. Depart. Split!

The band knows you've caught on to the problems with the singer, but they're not being honest with you or with themselves. They're cranking their guitars to hide this singer's lack of ability—you've figured that out. Although this is only conjecture on my part, the increase in their use of intoxicants may be to numb themselves. There's an expression, "the elephant in the living room," that means there's a big problem right in front of you and your bandmates, but for whatever reason they're too afraid to admit that it exists or to take action.

Why they took on this poseur as the singer is anyone's guess. Is he a relative or spouse of a band member? Does he buy the beer? Does he own the sound system? In the end, though, the reason doesn't really matter, because our time is best spent on getting you out of there.

There's a wealth of ways in which you can extricate yourself from this group. You can be brutally honest and tell the bare-bones truth: "I'm leaving because you have a singer who can't sing." Expect some drama and defensiveness, and maybe even some hostility, to ensue from that approach. If these folks seem like the combative type, don't put yourself in a situation where your physical well-being would be at stake. (Remember: The judges on TV singing contests have bodyguards.)

You're only five practices in, so a vague but decisive approach might play quite well. With a matter-of-fact demeanor, deliver something like this: "Guys, I thought this was the band for me, but I really want to play originals. I guess I've played in one too many cover bands." Some anger may come your way, because they now have to gear up for another drummer search. If you're met with anger or resistance about your impending depar-

ture, keep °ipping the responsibility back on yourself, and stick to your decision. Avoid mentioning the singer, and you should be able to sidestep major drama. Phrase your reason for leaving in a way that makes it sound like you don't want to waste *their* valuable time, when in reality the reverse is true. Life is time-limited. If you're not happy with the situation, there's no reason to play another note with this outjyt.

You should be enjoying your practices and enjoying putting in the hard work that will pay o_ for you on stage. This situation, with a subpar vocalist and band members who lie to you as well

as to themselves, is toxic. Making music should be uplifting, not causing you this sort of stress.

Before you make a commitment to the *next* band, be sure you look before you leap. You'll ynd that life on the throne will be a little easier and a lot more fun.



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



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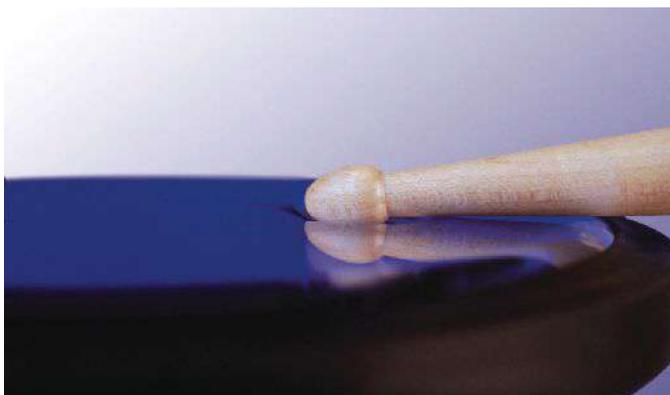
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DDRUM

REFLEX RSL POWERHOUSE DRUMSET

by David Ciauro

For many years it seemed that only a handful of wood species became staples of drumset construction.

Recently, though, the marketplace has

Alder has been used for years by guitar manufacturers, but with the Reflex series, ddrum takes the first stab at building drums out of this softer, more affordable wood.

seen a noticeable rise in the presence of previously unused woods. Ddrum's contribution comes in the form of the Reflex series, which consists of the first known mass-market drums to use 100 percent alder shells.

Although alder is new to drum construction, its application in the making of musical instruments, including guitars and basses, is quite common—just ask ddrum's sister company Dean Guitars. Ddrum says that alder shells possess a natural warmth and focus, giving the drums a "naturally equalized" tone.

The five-piece Powerhouse kit on review has a black satin finish that, in conjunction with the larger drum sizes (16x24 kick, 10x13 non-mounted rack tom, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and matching 6½x14 snare), will likely appeal to rock, metal, and punk players. Perhaps most enticing, though, is the kit's affordable list price of \$1,672.50. Before we delve further into the nuts and bolts of this outfit, let's take a moment to discuss alder in comparison to some of the more commonly used wood species.

A LESSON IN WOOD HARDNESS

Hardness is measured on the Janka scale, which essentially tests wood species' strength and durability. The harder the wood, the more force it can withstand before incurring damage. The scale uses a numerical system to rank woods in order from softest to hardest, based on units of

force. Pound force (lbf) is the unit used in the United States and has a range of 22 (softest) to 5,060 (hardest).

It's important to note that some wood families comprise several species used in drum construction, each of which can have different levels of hardness. For example, within the

birch family there's gray birch (760 lbf), paper birch (910 lbf), yellow birch (1,260 lbf), and sweet birch (1,470 lbf).

Here's a quick rundown of the pound-force measure of some other commonly used drum wood species: ash, 850–2,030; beech, 1,300; bubinga, 2,690; maple, 850–1,450; poplar, 540; and oak, 1,130–1,620. Some less common or more exotic woods rank as follows: blackwood, 1,720; cocobolo, 1,136; jarrah, 1,910; and spotted gum, 2,473.

Alder's pound force is 590. Therefore it's softer than the most widely used woods, maple and birch. The softest drum-related species we found on the Janka hardness scale was basswood (410), which is typically used for shells found on entry-level kits. Alder is closest in hardness to poplar, which is often the center ply in vintage or vintage-style 3-ply drums and is a big reason why those types of drums sound warmer and rounder.

HOW DOES IT SOUND?

Although interesting on its own, this information about wood hardness becomes more relevant when put in context for potential buyers. How do the properties of alder translate to the quality and sound of the Reflex kit? For starters, ply shells made solely of softer woods are likely to be more fragile than shells made from harder woods, and thus they have an increased likelihood of being prone to damage. In other words, they may not hold up to



the rigors of road wear. That's not to say these drums gave us any impression that they were going to fall apart. In fact, from our testing, no fragility was immediately apparent, but it is something to think about when you consider whether this is the right kit for you. The big plus is that alder is a fairly lightweight wood, so drums made from it can be bigger in size without added heft.

It's also important to note that the sonic quality of a wood isn't linked directly to its hardness. Guitar builders prefer alder for its balanced attack, liberal sustain, and even tone. But how does it sound in drums? We found that the shells on this kit had an ample supply of resonance, if not an excess. At most tunings (the drums had a limited range of about two full rotations of the drum key at each rod before choking), both tone and attack were overpowered a bit by the overtones.



Although these are loud drums, they seemed to lack some focus and projection, and the tone seemed to escape through the shells, rather than being contained by them. The matching snare was the best-sounding component of the kit, especially with a medium-tension batter head.

Additional specs of the Re[™] ex series include interchangeable Faceo[®] lugs that allow drummers to further personalize

their kits, 2.3 mm steel hoops, Fixtpitch suspension mounts, and matching bass drum hoops. Rounding out the features are ddrum's Resolifts, which comprise rubber boots attached beneath the four bottommost bass drum lugs to raise the shell's resting position slightly. These are said to help maximize resonance and enhance low-end projection.

When playing live, many rock, metal, and

punk drummers opt to rely on microphones or triggered sounds to cut through the mix. (To be fair, *no* drumset can be expected to compete acoustically with stacks of guitar amps and blaring bass.) So the tone of the shell itself might not necessarily be as vital as the kit's aesthetic appeal and affordable price tag, which the Powerhouse has covered on both fronts.

ddrum.com



T-CYMBALS

LA PASION TURCA, SWING KING, AND JANISSARY™X SERIES

by Anthony Riscica

After ten years of creating designs for other companies, the folks at T-Cymbals decided to make their own custom products. The company, based in Istanbul, Turkey, prides itself

to cut—but in a silky way.

The 14" La Pasion Turca hi-hats followed suit. They were thin and light yet didn't succumb to the pitfalls of such characteristics. They had a low tone

It's no surprise that T-Cymbals has spent the past decade supplying cymbals for other brands—these models sound too good not to be the result of years of cymbal-making expertise.

on being not only cymbal makers but "cymbal fanatics" and players alike. Its goal, according to its website, is simple yet resounding: "Offer a product that is reliable and better built than the competitors', and give artists and customers the kind of treatment you would give to your family or close friends." This sounds like a great motto, but do the products stand up to the words? We were given a few cymbals to test out, from three lines—La Pasion Turca, Swing King, and Janissary-X—so let's see.

LA PASION TURCA

We started with the La Pasion Turca 21" ride (\$690) and 14" hi-hats (\$625). The first thing I noticed was the ride's thickness and flexibility. It's a thin cymbal with a traditional/vintage look. It will bend pretty easily in your hands, which is usually a quality I like in a jazz ride.

This model offered warm, low overtones and a soft response. What I really liked about the cymbal was that I didn't have to break out a stick with a tiny tip in order to get an articulate sound. I played the ride with a thicker 5B, and it still retained a nice attack without the resonance becoming overwhelming. Even when I crashed the cymbal a bit on the edge, the overtones remained controlled and manageable. (This articulate response proved to be true of the Swing King ride as well.) The bell sound was pleasing, with enough tone

and considerable wash when played with sticks, and the "chick" sound—while soft in volume—had a presence that matched well with the volume of the ride.

SWING KING

Next up are the Swing King 21" ride (\$825) and 14" hi-hats (\$750). These cymbals seemed to be essentially the next weight class up from La Pasion Turca. They shared roughly the same traditional finish, with random hand hammering and hand lathing, but had more of a "new cymbal" look.

The ride shared many of the same attributes as La Pasion Turca, with a warm set of overtones and a controllable wash. The big difference was in stick response and attack, due to the heavier weight. The Swing King sounded great with a 5B tip as well, but it had more volume and stick sound. If La Pasion Turca is the company's jazz-trio cymbal, then the Swing King would be the ride to go to for larger combos or big bands, even though both could also be used outside those genres.

The same could be said for the Swing King hi-hats. With a little more weight, they carried more volume, both in the "chick" and when played with a stick. I used these hats on a few different gigs, ranging from jazz to heavy rock. They were sensitive enough for the softer playing, while being surprisingly



convincing in the rock setting, although I could've used a bit more definition when I played them loosely with sticks. All in all, this is an extremely versatile set of medium-thin hi-hats.

JANISSARY-X

The last cymbal we tested was the

Shaman, from the Janissary-X e° cts line. We were sent the 21" version (\$745), though it's also available in 17" and 19" sizes. The wavy-shaped Shaman has a raw ynish with no lathing. I wasn't expecting a traditional sound from this unique-looking instrument, so I was surprised when I heard the warm, complex tone it had to o° er. A lot of unlathed e° cts cymbals have a very speciyc sound, but I was able to pull myriad tones and colors from the Shaman. I even put it up as a main ride in a few situations.

This thin cymbal wouldn't work well as a ride in heavier playing situations, but it would function nicely as a crash.

The 21" version opened up when I laid into it and then got out of the way quickly. The bell sound was sweet, with just enough "kang" mixed in with the overtones.

CONCLUSION

As a yrst-time player of this brand, my overall feeling is that the people at T-Cymbals really know what they're doing. These are quality instruments that live up to the goal the company set out to accomplish. With a quick look at the website, you can see a bunch of other models suited for di° erent playing styles. They're worth a look.

tcymbals.com

EVANS

LEVEL 360 G1 DRUMHEADS

by Michael Dawson

D'Addario recently retooled the Evans factory with state-of-the-art machinery that can now form drumheads in a way that the company claims makes them easier to tune with more consistency and a wider tuning range, and these

Evans' Level 360 drumheads have a steeper collar for a more balanced and ~ush yt all the way around the bearing edge. They sound good too.

heads are designed to sit ¼ atter on the bearing edge of any type of drum—new or old. Drumheads made using this new technology are called Level 360.

We were sent a batch of Level 360 clear G1s in a variety of sizes, which we tried out in three scenarios: on 13" and 16" mid-level birch toms with imperfect bearing edges, on a vintage 14" Slingerland rack tom that's slightly out of round, and on a pristine Premier Signia 10" tom with an undersize shell.

THE LEVEL 360 BLUEPRINT

The main modiycation that D'Addario made for Evans' Level 360 heads was to

create a steeper collar in an e° ort to ensure that the plastic lies ¼ at on the bearing edge all the way around

the drum. In all three of our testing scenarios, it was indisputable that the updated G1s sat ¼ atter and more securely on the edge than the earlier versions did. The heads didn't wobble on the drum, and the plastic maintained even contact with the shell all the way around (hence the name Level 360). These new heads also yt our less-than-perfect test drums quite well. The only one that didn't rotate freely when I tried to spin it on the bearing edge was the 14" on the old Slingerland. There were two points on that drum's edge where the head got stuck, but at every other location it sat friction-free. Full disclaimer: The Slingerland tom was chosen for this test because I've had trouble ytting heads on it in the past. But the Level 360 had the best yt of any brand or make I've tried so far.



SOUND QUALITY

We chose to test the Level 360 on the 10" Premier tom because that drum has an undersize shell, which takes the new collar out of play when trying to determine the basic sound quality of the heads. (All drumheads sit ¼ at and level on this drum.) When A/B'ed with its competitors, the new G1 sounded a bit punchier and more focused, with more emphasis on the low fundamental note. It still had a classic, wide-open tone, and the decay was about the same as that of other single-ply clear heads. I was able to get a pure 10" tom sound from the G1 without much e° ort, and I didn't need any mu~ing to control

the overtones.

The 13" and 16" mid-level birch toms don't have perfectly level bearing edges, so I usually have to tighten heads more than I want to in order to clear out wrinkles and troublesome overtones. The Level 360s weren't a miracle cure on these drums, but I did find that I could

tune them a bit lower and get a more even tone. On the 14" Slingerland, the Level 360s allowed me to take the tuning down very low, with each lug barely a half turn above yñger-tight, which I couldn't previously do with other heads. The drum sounded big and fat at that tension, with a little bit of growl, and the pitch was

actually lower than that of the 16" birch tom.

All Evans snare and tom drumheads, from 6" to 20", will now incorporate the Level 360 collar, and bass drum heads are currently in the works. If you haven't tried Evans heads yet, now's the time.

evansdrumheads.com

ANCIENT TREE

6½x14 CONQUISTADOR STAVE™ SHELL HEARTWOOD SNARE

by David Ciauro

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED



Australian builders like Brady and Fidock expertly fuse stellar craftsmanship with the science behind the properties of rare wood species. Stateside, exotic woods are not as easy to stumble upon, but they do exist. Ancient Tree's pieces add intrigue to the art and architecture of U.S. drum construction.

Ed Mendel, founder of Ancient Tree, uses river-reclaimed heart cypress and heart pine to handcraft stave-shell

unique niche of being appreciated equally as musical instruments, works of art, and labors of love.

What exactly is heartwood? Mendel explains, "A tree has two components: sapwood and heartwood. Heartwood combines tight graining and more resins—the more the resin, the

that with the superb smoothness of the rounded bearing edges and snare bed, and I thought, *If this drum sounds equal to how it looks, we're in for a treat.*

I played the Conquistador for several hours, changing up the tunings and recording little snippets to check out how the recordings matched with what I was hearing in the room. The drum sounded incredible and was a pleasure to play. However, the rarity of the wood didn't create an idiosyncratic sound. This is a snare drum, after all, and the artist's intention wasn't to make a drum that sounded unlike anything heard previously. Instead, the idea was to craft a great-sounding, functional, and playable work of art. Mission accomplished!

The Conquistador comes with an Evans Power Center Reverse Dot batter and Hazy 300 bottom, PureSound twenty-strand wires, powder-coated and custom-milled aeronautical aluminum lugs and 2.3 mm hoops, and a Trick three-step throw-off. The price of the drum, which includes \$109.20 in options, is \$1,618.40.

ancienttreedrums.com

Ancient Tree builds drums from centuries-old, river-reclaimed timber. That's an impressive story all by itself, but the real subtext is just how great this snare sounds.

drums. The snare on review here is made from longleaf pine heartwood that was between 200 and 500 years old before it was harvested. It was then preserved for another 150 years on a riverbed, hence the term *river reclaimed*.

Heartwood holds a special place in American architecture. "Longleaf pine was the wood that built America, and it was almost harvested to extinction," Mendel says. "It can still be found on the floor of Mount Vernon, where it has been walked on for over 200 years." Today you're more likely to have a run-in with Bigfoot than come across river-reclaimed longleaf pine heartwood. Drums produced from such a special source therefore enter a

harder the wood. Sapwood has 4 percent resin, and heartwood has 25 percent. The wood we use has at least eight growth rings per inch compared to sapwood, which has four. Longleaf pine grows only one inch in diameter every thirty years, and river-recovered logs are actually drier than freshly cut trees, because the wood is filled with oleoresins and does not take on water."

Before testing the Conquistador, I removed the batter head to check out the quality of the craftsmanship. The vertical-grain lines were so vivid that they appeared as though they'd been painted on, due to the near complete absence of any knots or imperfections. Combine

BOSO

MODERN DRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

NATURAL, DARK, AND STRATA BAMBOO DRUMSTICKS

by Miguel Monroy

For many drummers, finding the right kind of sticks is not a quick process but rather a journey that takes a little time before reaching its destination. Tons of factors usually go into the final choice, including species of wood, weight, length, taper, bead shape, and nylon or wood tip. A new factor has recently emerged: sustainability. This is where Boso Drumsticks steps in, offering a range of options made from eco-friendly bamboo.

Bamboo is known as an excellent alternative to wood, as it averages a growth of three to five inches per day, returns 30 percent more oxygen than trees, is naturally antibacterial, and has incredible tensile strength (resistance to breaking under tension) and compressive strength. Boso uses two types of bamboo in its stick offerings. The Natural line consists of 100 percent reformed bamboo, which creates a stick that's much lighter than one made with commonly used hickory. The Dark series is crafted from compressed bamboo, which is heavier than hickory. Boso also offers a third line, Strata, which is a combination of Natural and Dark. Strata sticks are approximately the same weight as standard hickory models.

We received a full line of Boso sticks for review (\$14.50 per pair for all sizes). What impressed me

Offering eco-friendly bamboo models in three different weights per size, Boso Drumsticks is a new company with a highly sustainable future.

most was having such a wide range of weight options. The 7A Natural weighs about 30 grams per stick, which proved to be perfect for light and soft songs, as well as really fast ones. The 7A Dark model weighs about 53 grams per stick, which made it a better choice for louder, more aggressive playing. The same pattern was true of the 5A, 5B, and 2B options.

Boso also makes marching sticks, which are currently available in the Natural series. I couldn't believe how light these sticks were, weighing only about 63 grams each, which is about the same as a 5B hickory stick.

All of the Boso sticks proved to be incredibly durable and felt great in my hands. One interesting thing I noticed was that bamboo doesn't splinter like hickory does. Instead, it has a much cleaner and smoother appearance when it begins to wear down or break.

For anyone interested in sticks that are eco-friendly and extremely durable, Boso's models are definitely worth checking out.

bosodrumsticks.com



Why Dream?

"From an Eagles ballad to a rocking Zep tune, Dream Cymbals have the sounds that I need for Windborne's Symphony Rock Shows."

Powell Randolph
- Windborne Music

www.dreamcymbals.com





Justin Brown

by Ken Micallef

He's made quite a name for himself on the NYC jazz scene—largely by absorbing the intricacies of styles well outside the idiom.

Twenty-eight-year-old, Oakland-born Justin Brown plays jazz with a universality and maturity that have made him one of the busiest players in New York City, cutting records and performing with Chris Dingman, Gerald Clayton, Ambrose Akinmusire, Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride, Stefon Harris, Esperanza Spalding, Terence Blanchard, Josh Roseman, Gretchen Parlato, Yosvany Terry, and Vijay Iyer. An extremely quick-witted and responsive drummer, Brown is tough to pin down. You hear hints of Tony Williams and J Dilla in his lithe, forward-motion approach, but there's nothing about the way he plays that boxes him into any particular era or camp.

Brown began drumming in church when he was two and eventually joined UC Berkeley's Young Musicians Program, which he attended for a number of summers. In 2002 he won a full scholarship to the Dave Brubeck Institute; two years later he was awarded a full scholarship to Juilliard. After arriving in New York, though, Brown dropped out of school and hit the circuit. His first EP, a heady blend of surreal instrumental R&B and incommensurate improvisation, is set for fall release.

MD: You've recorded some of the most compelling records out of New York in the past few years. What's been your general focus?

Justin: To be a great musician, not just a great drummer. I'm influenced by what's happening now; it's not just about straight-ahead jazz. With the iPod generation it's hard to be narrow-minded about music. Everything is related.

MD: What did you practice growing up?

Justin: Rudiments. I studied a Roy Burns book for time and for applying

swing beats. When I was older, I studied orchestral music, Charles Wilcoxon's "Rolling in Rhythm" as a warm-up routine, Moeller technique. I was still playing in church but getting formal training during high school. These days I focus on independence—building up muscle memory to play four polyrhythms independently and applying it musically.

The stuff I actually apply is either conceptual or something from a record. I've studied African and Cuban rhythms, Steve Coleman's rhythms—"Law of Balance" is one of my favorites. And I studied Bernard Purdie and Clyde Stubblefield, trying to understand what about their drumming made it so groovy.

If it was taking a Tony Williams swing beat or a Stubblefield groove, for instance, I would try to emulate it and make it feel good. I would practice a groove for *hours*, even with a minimal kit of bass drum, snare, and hi-hat, and do it with the metronome. Learning how to play behind the beat or ahead of the beat, playing the groove with a swung feel and with a straight feel—I would analyze all of those things.

I'd also just do a lot of listening;

anything about how my sound came about or my time, it all comes from listening. I would work out a groove to a metronome, and then once I got it I would try to make it more lazy sounding, or accurate and perfectly on the beat. And I'd come up with solo concepts of the

or fusion, I will do that. If a tune calls for a straight pocket beat and no fills, I'm going to do that at a hundred percent. I will do what is called for.

This takes a lot of maturity. It took a lot of time for me to know what is called for in each moment. I want people to hear the

"I want people to hear the emotional and spiritual side of who I am, but you have to do it with full conviction and authenticity."

metronome. Or I would play along to my own drum loop—play off it, ahead of it, behind it, and play polyrhythmically to it. I'd take one thing and dice it up as much as I could.

MD: You can hear the references in your drumming, but you're also transparent; your style is hard to categorize.

Justin: It comes from studying the music. I never wanted to have a specific style or concept. I love all aspects of music. And I knew I wanted to be as authentic as possible in every situation. You want to be yourself and have ideas and explore, but you have to play the music. If it's jazz

emotional and spiritual side of who I am, but you have to do it with full conviction. In any musical situation, if you're going to be honest and feel free with it, you have to not only study it but do it with full authenticity.

MD: What's your advice to drummers who'd like to have the types of gigs you play?

Justin: Never settle. If you feel like you're at a point where you've done something right, never get comfortable with it. Always be developing. Always be working on something. That's what I strive for.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Brown plays a Craviotto set consisting of a 6½x14 walnut snare drum, 7x11 and 7½x12 rack toms, a 15x15 floor tom, and a 14x18 or 14x20 bass drum. His cymbals are Istanbul Agop, including 16" Traditional hi-hats, a 21" Signature ride with two rivets, a 24" Signature ride, and an 18" 30th Anniversary crash. His heads include Remo Coated Emperor snare and tom batters and a Powerstroke 3 on his bass drum. Justin uses Vic Firth 8D sticks and brushes and a Ludwig lamb's wool bass drum beater.

Irma Islek



THE CARS

Clean and pure, without a bit of wasted yzz, **this self-titled yrst album is a pop masterpiece.**

Looking simultaneously backward and forward, 1978's *The Cars* is a rock 'n' roll guitar record glossed with new-wave sheen. The songs, by singer/guitarist Ric Ocasek—only "Moving in Stereo" was cowritten, by keyboardist Greg Hawkes—go down smooth with a confectionary lightness, but as with much great pop, care has been taken to temper the sugar with substantial songcraft and sharp musicianship.

Part of the magic involves the album's complementary lead vocals, where Ocasek's oddball-hipster deadpan ("Good Times Roll") alternates with bassist Benjamin Orr's suave and silky delivery ("Just What I Needed," the album's biggest U.S. hit). And let's not forget the brilliant guitar solos, by lefty axe-slinger Elliot Easton, a guy whose playing is so exciting and studio-crisp that he could've blazed leads for Steely Dan. Easton coils and then springs, and he always leaves you wanting more.

The drumming is a thing of more subtle beauty, but once you begin pointing out David Robinson's gifts, the bounty seems endless. Robinson is unquestionably yxed in a supporting role, but like a character actor who can steal the show from the top-billed stars, he has a lot of fun choosing valuable ways

The Cars (1978)

Good Times Roll • My Best Friend's Girl • Just What I Needed • I'm In Touch With Your World • Don't Cha Stop • You're All I've Got Tonight • Bye Bye Love • Moving in Stereo • All Mixed Up

Ric Ocasek: lead vocals, rhythm guitar

Benjamin Orr: lead vocals, bass

Elliot Easton: lead guitar, backing vocals

Greg Hawkes: keyboards, percussion, sax, backing vocals

David Robinson: drums, percussion, backing vocals

Produced by Roy Thomas Baker



to make his contribution. As the Cars' "artistic/fashion director," he knows the value of a hook, and his parts are packed with them, from the famous beat ° ip in the last verse of "Just What I Needed" to the over-the-barline yll in the chorus of the tom-pounding "You're All I've Got Tonight" to the bouncy snare/tom phrasing on "My Best Friend's Girl."

With Hawkes' synthesizers and Robinson's embrace of emerging drum-machine technology, the Cars are often thought of as an electronic band. But despite exceptions like the ° angled drums on "You're All I've Got Tonight," the yrst record isn't exactly awash in e, cts and electro tones. Along with producer Roy Thomas Baker, the quintet tinkers with trendy late-'70s sounds, notably on the ominous "Moving in Stereo," yet also makes great use of rock conventions like chooglin' bass and rhythm guitar, crunching six-string overdrive, and pumping keyboard lines. After starting o, , for instance, with a futuristic electronic "backbeat" on the opening track, "Good Times Roll," Robinson comes in strong with a deep acoustic sound that at times recalls Queen's Roger Taylor. (Did Baker, who's famous for his Queen productions, push things in that direction?)

Vital to the group's sound is rhythmic precision, and indeed the ensemble

interplay on *The Cars* has been honed to a one-mind tightness. Robinson anchors the band's very straight time feel; even when he plays bass drum double strokes on the intro to the yerce yet sunny "Bye Bye Love," the e, cct is propulsion, not syncopation. Beyond the minutely orchestrated linear pattern on "I'm In Touch With Your World," his parts are not complicated, but they're distinctive and arranged just so—dig the hi-hat pulls and tom rolls on the brisk "Don't Cha Stop"—and they show once again that simplicity and creativity can go hand in hand. Robinson clearly thought hard about his vocabulary of ylls for each track as well, and he doesn't repeat himself.

The drummer, who gave the group its name and also helped design its album covers and stage sets, retired from music after the Cars broke up in 1988, following the release of *Door to Door*. He made his comeback, true to form, with the 2010 reunion CD *Move Like This*, minus Orr, who died in 2000. ("Ben, your spirit was with us on this one," the band wrote in the liner notes.) But Robinson will perhaps be best remembered for his yrst e, cts with his mates, right out of the gate. No list of stellar debut albums is complete without *The Cars*, thirty-yve minutes of pop perfection.

Michael Parillo





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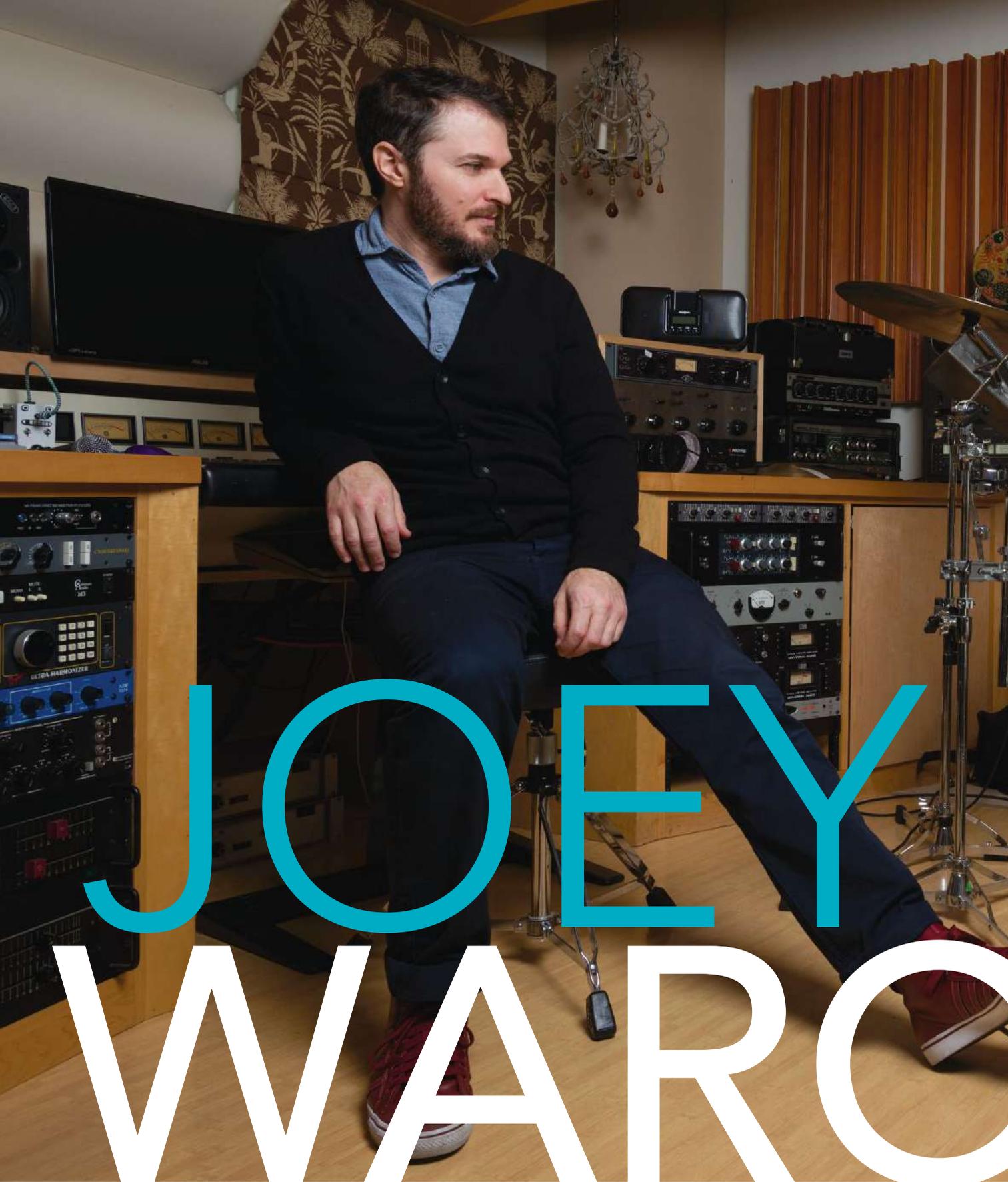
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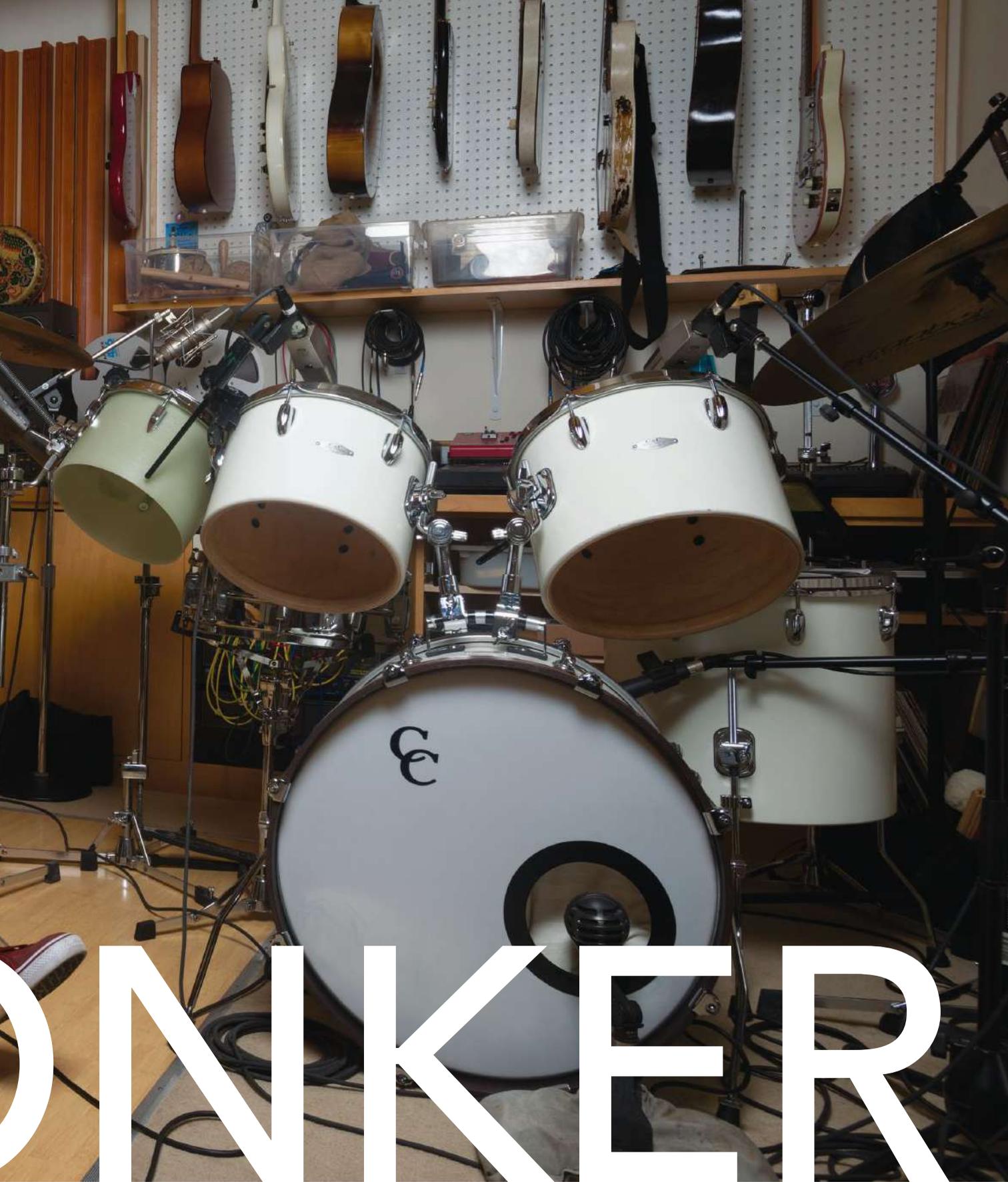
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By creating subtly insinuating grooves that blur the
he's become the secret ingredient in some of the



lines between electronic and acoustic percussion,
gutsiest, most detailed music of modern times.

Story by Michael Dawson • Photos by Alex Solca

There's nothing about the Los Angeles-based drummer/mixer/producer Joey Waronker that screams for attention, musically or otherwise. But check out this ridiculous track record: Tegan and Sara, Dwight Yoakam, Norah Jones, Danny Elfman, Thurston Moore, M83, Pink, Nelly Furtado, Doobie Brothers, Pete Dinklage, Air, Tracy Chapman, Joshua Radin, Gnarls Barkley, Eels, A Fine Frenzy, Emmylou Harris, Rickie Lee Jones, Crowded House, Gavin DeGraw, Five for Fighting, Tracy Bonham, Paul McCartney, the Vines, Natasha Bedingfield, R.E.M., Remy Zero, Smashing Pumpkins, Johnny Cash, Tonic, Poe, Elliott Smith, Rufus Wainwright.... The list goes on and on. And then there's the longtime collaboration with the platinum-selling artist Beck, a constant compatriot

since Waronker began recording B-sides in 1993 and touring in support of *Mellow Gold* in 1994. (Joey's clever beats and percussion also appear—in varying forms, from start-to-finish performances to chopped-up loops—on *Odelay*, *Mutations*, *Midnite Vultures*, *Sea Change*, *Guero*, *The Information*, and *Modern Guilt*.)

If you were to grab any record in Waronker's lengthy discography, you wouldn't necessarily be knocked over the head with obvious "drummer stuff." Yet the rhythm tracks, whether they're made with a standard drumset and percussion or off-the-wall electronics and homemade contraptions, are so perfectly matched to the song that the two meld into one living, breathing listening experience. Waronker somehow manages to make his drumming invisible yet essential at the same time. Although his specific contributions are downright



indescribable, the way they improve a track is often pure magic. And, always, deeper examination reveals ways for us to elevate our own art.

We'd been meaning to catch up with Waronker for a few years now. His last cover story was in May 2001, and it focused primarily on the experience of stepping in for Bill Berry with R.E.M. We also featured two of the left-handed drummer's unique setups in our January 2011 Gearing Up column—one was the organic earthy-toned kit he used on tour with Blue Note recording artist Norah Jones in support of her 2009 album, *The Fall*, and the other was the heavily treated electroacoustic hybrid configuration he created for a tour with Atoms for Peace, an alt-rock supergroup of sorts that includes Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke, producer/engineer Nigel Godrich, Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea, and Brazilian

percussionist Mauro Refosco. Despite Waronker's consistent output of interesting recordings and collaborations, 2013 is a particularly ideal time to sit down with the drummer for his second *MD* cover story. Atoms for Peace's debut album,

Amok, was released on February 25. And Joey's new electronica trio, Ultraísta, which includes Godrich on keys and bass and up-and-coming U.K. singer Laura Bettinson, released a cool drum-centric self-titled debut that's jammed with super-hip Afrobeat-meets-Massive Attack tracks. The group planned a run of East Coast dates, including an appearance on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*.

What we didn't know until shortly before our scheduled meeting in NYC was that Waronker was only days away from becoming a father for the first time. As it turned out, his wife went into labor moments before Ultraísta's first show in Philadelphia. "I think I hit the snare once at soundcheck and the phone rang," Joey recalls. "Then I had to hop on an airplane." Since the tour had to be postponed, a face-to-face interview was clearly out of the question. But being the humble and gracious soul that he is, Waronker allowed us to steal him away from his daily duties as a new father—his most challenging gig yet—so we could chat about his unified approach to tone, touch, and technique and discuss the way his music-first aesthetic relates to his dual roles as a studio artist and a contributing partner in Ultraísta and Atoms for Peace.



MD: How did you get involved with Atoms for Peace?

Joey: I've worked with Nigel for years, and we're really good friends. So it was kind of one of those organic things. Thom wanted to explore reinterpreting his album *The Eraser* live. We tried it, and it worked. Recording followed, which consisted of another batch of material that was more collaborative.

MD: How was the new stuff written?

Joey: We went into the studio and just jammed. Thom also had germs of ideas that we would expand upon. It was that kind of process, being built from the music outward.

MD: Were you playing live drums during the jams? It's hard to tell from what made it to the album. It sounds like a lot of layering of drum loops and electronics.

Joey: The drumset that I created for Atoms for Peace was so bizarre and electronic sounding anyway, but there was a lot of layering of drums

and percussion, played mostly by Mauro. I had developed a unique drumset for the tour, and Mauro had these different percussive sounds, so when we started working on the new material we already had a sound palette.

Some of the jams started with an electronic beat that Thom had programmed. Or later we would add some electronic elements. It became a dense hybrid of stuff.

MD: How are you going to reverse engineer the new music for shows?

Joey: With this album being so sophisticated and layered, I'm hoping to create a kit that fits the new songs. Or I'll just change things up to use some different sounds and then let it be what it's going to be.

I had some electronics last time, but they were more on the organic side of that, like Simmons pads and a Simmons brain. The Simmons brain died at Coachella, so I sampled the sounds and loaded them into my old ddrum brain, which I

ALL-TIME FAVES



Marvin Gaye *What's Going On* (Chet Forest, Marvin Gaye) // **Talking Heads** *Remain in Light* (Chris Frantz) // **Tom Waits** *Rain Dogs* (Michael Blair, Mickey Curry, Stephen Hodges) // **Serge Gainsbourg** *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (Dougie Wright) // **Scott Walker** *Scott 3*, *Scott 4* (uncredited) // **Béla Bartók** *Concerto for Orchestra* // **Can** *Ege Bamyasi* (Jaki Liebezzeit) // **Led Zeppelin** *Led Zeppelin III* (John Bonham) // **Aphex Twin** *Drukqs* // **Kraftwerk** *Ralf und Florian* (Ralf Hütter, Florian Schneider) // **David Bowie** *Lodger*, *Low*, *Scary Monsters* (Dennis Davis) // **De La Soul** *3 Feet High and Rising* // **Public Enemy** *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* // **Charles Mingus** *Mingus Ah Um* (Dannie Richmond) // **Fela Kuti** *Expensive Shit* (Tony Allen) // **Jorge Ben** *África Brasil* (Wilson das Neves, Mamão) // **Os Mutantes** *Os Mutantes* (Dirceu) // **Joy Division** *Unknown Pleasures* (Stephen Morris) // **Siouxsie and the Banshees** *Kaleidoscope* (Budgie) // **Junior Murvin** *Police and Thieves* (uncredited) // **The Congos** *Heart of the Congos* (Sly Dunbar, Mikey "Boo" Richards) // **Love** *Forever Changes* (Michael Stuart) // **Max Roach** *Drums Unlimited* (Max Roach) // **Sly and the Family Stone** *Fresh* (Andy Newmark) // **Miles Davis** *On the Corner* (Jack DeJohnette, Al Foster, Billy Hart, Don Alias) // **Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band** *Clear Spot* (Art Tripp)

feel is still the best thing for triggering samples. Now I have a Roland SPD-SX, which is really handy for loading samples into. But you can only use four trigger inputs with it, so it's kind of limiting.

MD: When the Simmons brain died, were you then running triggers on the acoustic drums into the ddrum module?

Joey: No. I kept the Simmons pads and plugged them into the ddrum. I only used four Simmons sounds, but they worked for the whole set. There was a sustaining bass drum that was tuned to a low note that I used on one song. The other sounds were percussive white noise. Live, it sounded like a drum machine, but I honestly didn't know how we were doing that. [laughs]

MD: But you were intentionally trying to reproduce the programmed sound of *The Eraser*.

Joey: Right. And there was an intention to do things like play the bass drums and snare without any dynamics, but the sound guy took that and ran with it. He made the drums sound as punchy and machine-y as possible. Then, when Mauro added the percussion... He's Brazilian, so it's not an Afro-Cuban sound. He's doing more shaker-type things that sound programmed. When he's playing pandeiro [Brazilian tambourine], it sounds like a drumbeat that's been chopped up and filtered down.

MD: Since you were able to get that electronic-type sound live without using loops, why do you think you ended up layering all the electronics when making *Amok*?

Joey: Even if the drums were meant to be machine-y, there's literally air around the sound because of the microphones. So it actually ends up sounding softer. The direct signal of a sample is punchier, and it has less dynamics. It has a completely different tonal character that's difficult to get out of a live drumset.

The exciting thing about the live drums and percussion is that we're moving around and doing things that are a little bit dynamic and not so uniform. We're doing this heavily layered, repetitious thing that's kind of like dance music, but it's human at the same time—like Afrobeat. When recording, you can keep it moving and then add

8 Ultraísta Beats



Much of the music that appears on Ultraísta's self-titled debut album originated with Joey Waronker jamming on the drumset. The result is a hypnotic, groove-oriented record that's chock full of tasty beats. Here are some highlights.

"BAD INSECT"

This hip Afrobeat-inspired drum break occurs at the end of the album's opening cut. Check out the interplay between the syncopated snare, bouncy kick, and quick hi-hat openings. (4:14)



"GOLD DAYZZ"

This beat sounds as if it was lifted off a dusty James Brown record from the '60s. The ghost notes make the groove really bounce. Keep it light and soulful. (3:06)



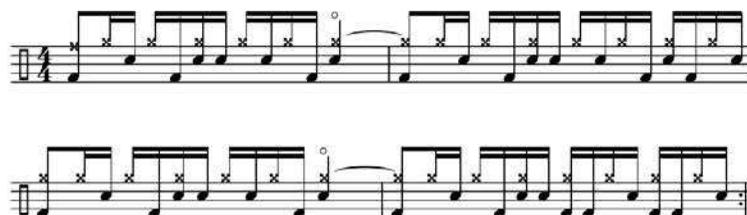
"STRANGE FORMULA"

This track features a tighter and more deliberate two-bar groove, and it's in 3/4. The trick to getting that machinelike feel is keeping the dynamics of each limb as consistent as possible. (0:00)



"OUR SONG"

This is the slinkiest and most syncopated beat on *Ultraísta*. Again, use a light touch and let the kick, snare, and hi-hat glide from bar to bar. (0:00)



"EASIER"

Waronker uses heavily dampened single-headed toms to create a slick melodic motif at the start of this track. (0:00)



Joey Waronker

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8 Ultraísta Beats (continued)

"SMALLTALK"

The driving groove that opens this tune features a sparse quarter-note hi-hat pattern, which leaves plenty of space for the 16th-note drum machine part that cycles underneath. Subtle ghost notes make the track sound extra-funky. (0:00)



"PARTY LINE"

Waronker lays back on the beat for this down-tempo, hypnotic groove. (0:03)



"WASH IT OVER"

This head-bobbing beat is all about the spaces between the notes. Make the bass drum 16ths swing and dance without sacrificing consistency. (0:07)



samples and electronics underneath to tie it all together. To do that live without loops or samples, you just have to gate and compress the kick and snare.

MD: Is that part of the reason why you often use heavily dampened drums? So you can get as close to that tight, punchy electronic sound as possible?

Joey: That's just the tone I like. Even if the drums are miked from far away, I end up dampening them. But usually when I record, things are pretty basic, with microphones that aren't too far away, so you get a lot of tone.

But it depends on the context. I love what I do because I get to switch around so much. With Beck, I'll often have three different drumsets. One will have no bottom heads; another will be a ringy, wide-open '50s or '60s Gretsch that sounds like Max Roach; and then there will be a more typical rock kit.

MD: Has drum tone always been a big focus of yours?

Joey: The feel and the sound are almost on equal levels for me. Led Zeppelin was such a massive influence, and the feel and sound that Bonham was getting

was unique. It's the same thing with old funk records and the '80s stuff that I grew up listening to, like Siouxsie and the Banshees, Joy Division, and Talking Heads. It's always about the grooves and the sounds.

MD: Did you spend time trying to get your drums to sound like the records?

Joey: I did. When I was a kid, I spent all of my time tuning drums and trying to figure out how it was done. And I would stare at pictures of guys' drums in *Modern Drummer* to see what they were putting on the drumheads. [laughs]

MD: Why do you have a cloth hanging over the rim of the snare? Is that to soften the rimshot sound?

Joey: No, I don't really play rimshots on that kit. That's just where it sounds good. I've seen that used on Hal Blaine's kit and in other photos. I'm being a little more extreme, but I remember in an early recording session the engineer came out and taped a piece of towel on the snare that way. I thought, *Okay, I'll keep doing that. That sounds good.*

MD: So what is it about that dry sound that you dig so much?



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JOEY WARONKER

Joey: I just like sounds that are tight and punchy. I like snares to be contained and not have too much sustain. Maybe it's because I'm listening to too many Serge Gainsbourg records. When I'm listening to something and getting inspired by it, I end up wanting to explore that sound.

MD: What about the way you play

The drumset is still an instrument, and there's an art to playing it. So if you tune and play the drums right, you can control the sound through your touch. That's the name of the game for me.

MD: I don't hear a lot of "drummer stuff" in your playing. Is that a result of growing up in the studio [Joey's father is the famed



JOEY'S SINGLE-HEADED SETUP

Drums: C&C maple/poplar/maple

A. 5x14 Ludwig chrome-over-brass Supraphonic snare

B. 10" Blaemire fiberglass concert tom

C. 12" concert tom

D. 13" concert tom

E. 16" concert floor tom

F. 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Istanbul Agop

1. 15" Xist hi-hats

2. 22" Xist crash

3. 24" Joey Waronker signature ride

Heads: Remo Coated CS snare batter, Coated Ambassador tom batters, and Coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

Hardware: DW, including 6000 series retro flush-base cymbal and hi-hat stands and 9000 series bass drum pedal

Percussion: Pete Engelhart Reco Reco

Sticks: Innovative Percussion Joey Waronker signature models, various brushes and mallets

Electronics: Native Instruments Maschine

the drums? You often use a light touch. Is that for tone, or is it just the way you naturally play?

Joey: I'm thinking of the sound and tone. I was never drawn to the hard-hitting thing. Even when I was in a rock band in my early twenties, the sound we ended up going for didn't involve bashing the snare.

MD: What is it that you like about it?

Joey: There's more control of the sound and the feel. I can't think of too many tracks that have a really exciting groove where the drums are being smashed. John Bonham was such a big influence for me, and even though he was probably hitting the shit out of the drums, he played in such a nuanced way. It had a finesse that I was inspired by and could never shake.

producer and record executive Lenny Waronker], or has it evolved over years of recording?

Joey: Some of it is growing up in it. But I was always obsessed with the drums, and I wanted to be *in* Led Zeppelin. Even as I got into different music, I still wanted to be the drummer. But I was one of the kids who *wasn't* into Rush. I realized later that that music is great, and I love Neil Peart. But when I was a kid, I liked the Police and Stewart Copeland, and that was as far as I went on the "muso" tip.

When I started getting into playing with a band, recording was the thing that excited me. It started with experimenting with a four-track recorder and grew from there. I even wanted to stop playing live

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JOEY WARONKER



altogether and just focus on playing, producing, and writing in the studio, because that's more fun for me. Then I realized the importance of performing. The two really feed each other.

But I'm just drawn to the studio, and I love to collect different sounds. I have a room filled with percussion, and it's all set up in a way that it's easy to record. I keep buying and making more instruments. I can't stop myself. [laughs]

MD: What are you making?

Joey: It's usually metal stuff. I love Harry Partch, so I'll make contraptions that are inspired by his instruments. And I'll put things in different kinds of containers to get various shaker sounds. I also got on a kick of buying '60s Japanese drumkits, especially the ones with teardrop lugs that look like old Sonors. I found one that had an olive-green-swirl wrap. It was the ugliest, coolest thing I'd ever seen, and it sounded awesome, so I had to have it.

MD: How do you choose a kit for a particular project?

Joey: That's my favorite part of the whole process. I just sit and listen to the music and experiment with ideas to create a specific sound palette. When I was a kid, I was exposed to a drummer named Steve Hodges. He worked with Tom Waits, but even if he was just playing blues in a club in L.A. he would have a crazy mishmash of sounds with a few pieces of metal or detuned timpani. I thought that was cool.

For the first Atoms for Peace tour, I just listened to *The Eraser* and thought of ways to reinterpret it for a live stage. I used my imagination and picked from the stuff that I had: various gadgets, Pete Engelhart metallic instruments that have springs attached, and other weird things. I did my

best to represent specific sounds that are in the different songs, but I wanted a kit that I could use for everything.

Now I'm into the concert-tom thing. Maybe it's boredom, but I wanted to see what I could get out of that. The sound reminds me of some of my musical references that have that junkyard vibe, like Captain Beefheart. It's a good challenge to try to use a drumset to get that happening. They have to sound like drums, but how do you get them to be a little bit "off"?

MD: Do you bring a bit of that aesthetic when you're called in to do a session for someone else?

Joey: Yeah, totally. Hence, I don't get called to do sessions too much anymore. [laughs] But I like to bring something different. If someone's calling me to record with them, I'll let them lead. I have a great deal of respect for that type of playing, and I enjoy it immensely. But generally when people call me for a session these days, they want me to bring some special sauce to the recording that they haven't thought of.

MD: What would be your top piece of advice for a drummer going into the studio as a producer for the first time?

Joey: Always rely on your strengths. Even though you've spent years honing a craft as a drummer, the tendency is to put all your energy into working on the big picture versus getting a great rhythm track, which is what you're really good at. Don't neglect your expertise. And don't be intimidated by the process. Don't think that just because you're coming into something that's slightly unknown, there's really a right way of doing things. There's going to be a learning curve, but just go with it. Reinvent the wheel if you need to, and don't worry about it.

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JOEY WARONKER

MD: Should they be studying records or just trying to figure it out on their own?

Joey: It's good to listen, and I love picking apart records. So, yeah, this is your opportunity to study. But I say reinvent it. Don't worry too much about how the Beatles got their sounds. Who cares? They got them by experimenting.

MD: What about the drummer who's never recorded before? What would be the biggest advice for that person?

Joey: It's really a game of experience. The worst thing is the lack of confidence you have when you go into that

situation for the first time. You just have to make it as comfortable for yourself as you can. If something doesn't sound right in your headphones, try to fix it. If engineers or producers are telling you to do things that you know are making you stiffen up or shut down creatively, try to figure out a way to step back and let them know that you have to do it a certain way in order to make it as good as it can be.

MD: Self-doubt can be really damaging.

Joey: I think so. It took me at least ten years before I could go into a recording

session and not be nervous. And if producers start getting tweaky, it's usually because of their own insecurity. Now I'm hyper-aware of it. But that was really hard to get past when I didn't really know what I was doing.

MD: Let's shift over to Ultraísta. How did that project come about, and what was the intention behind it?

Joey: Nigel and I were hanging out all the time and working on different things, and we got into this conversation where we were telling each other to start a project. By the end of that, we planned to do something together. We went into the studio and just started throwing ideas around. It really started as rhythm tracks. Then we got to the point where we decided we should try to make these ideas into songs with a vocalist to give it more of a pop sensibility. We thought it would be a challenging left turn for us to try to do more normal song structures.

When we got in cahoots with Laura, we tried different things with the tracks we already had. Once we got through ten, we had the record. It was very deconstructive. We had these rhythm tracks that we would chop up, rework, and then add stuff on top of. It took a really long time, but finally a style was born, and we just followed it.

MD: What were those original sessions like?

Joey: I was playing mostly drums and Nigel was recording. We decided to stick with our specialties. Nigel and I knew that we worked really well with him recording me, so we figured here was an opportunity to do it without being directed by another artist. It was really creative, and we had about fifteen ideas together over the course of three days. Then we went back and added stuff. We didn't go through the typical songwriting process. We were going for the sensibility that you don't have to be James Taylor to make a great song.

Also, Nigel and I both grew up listening to a lot of Afrobeat, like Fela Kuti, as well as Adrian Sherwood, African Head Charge, and dub reggae, so we were excited to explore a more groove-oriented approach. We both love the idea of having musicians hit on one idea and do it over and over again, which seems like it should be irritating but actually

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JOEY WARONKER

ends up being really hypnotic.

MD: There's a fine line between something that's repetitive and annoying and something that puts you in a trance. You guys really hit that sweet spot.

Joey: Thanks! It's so hard to do that. You can't just take something and loop it. Things have to happen. That's the trick.

MD: How much of the drum tracks were chopped up versus played continuously?

Joey: They're usually pretty long chunks. The idea was to try to leave things as they were, so maybe we would grab a

minute-long thing that was working the best and then layer everything else on top.

MD: How are you playing this stuff live? Are you playing to tracks, or are you manually firing the sounds?

Joey: There's always at least one looped rhythmic element that we play along to. Those are triggered by me with an SPD-SX, and the entire show is run from Ableton Live in one computer. Nigel and Laura are playing virtual instruments with keyboards and controllers. The idea was to just show up with a computer

and an audio interface and be able to go stereo-out of the interface into the PA. The vocals are going through Live, so Laura can use effects and loop them.

We wanted to be able to loop ourselves and trigger sounds on the fly and have it all synced, and we didn't want to use tracks. If you're playing to a track, there's no way to extend sections. It just is what it is. We wanted to leave it open ended and see if we could take it to another place by actually playing all of the parts. With Live, as long as that one rhythmic element is looping, everything is usually fine.

MD: Does being responsible for triggering samples and loops affect the way you play the drums?

Joey: I can't really dig in and play as much as I'd like to, but it's actually better than I thought it would be. As we keep going it'll get easier, and I'll have triggers around the kit so that I'm not so locked into the SPD-SX pad.

MD: Did you design this kit especially for this band, or is it the kit you've been using on everything lately?

Joey: I've been obsessing on the concept of this concert-tom kit. It's just the sound that I'm into right now. I'm using it with Beck, and parts of it will probably be the basis for the next Atoms for Peace setup. And I'll use it with anyone else who will let me get away with it.

MD: What is it that you like about the sound of single-headed toms?

Joey: For some reason they're speaking more in the track. They're more in your face. I also have a Pearl fiberglass concert-tom kit, and that's what's on the Beck song "Chemtrails," off *Modern Guilt*. I bought that kit as a joke because it looked ridiculous. The toms are huge, but they were so punchy. They sounded as loud as the vocals in the track.

MD: How do you have the concert toms tuned?

Joey: I tune them kind of low to get a round tone. They sound like the samples in the Linn drum machine; that's probably what they used in the first place.

MD: Are there plans to play more shows with Ultraísta, since you had to cancel the first run?

Joey: Yeah, we're going to make those up. We just don't know when yet. Schedules are really crazy for a while, but we'll see.

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"DONE. THIS IS EASY."



Jean Paul Gaster
Clutch

GEARING UP

DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview and photos by Miguel Monroy

DRUMS: DW Collector's series maple with SSC shells in ruby glass finish with black nickel hardware

A. 5x14 VLT maple snare

B. 10x12 tom

C. 16x16" oor tom

D. 18x18" oor tom

E. 18x24 bass drum

Not pictured: 5½x14 aluminum and 5x14 VLT black sparkle backup snares

"I made the shift to DW drums a year and a half ago, and these are fantastic; they just sing," Redmond says. "They inspire me, and not one piece of gear—from the hardware to the drums—has broken.

"My setup is a classic combination that many of my heroes used. Having the second oor tom allows me to do some massive ° at °ams and double-stops. All of my ylls are Motown- and classic-rock-inspired, so three large toms is all I usually need."

CYMBALS: Sabian

1. 16" AA Rock hi-hats (prototypes)

2. 20" AA Holy China

3. 20" AAX X-Plosion crash

4. 20" HHX Evolution ride

5. 15" AAX Rock hi-hats

"My favorite ride cymbal of all time is the HHX Evolution. It has an amazing bell. It has an amazing ping. You can shoulder crash on it, and you can wash it out.

"I also love larger hi-hats. They're fuller, richer, and more 'chocolaty.' And they better

complement the gigantic rimshot backbeats that I like to serve up.

"The second hi-hat gives me another sonic option. I may use them on a verse and then use the main hats wide open and sloshy on a chorus—or vice versa. It also looks great to play the secondary hats, because I can raise my left arm higher over my head than when I use the main hats. It's all about that over-the-top energy."

HARDWARE: DW 9000 series

HEADS: Remo Emperor X snare batter and Ambassador bottom, Smooth White Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter (with double kick Falam Slam pad) and Coated Emperor front head with custom artwork by Woodshed Percussion

"I have to have a Falam Slam, because you definitely don't want to go through a kick drum head in front of 20,000 people. The Remo Emperor X is perfect for hard hitters, and it has a lot of midrange thump and high-end crack. A little piece of ga er's tape controls any ring, and I can get three shows out of each head."

PERCUSSION: Gon Bops shaker and Red Rock cowbell

ACCESSORIES: Danmar red wooden beaters and zebra-stripe stick holders,

Cympad cymbal felts mounted under each cymbal, Drumplates RoadBlocks (secured to the carpet with hook-and-loop fastener and used to lock in cymbal and drum positions), Great Leather tom protector and stick bag, Blowit fans, Gator and Alcorn cases, Hans-enfütz practice

pedals and RealFeel practice pads for warming up backstage, RoboKey

"I love the impact that the wood beaters give me. And you can never miss a backbeat, so that's why I'm °anked by two stick holders. It's a great sense of security knowing that I can grab another pair of sticks from either side of the kit."

STICKS: Pro-Mark 5B hickory wood tip with Pro-Mark Stick Rapp tape

MICROPHONES: Audio-Technica AE2500 on bass drum, AE3000 on snare (top and bottom), ATM450 on hi-hats, ATM350 on toms, ATM450 on ride, AT4050 overheads (left and right), and AT4047/SV rear overhead

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ELECTRONICS: ButtKicker transducer on throne bottom, ddrum Acoustic Pro trigger on bass drum and DRT triggers on toms (used to open and close gates; no triggered sounds are used for the main mix), JH Audio JH16 Pro in-ear monitors



"We use in-ear monitors instead of wedges, so the ButtKickers allow me to feel the low end in my body. Rock, funk, pop, and country drumming are all about the low end and grounding things with the kick drum. Being able to feel that inspires me and helps center my groove and pocket."

TECHNICIANS: drum tech John Hull and back-line techs Edward Turner and Brian Love





Courtesy of Stax/Fantasy

AL JACKSON JR.: Soul Man

It's almost *unbearable*. Otis Redding's immortal recording of "Try a Little Tenderness" sustains a nearly paralyzing groove tension, helping make it perhaps the quintessential record by the soul legend and a perennial entry on "greatest songs of all time" lists. The track also perfectly encapsulates Al Jackson Jr.'s profound gifts of musical intuition and masterly restraint, anchored by an astonishingly deep time feel that can be felt on hundreds of classic tracks. In a 1977 interview with Valerie Wilmer for the U.K. magazine *Black Music*, guitarist session mate Steve Cropper said Jackson "could always pocket it."

But back to "Try a Little Tenderness." After Redding soulfully pleads the first ballad verse, Jackson enters with an unexpected double-time rimclick on all fours, buoyed with subtle, almost ghosted hi-hat 8ths. The feel is perfection. The lean, locked part stays there...and stays there...and stays there. The suspense sizzles like a slow fuse on a stick of dynamite.

The rhythm section gradually peppers in its parts, dancing off Jackson's tight, forward-moving yet relaxed time-sunk groove. Redding climbs the pulpit until he can withhold no longer and—*boom!*—Jackson cracks his first minimal snare fill into a cathartic downbeat. It's explosive, transporting.

And it doesn't stop there. Jackson continues with all fours on the snare and a strategically funky foot. There's nary a fill while the cut escalates ever higher into the stratosphere through the last faded seconds of the outro.

Yet it wasn't supposed to happen that way. At first the band assumed a mistake had occurred, because Jackson was slated to enter much later than he had. Intuition, though, inspired the drummer to jump on the groove, and it was the perfect, magic call.

As the house drummer for Stax Records and its subsidiary, Volt, Al Jackson Jr. played a central role in defining the sound and feel of '60s and '70s soul and R&B. In addition to being a star session player, he was active in producing and songwriting.

Jackson was born on November 27, 1935, and grew up surrounded by jazz. His bassist father led a popular big band in Memphis, and starting at age five Al Jr. often sat in with the group as a novelty. By age fourteen he took over the seat, and later he joined trumpeter Willie Mitchell's band, which circulated through Memphis's wee-hour clubs.

But it was at his eventual "full-time job" at Stax Records where Jackson would make history. His initial Stax session was in 1962, for Carla Thomas's single "Cause I Love

You." When the tracking was complete, label cofounder Jim Stewart proclaimed that he'd found the ultimate Stax drummer. From that point on, especially between the peak years of 1962 to 1972, Jackson played on practically every Stax hit. The legendary house band, which also included bassist Lewie Steinberg (and later Donald "Duck" Dunn), Cropper, and organist Booker T. Jones, defined "the Memphis Sound," a stripped-down, gritty counterpart to the style that Motown, Stax's larger competitor, was known for.

At Stax, Jackson was dubbed the Human Metronome.

"You could go out and have lunch," Steve Cropper told Black Music magazine in 1977, "and come back and say, 'Okay, count it in, Al,' and it would be the exact same tempo as when you left an hour ago. I've never worked with anyone else that was that dead on time."

The list of watershed recordings fueled by Jackson is staggering and includes Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight Hour"; Eddie Floyd's "Knock on Wood" (the four "knocks" were Jackson's idea); bluesman Albert King's "Crosscut Saw" and "Born Under a Bad Sign"; Sam and Dave's "Soul Man," "Hold On, I'm Comin'"; "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby," and "I Thank You"; and a catalog of Otis Redding charters, including "I Can't Turn You Loose," "Respect," "Mr. Pitiful," "I've Been Loving You Too Long (to Stop Now)," and "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay."

Jackson and his mates took advantage of open studio slots during a rigorous road schedule to cut their own instrumental numbers. On the first shot, they hit the R&B charts' number-one slot with "Green Onions," a torrid blues shuffle so named because they needed a "stinky" title. Jackson's key approach was to lean a simple, hard, straight-edged feel against the other players' "swingier" parts. With that hit, Booker T. & the MGs were born.

The group continued rolling out its own discs, resulting in twenty-three singles and eleven albums between 1962 and 1971.

Further groove-heaven signature hits included "Hip Hug-Her," "Hang 'Em High," and the infectious "Time Is Tight."

During sessions, Jackson was amusingly unparticular regarding equipment. Preparing his kit meant tossing a fat wallet on the snare. He rarely fussed over tuning and changed heads on his well-worn Rogers drumset (with a Ludwig snare) only if they split. Yet he undeniably delivered a sound.

The busy drummer also managed to moonlight at neighboring label Hi Records, lending his groove to many of Al Green's hits. He even co-penned some of Green's biggest chart-toppers, including "I'm Still in Love With You," "You Ought to Be With Me," and the radio staple "Let's Stay Together." Jackson's penchant for a behind-the-beat feel was even more prominent on the Green tracks. He laid down a

relaxed, sexy lope with a detuned-snare backbeat that was beefed up by Howard Grimes' open conga tones, creating a fat sound that became a highly imitated Green trademark.

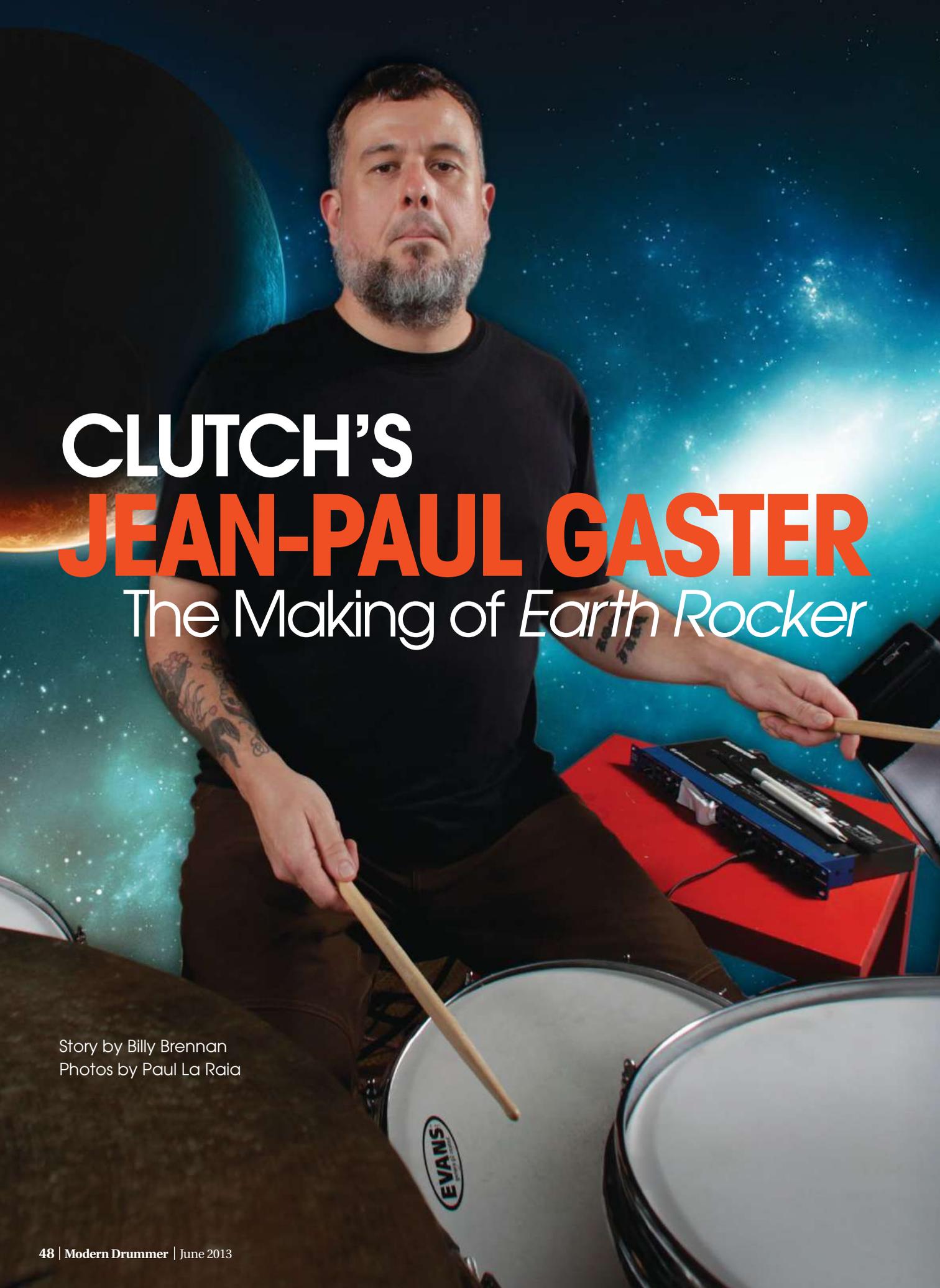
By the end of 1971, the MGs had parted ways, while Donald Dunn and Jackson stayed on the Stax staff for continued session work. Through the early '70s, Jackson also recorded outside the label with stars such as Eric Clapton, Bill Withers, Donny Hathaway, and Rod Stewart.

In 1975, the MGs gathered for a meeting and heartily agreed to a triumphant reunion. Nine days later, on October 1, Jackson walked into his Memphis home to discover intruders and was brutally shot dead. He was thirty-nine years old. In the same year, Stax collapsed. Yet Jackson left an immeasurable imprint on a genre and on the future of groove-oriented music.

At the top of Stax master tapes, Jackson is routinely heard in an exchange that became a house ritual. The engineer hollers, "Hey, Al! How are we gonna cut this?" To which he replies, "We're gonna cut the shit out of it!" And they did.

Jeff Potter





CLUTCH'S **JEAN-PAUL GASTER** The Making of *Earth Rocker*

Story by Billy Brennan
Photos by Paul La Raia

Producer/engineer Machine describes Clutch as *the* blue-collar rock band. It's an appropriate title. The group's work ethic and curiosity make Clutch absolutely revered by its fans. Likewise, the band's drummer is a favorite among those who prize his old-soul approach to modern heavy rock. In this exclusive MD feature, we go deep into the details of one of the most fruitful working relationships in contemporary music.

After initially coming together on the 2001 album *Pure Rock Fury* and again for the 2004 fan favorite *Blast Tyrant*, Clutch and producer Machine have joined forces once again on the Maryland-based band's tenth studio album, *Earth Rocker*. Strengthened by this renewed partnership and armed with the fastest and heaviest Clutch music to date, Jean-Paul Gaster and crew are pulling no punches this time out.

Machine is best known for his methodical, hands-on contributions to metal albums like *Ashes of the Wake* by Lamb of God and *Gutter Phenomenon* by Every Time I Die, so he might not seem like the obvious choice to man Clutch's boards. But in addition to their uniquely groove-fueled riff-rock style, the members of Clutch are well known for their willingness to explore and experiment with musical genres as well as with methods of working. And to that end, Machine brilliantly facilitates the band's balance of creativity and structure.

MD had the chance to spend a day with both drummer and producer at the latter's Machine Shop studio in Belleville, New Jersey, while the pair were in the midst of tracking drums for *Earth Rocker*. Between exploring the studio space, grabbing lunch at a nearby Stewart's, and watching Gaster lay down a propulsive groove for the track "Mr. Freedom," we took advantage of a rare opportunity to witness two giants of music do what they do best, and to grill them about their methods in real time.

MD: Not to put you on the spot with JP here, but how has it been working with him again?

Machine: I cried before work this morning. [laughs] I'm barely holding it together even as we speak. No, it's awesome working with Clutch. They listen to each other—and they invite me in, which is great. They're not afraid to try this, try that, analyze it for a minute...it's like bop.

Another thing: Their cell phones aren't

ringing all the time, and they're not tweeting, Facebooking, this-ing, that-ing. The TV's not on. They go to work, and afterwards, boom, office closed—let's have a beer.

MD: What's the process in the studio?

Machine: First we bring the computer in and mike up the band horribly. We make the songs work in the room, and if it impresses us there, it only gets better. Even Neil [Fallon, vocals/guitar] is in on it at the beginning—and dude, that's rare. The band wants to know either Neil's lyrics or the intent behind them. That determines everything.

MD: JP, do you think that mentality is part of the reason you've been successful?

JP: There's a tremendous amount of respect among the four of us, and that goes back to when we first started touring. We got in a van when we were nineteen years old and drove across the country. Those formative years really made the blueprint for who we are now. It's just a bigger version of what we were doing twenty-two years ago.

And then we have someone like Machine come in, who's able to become part of the creative force that makes a record. Not a lot of people could do that. We work with all kinds of producers and engineers—guys who are strictly, you know, tech dudes. And I think Machine is by far the most hands-on when it comes to the creative side of it. And in a good way. He asks questions and suggests things that really put a different perspective on whatever it is we're trying to accomplish. That's one of my favorite things about doing what we're doing.

MD: You've been playing some of these songs on the road for a long time—shaping them live and then getting into preproduction.

JP: Some of the early ones, like "Space Cadet," have been around for over a year. We thought about this record more than the other records we've done. I think back to 2009 and the first record we put out on [Clutch's own label] *Weathermaker*, *Strange Cousins From the West*, and that came together relatively quickly. A lot of it had to do with the fact that we were just excited that we could record an album and put it out on our own.

From the very beginning of the band, the business side was always tough. Dealing with the labels, whether they were majors or indies or mid-level, it was always a source of frustration. So when the concept that we could put out our own records became a reality, it completely flipped the script for us. On this record we knew we could do this. We had real distribution and we could put out the records in a real way. And so we said to ourselves, Let's

crank this up. Let's kick it up a notch.

MD: Was it a matter of being very thorough and thinking ahead a lot, or do you ever have issues in coming up with new material that you're satisfied with?

JP: We always have issues coming up with material that we're satisfied with. [laughs] We probably throw away ninety-nine riffs for every one that makes it into preproduction—and even then, if you're one of those songs, the odds are still against you. Because we thought so long and hard about this album, there was a lot of stuff that we were like, "Nope, we've done that before, we've said that before, that's not interesting to us right now."

I will say that touring with Motörhead and Thin Lizzy in the last year definitely made an impact on this record. We just saw things a little bit differently. Watching Lemmy [Kilmister, Motörhead leader] being Lemmy every night for six weeks is an experience that *everybody* should be a part of. Just being around that guy and watching what he does—even aside from a musical level, that idea of being a blue-collar band. That guy is the most blue-collar rock 'n' roller there is. And so being around him and seeing that band every night was inspiring for us. All those experiences we've had in the last couple years have made this record what it is.

MD: Was there any music you had been listening to that affected your approach



“Touring with Motörhead and Thin Lizzy in the last year definitely made an impact on this record. Watching Lemmy being Lemmy every night for six weeks is an experience that *everybody* should be a part of.”

this time out?

JP: Brian Downey, the drummer for Thin Lizzy. Oh my goodness, that was one of the most inspiring things. That guy owns the shuffle. *Owens* it. The track that we just cut, just when you got here to the studio, I was thinking about Brian Downey the entire time. He's got such a beautiful, effortless way of putting out a tremendous amount of energy. And he just barely breaks a sweat. That was really inspiring to me.

MD: The shuffle is conceptually pretty simple, but it's so difficult to perfect.

JP: I'm *still* working on it. I used to play with this blues guitarist back home. One thing that was invaluable to me was, we would be playing a shuffle and he'd come over and say, [in a heavy mock drawl] "Quiet down, boy, quiet down." And then he'd get on a microphone and say, "I want it so quiet, you could hear a rat piss on cotton." [laughs]

So I'd be playing what I thought was just the very softest, quietest shuffle you could imagine—and that was not quiet enough. "Quiet down, boy." So you'd have to play *really* quiet. But doing that for an hour each night? That was a learning experience and really brought the concept of the shuffle together for me.

MD: Tell us about the set you're using.

JP: The kick drum is a 14x26 1957 Slingerland that I found on eBay and then recut the edges and rewrapped. It sounds fantastic. You can't beat old wood. The toms are '61s—9x13 and 16x16—and the interesting thing is that these three shells are mahogany/poplar. So they have a slightly darker tone. Sometimes I like to think that these toms would sort of be like a Gibson



Machine



JP reveals the homemade miking system that producer Machine and the band devised to get *Earth Rocker's* bass drum sound.

SG [guitar], where maple shells might be more like a Les Paul. I think maple shells tend to be a little boomier, with a little more top end. And these tend to have just a little more midrange and low end. And they're really fun to play. **MD:** Describe the snares you used on the album [pictured below], all of which are Slingerlands.

JP: [From left starting in the back row] we have an '80s-era 5½x14. It has a brass shell without the chrome on it, so it sounds a little more polished. It's got a little bit more of a "produced" kind of sound; there are not as many nasty



overtones in that. It sits in a mix really well, depending on the song.

The next one is a late-'70s 5x14 Slingerland chrome over brass. This one's got a little more bite to it.

Next to that is the most recent snare I've gotten, another chrome-over-brass Slingerland, but it's a 6½x14. This one saw some action on the record. I'm definitely into ten-lug snare drums. They feel different from eight-lug snare drums. I think they cut a little more.

To the right of that is a snare that I found in 1993, when we were out with

Sepultura on the *Chaos A.D.* tour. We were in Oklahoma City, and there was a pawnshop across the street from the gig. This was my first sort of vintage drum that I came across. I bought it for \$40, and it's been on nearly every Clutch record since then. It's a really reliable snare drum, a lot of fun to play. It's not a particularly expensive drum, and it's got an aluminum shell, so it doesn't have a tremendous amount of low end; it's a little bit more mid-sounding. But it has a lot of crack and cuts through in a good way.

And this guy here in front is a 1963 Slingerland. It has the same style of shell as the toms and bass drum. It's another that I got on eBay. I need to stay away from eBay, because if I go on there I will *definitely* buy something. But this one's cool. On the inside it says "Service Club #1." I'm not totally sure, but I'm pretty certain this means the drum would have been part of a house kit in a military officers' club—a service club. It sounds great, and it's very different from the others, really meaty and deep sounding. It's fun to play and blends well with the other drums because of the mahogany/poplar shell. It's got that same sort of fat warmth to it.

The interesting thing is that we sampled each one of these snares,

and when it came time to pick the one we liked for each track, we'd run the song [with each snare sample in the mix]. It was interesting to be able to scroll through all five snares and find the one that sat best in that song.

Machine: Yeah, within the perspective of the track. That's another thing—you have to put things in the world they're gonna live in.

JP: Sometimes you put up a different snare drum and say, "Oh yeah, that's definitely the one." But you really need to be able to compare all the different sounds before you can tell which sounds best. This gives you a much better idea without having to [record a different take with each drum].

Machine: That idea came about when your wife was making fun of you for not being able to choose drums. And I was like, "Oh, it's gonna be like *that?* I know—I'll sample them and swap them in the track instantly!"

MD: We've talked in the past about looking back at choices and wishing you had done something differently. Do you think this approach will prevent that sort of thing?

JP: Yes, for sure. This really puts everything into perspective, and at the end of the day I feel a lot more confident. And Machine's got a great ear and a good understanding of what each drum will do within the song.

MD: Is it a coincidence that you decided to go with all vintage Slingerlands for this album?

JP: I have mostly vintage Slingerland drums. I have a special place in my

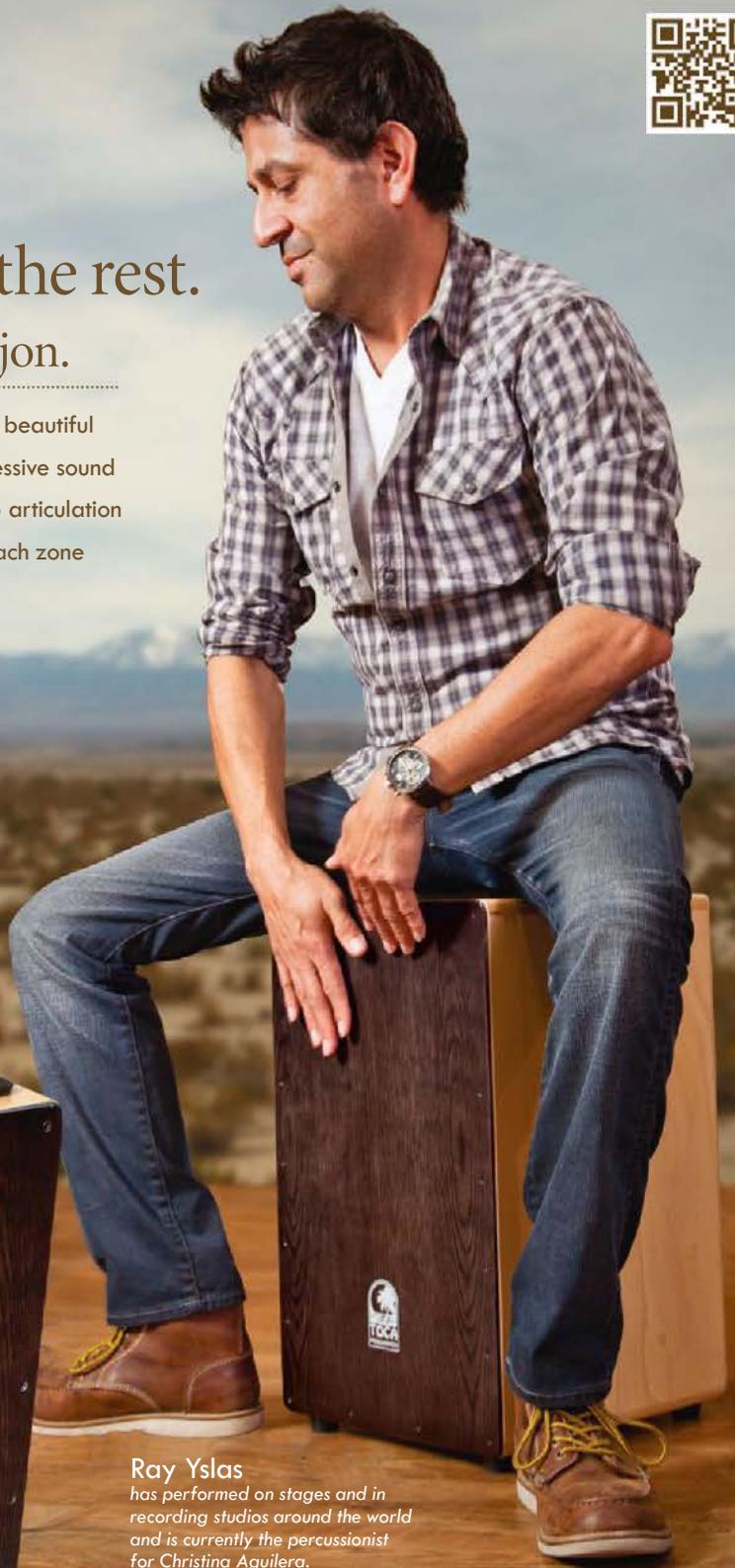


Last October, during the CMJ convention in New York City, Clutch played a secret studio show for industry pals and CMJ attendees at the Machine Shop studio in Belleville, New Jersey, where Gaster's interview was also conducted. The lucky crowd got to hear the band perform songs from the new album at the very studio in which it was recorded—even better, they got to participate in the recording itself. In addition to playing *Earth Rocker*, the group performed the go-go-style breakdown that's been a longtime feature of its live show, complete with an oral history of the beat.



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Ray Yslas
has performed on stages and in recording studios around the world and is currently the percussionist for Christina Aguilera.

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heart for old drums, these Slingerlands in particular. And on the last record I sort of made it a point to play all old snare drums. That was a lot of fun and makes for a unique-sounding record. Most people don't use old drums. Some old drums are sort of crotchety; they have their idiosyncrasies, and you have to learn each one. But to me they have a lot more character and are more fun to play than a new drum right out of the box.

MD: The idea of old drums having a history to them adds an intangible factor as well.

JP: You just can't beat it—to think about how that wood has been sitting around for so long and how people have been playing those drums [for so long]. Those molecules are getting moved around and everybody's talking to each other, and after all these years everything just sort of lines up.

Machine: That's a very real thing with instruments. Look at all the famous Stradivariuses—you know, million-dollar violins. That's the same theory. That guy was the best craftsman, and that's the notorious thing, but then [violin experts] say the age factors in as well. Because they've aged that way, that makes them sound unbelievable.

MD: Has your Meinl cymbal selection stayed the same?

JP: For the most part, yeah. That 23" heavy ride cymbal in particular; we tried to use others, but that one just seems to get along with this room and these songs.

My Sand Hats have a kind of trashy tone. We put up some 14" Byzance Mediums, and they sounded good too, but they have kind of more of a hi-fi sound. These guys really cut.

I've also been using an 18" Byzance Sand crash and a 19" Byzance Medium crash. Those are actually a little lighter than what I've toured with and normally play. But I don't really think about size; I just go with my ear. We tried to make it a point to have that be the guide, rather than what it looks like.

MD: Let's get into more detail about the recording process for *Earth Rocker*.

Machine: I was thinking, *If I got to do another Clutch record, what would I do to top everything from before?* And obviously there could be no drum replacement. No way on a Clutch record. But [we could] try to put the kick in its own room, in a way.

So we used one of those tubes that they pour concrete into [to create columns for construction]. This one measured thirty inches by twelve feet, and we cut it to five feet long and covered the outside with high-density vinyl, which is super-heavy and sound-rejecting. We also lined the inside with Auralex. Then we needed to somehow mount mics in the middle. Neil Fallon said, "Why don't you just suspend a pole inside and find a way to mount mics to that?" So we found hardware to mount mics to poles, and by also using three spokes and some ties, we could place the mics anywhere within the tube.

MD: What kinds of mics do you have in there?

Machine: We have a Beyerdynamic M88 for close miking, and outside is a Shure Beta 52. We put aside a whole day just to get sounds, and we did a series of tests, moving mics and changing mics, and we filmed all that, which is something I've never done before. We put that into iMovie, and, to go even nerdier, we could edit so that we could quickly compare, listening to things like the phase reaction of the two mics together.

MD: Phase differentials take some time and experimentation to figure out.

Machine: It takes a long time to digest the physics of it and really understand the benefits. Knowing all about phase and how the mics talk to one another—that's what separates the amateurs from the pros. With a lot of modern recordings it almost doesn't matter. All the drums are sound replaced or super-gated, and all of this stuff goes out the window. But with great traditional recording, it's the opposite. There's interplay between all the mics. The snare sound isn't just from the snare mic, it's from the overhead mics, the cymbal mics.... It's understanding the science of it all that makes a great recording.

Another thing is that miking too close doesn't necessarily represent the sound of a drum. If I stood an inch from your ear and said, "Hey, how're you doing?" that's not necessarily how my voice would sound if I was standing in front of you. In front of you my voice would have a presence. So miking too close to the drum for that isolation thing—that might be good for one style of music, but not for Clutch. It's all about making the drums sound like drums.

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JP GASTER

MD: What other drum recording methods are you using?

Machine: If you're going to pick one drum to acclimate the room to, you go to the top snare. The kick is in its own space, so we had that covered. But for the snare we used a Shure SM57 on top and an SM7 on the bottom. Then on the rack we used a Sennheiser 421. And on the floor an AKG D112 kick mic, which I like better than a 421 for that use.

We used AKG 451s for cymbal mics, which is typical. But check it out, this is the bomb—just for the ride, just for this record, we used a Beyer M160, which is a ribbon mic. This is one of the main John Bonham ribbon mics. That was crucial, because the ride is such an important voice for JP and Clutch. It needs the presence that you can get from a ribbon mic. Ribbon mics are slow and can't produce super-sharp "ouch" transients. So they come in sounding dark and you think, *Oh, that's not good*. But when you EQ them, there's that awesome vintage sound. Then I have an AKG 480 on the hats.

We also have a good old SM58 in there. It has a bit of a breakbeat sound; it's mono and really gets the drums and rejects the cymbals. If you listen to it by itself, it's really cool sounding. It's a cool little element to mess with in the mix; you can crud it up and blend it in.

And, of course, the room mics: all mono—also very cool, very Clutch, very vintage. We have an AKG 414, which is placed halfway between the top of the snare and the ceiling. Then there's another 414, mono, farther back in the room.

You should've seen us do our video test—JP playing dope beats and us running around the room with mics.

MD: All of this tech stuff can be intimidating to drummers wanting to get into recording, especially those who don't have the means to play around with many options.

Machine: I never went to school; I was always just doing it—making mistakes, experimenting. And all my things are based on common sense and using my ears, a very musical approach to how it all happens.

JP: You were also a musician first, and I think that leads to a unique perspective. A lot of guys just get into the mechanics of it, and that's all they see.

MD: There's the stereotype of a producer trying to be the "fifth" member of a band and sort of forcing it, but that's obviously not the case here.

Machine: There are a lot of producers who wouldn't be a match for Clutch. You could say this about a lot of bands, but you have to get this band. And the fans know it; they sniff it out. Even the last record I did with them, *Blast Tyrant*, I think it ran that edge. Fans liked it, but there were still some people who felt it was getting close to sounding too produced.

But some of the concepts we used on *Blast Tyrant* we carried through on this album, like using extreme panning. The boards back in the day didn't have pan knobs; they only had three-position switches. It was left and right, and in the middle it said "both," which made mono. So it's cool to have more modern and bigger sounds, but that feel—that old-school feel with the panning—is definitely carrying through.

JP: Going back earlier, we did a couple tracks with Machine on *Pure Rock Fury*. The concept of recording [each instrument] individually was foreign to us then. But I think it's important to try different approaches.

I've been lucky to record a lot this year. I made a record with my buddy Mike Westcott, who's an excellent blues guitarist from back home. We recorded that live, straight to tape, and it was a lot of fun. I also did a recording with Five Horse Johnson—same method. Then in Sweden I did a King Hobo record, and that was *really* live, like, "How does this song go? Okay, press record." Then being able to do something like this, where it's very regimented, focused, and detail oriented, it's a change of pace. But for me that's a really healthy thing. It makes for a different kind of recording and a different experience. And the more experiences you have, the better you're going to be.

I'm not saying no to anything now. I'll go and record anything, at any time, in any way, with anybody. Whereas maybe ten or fifteen years ago I may have been very skeptical if a producer said something like, "You have to record to a click." That would've been a really scary proposition to me. These days I eat it up. It's just another way to make a record, and you have to be flexible.

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Guitar Center DRUM OFF 2012 THE WORLD'S PREMIER DRUM COMPETITION

The world's premier drum competition, Guitar Center's Drum-Off, culminated with a grand finale event featuring the top five undiscovered drummers in the country and performances by the drumming elite. Juan Carlos Mendoza of Perth Amboy, N.J., took the crown, closing out the battle that started with over 4,000 drummers.

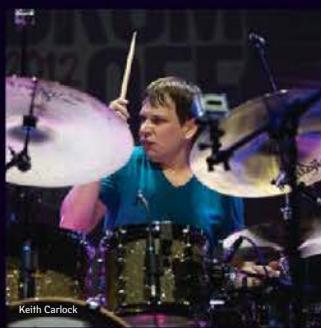
The star-studded lineup of competition judges included many top touring and session drummers: Tony Royster Jr., Nisan Stewart, Dave Elitch, Brooks Wackerman, Adrian Young, Josh Freese, Kenny Aronoff, Peter Erskine, Ray Luzier, Glen Sobel, and Jamal Moore.

Hosted by Stephen Perkins, the show featured special performances by Grammy-nominated drummer Darren King of Mute Math, godfather of gospel and R&B drumming Gerald Heyward, in-demand session drummer Keith Carlock, world-class groove master John Blackwell with funk icon Zigaboo Modeliste, and the legendary Steve Gadd with world-renowned percussionist Pedrito Martinez.

Gadd was honored for his incredible career and contribution to the music world with an induction into Guitar Center's Rock Walk. For more info on GC Drum-Off visit guitarcenter.com/drum-off.



Josh Freese, Brooks Wackerman, John Tempesta & Adrian Young



Keith Carlock



Pedrito Martinez, Steve Gadd & Travis Barker



Zigaboo Modeliste & Blackwell Blackwell



Gerald Heyward



Drum Off Finalists



Darren King of Mute Math





DRUM OFF

2012

THE WORLD'S PREMIER DRUM COMPETITION

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DRUM-OFF CHAMPION

Juan Carlos
Mendoza

FUNK DRUMMING TRAINING CAMP

Part 2: More Paradiddles and Musical Bass Drum Patterns by Mike Adamo

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X	
S.D.	●	○
B.D.	■	□

Ghost note

In part one of this series (May 2013 *MD*), we talked about the importance of developing a tight, solid, feel-good groove. Things you can work on to tighten up your playing include

gaining an intimate knowledge of the feel of every 16th-note subdivision, improving your coordination, having a strong internal clock, using dynamics, and practicing concepts that take you outside your comfort zone and expand your boundaries. This month we'll continue developing these ideas by expanding on the exercises from the previous installment.

As in part one, the basis of this lesson is the paradiddle and its three inversions, broken up between the hi-hat and snare. However, this time the bass drum patterns are more musical and groove oriented. Practice these patterns with a metronome and also with recorded music. It doesn't matter if the drummer on the recording is playing a different pattern from the one you're practicing. Work on picking up the feel, swing, groove, pocket, and vibe of the drumming on the recording, and apply it to the exercise you're practicing.

You can also practice this lesson in conjunction with the Click Track Loops from pages 162–173 of my book, *The Breakbeat Bible*. Practice at a variety of tempos (40–180 bpm is a good range). Don't forget to start slowly, and be sure to get comfortable with the patterns before you increase the tempo. Also make sure your playing is tight and all the limbs are perfectly aligned. This is why it's beneficial to start slowly—you can really home in on how tight you're playing and not just simply go over the exercise at a quicker tempo.

It's also beneficial to record your practice sessions, as well as live performances. Often, the things we play sound different while we're playing them. In the moment we tend to observe our playing very subjectively, meaning we listen to it based on our emotional inner experience rather than pure fact, whereas a recording device observes our playing objectively. If you listen back to recorded versions of your practicing and playing, you can get a clearer understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. The more you do this, the more you can close the gap between subjectively and objectively observing your drumming. You can then use this increased listening skill to make any necessary adjustments to your groove and feel while you're playing.

Here are the paradiddle variations for this lesson. Pay careful attention to the accents and ghost notes within the snare and hi-hat patterns. They will help you develop the dynamic aspect of your grooves, while adding more depth and flavor to the exercises.

Here's the first set of bass drum patterns. Letters A–H are a little more basic and contain various 8th-note-based rhythms. To practice these, start by playing example A with the first paradiddle example. Once you can do that comfortably twenty times in a row, move on to example B, and so on. After you've mastered A–H with paradiddle 1, move on to the next paradiddle variation and repeat the entire process.

Here's the second set of bass drum patterns. These are a little more intricate. Practice them exactly as before, until you can play each of them twenty times in a row with all four paradiddle variations.

K L

M N

O P

Here's the third set of bass drum patterns. These also focus on 16th-note subdivisions, but they include many instances where two 16th notes are played in a row. Practice them in the same manner as before.

Q R

S T

U V

W X

You can get a great bass drum workout by practicing patterns that feature three or four 16th notes in a row. Here are two examples.

Y Z

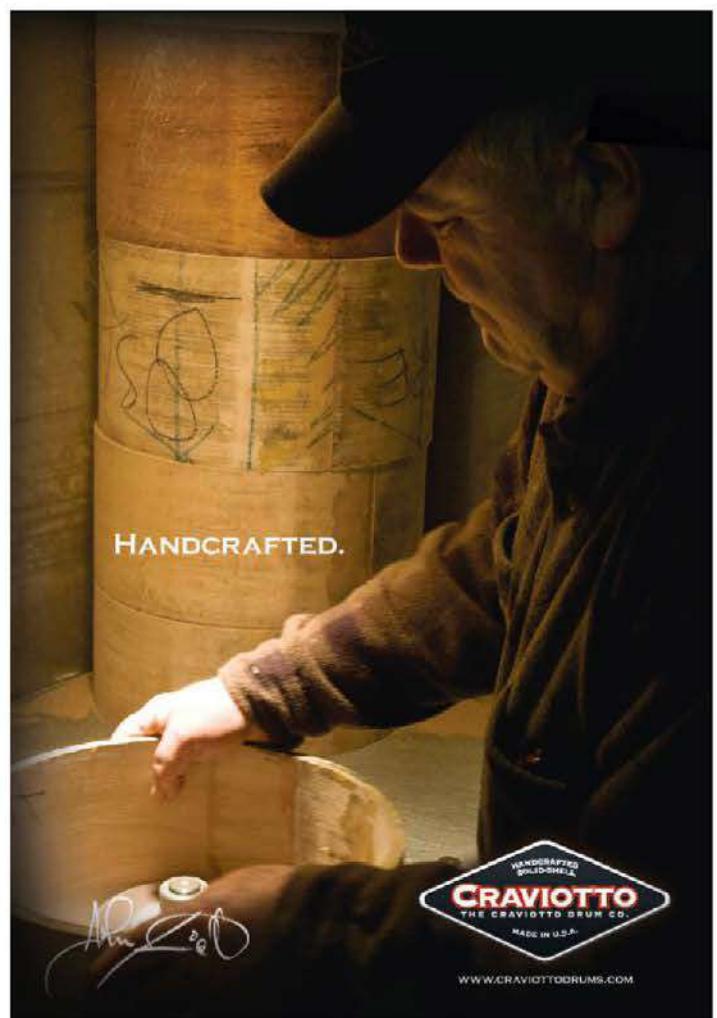
You can also analyze the bass drum patterns from some of your favorite grooves and play them with the paradiddle exercises from this lesson. For example, here's the bass drum pattern from "Ain't Sayin' Nothin' New" by the Roots, with Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson on drums.

Here's the bass drum pattern from "Love Slip Up on Ya" by the Meters, with Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste on drums.

Incorporate the patterns and concepts from this lesson into your practice routine for a few weeks, and you'll start to notice an improvement in your groove, timing, feel, and pocket. Even if you're playing a basic funk beat, your awareness of the 16th-note subdivisions will be heightened. Until next time!



Mike Adamo currently plays with 13 Kings, the Truth Cartel, the King Tide, and several other Northern California-based bands. He's also an active producer and educator, and he's the author of the critically acclaimed instructional book *The Breakbeat Bible* (Hudson Music). For more info, visit mikeadamo.com and thebreakbeatbible.com.



DOUBLE BASS FILLS

Overlapping Into the Next Phrase, Part 1

by Powell Randolph



MUSIC KEY

C.C. *
 S.D. *
 B.D. 2
 B.D. 2

The purpose of this lesson is to show you how to overlap bass drum notes at the end of a phrase into a crash at the beginning of the next phrase, in order to maintain a continuous flow of ideas throughout the measure. To begin, practice each of the following phrase fragments until you're very comfortable with them.

1 2

3 4

Now mix the groupings together to create a one- or two-bar phrase of 16th notes.

5 6

7

8 9

10 11

12

R L R L R L R L R L

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

R L R L R L R L R L

Now let's try some five- and seven-note groupings.

R L R R L R L R

Here are some ideas that incorporate the fives and sevens with the other groupings.

R L R R L R R L R L

R L R R L R R L R L

R L R L R R L R R L

R L R L R R L R L R

R L R L R L R L R

R L R R L R L R L

R L R L R R L R L R L

R L R L R R L R L R L

R L R R L R L R R L R

R L R R L R L R L R

Eddie Williams



Powell Randolph is a drum teacher at Alpha Music in Virginia Beach and a touring drummer for Windborne Music Productions, which puts together rock shows with major orchestras across North America. For more info, visit powellrandolph.com.



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FOCUS ON BRUSHES

From Basic Patterns to Advanced Techniques by Steve Fidyk



Practicing brushes is excellent for building strength in your wrists and fingers. It can help develop muscles and reflexes and also improves your control with sticks. With the exception of the closed roll, any pattern that you play with sticks can also be executed with brushes. Of course, you don't have the advantage of natural rebound the way you do with a stick. Nevertheless, you can develop a clear, crisp tone with brushes and play with surprising volume when using proper technique.

A brush can produce staccato and legato sounds. For a staccato sound, snap the brush down to the head, but draw the sound out of the drum by lifting the fan immediately after you strike. For a "slappy" staccato sound, press the fan into the drumhead. For a legato approach, sweep the fan across the head in a circular motion, producing a "swish" sound. The brush fan pivots across the head with a flowing motion controlled by the fingers, forearm, and wrist.

THE GRIP

For left-hand traditional grip, the index and middle fingers are positioned on top of the brush handle, while the ring finger acts as a bumper underneath. The fingers stay in contact with the handle at all times. The right brush is controlled with a combination of wrist and fingers, with all four fingers remaining on the handle. To produce a sound, you must lift the fan off the head, since a brush will not rebound like a stick.

The open and closed positions shown in the photos refer to the movement of the fingers when performing legato sweeps on the drumhead. Try practicing the finger movement while playing legato quarter notes in 4/4 time with your left hand. Beats 1 and 3 utilize the open position. On beats 2 and 4, close your fingers into your palm.

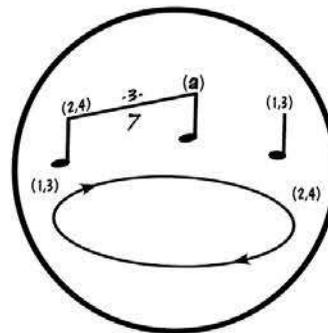


The left hand with the fingers in the open position (beats 1 and 3)



The left hand with the fingers in the closed position (beats 2 and 4)

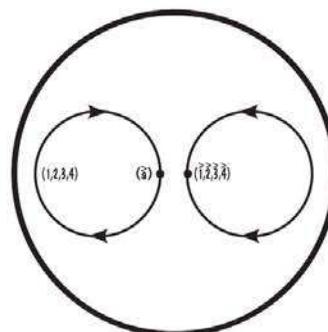
The most common jazz beat with brushes is notated and diagrammed below. Notice that the right hand plays the jazz ride pattern on the opposite side of the drum from the swish. The left hand rotates around the drum in a clockwise motion, keeping a smooth and connected pulse with the movement.



Spend time practicing this beat with recordings so that you gain confidence with the motions and develop a balanced sound from hand to hand. My brush concept is based on moves that Joe Morello showed me. I also listen to Jeff Hamilton, Ed Thigpen, Shelly Manne, and Philly Joe Jones and try to emulate their sound and feel. What follows are six patterns to practice in varying styles within the notated tempo ranges. Listen closely to the sound you're producing as you perform each one.

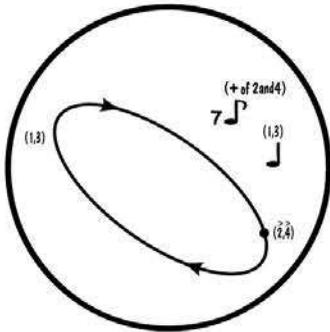
LEGATO SHUFFLE

This pattern uses the sweeping technique with both brushes to produce a connected swish sound. As you practice the beat, concentrate on keeping the sound of each sweep consistent.



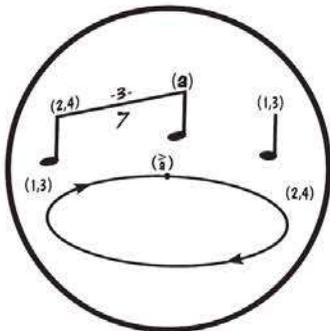
FAST SWING

This brush beat combines two sounds: the staccato tap in the right hand and the left-hand swish. The pattern is played at tempos of 300 beats per minute or faster, so be sure to relax and breathe. Also focus on blending the staccato tap sound with the left swish so that the beat sounds complete from hand to hand.



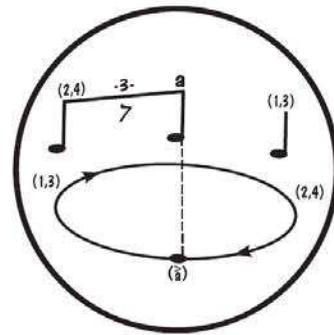
DOTTED QUARTER NOTE SWEEP

In this beat, the left hand creates a sweep accent on the "a" of beats 1 and 3 by closing the fingers into the palm. As you practice combining both hands, notice that the composite rhythm is a shuffle.



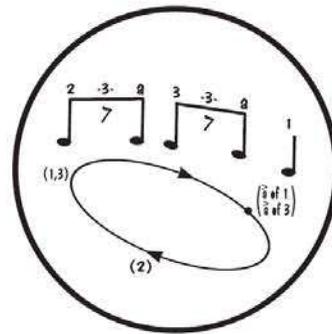
MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE

This pattern was named by Joe Morello. You can hear the groove on many classic recordings that he made with the Dave Brubeck Quartet in the 1950s and '60s. As you practice, focus on coordinating the left-hand sweep accent on the "a" of 2 and 4 so that it's in perfect unison with the right-hand swing beat.



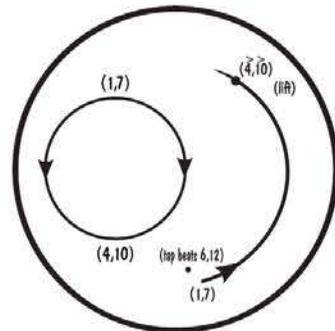
3/4 SWING

In this brush beat, the left hand creates a sweep accent on the "a" of beats 1 and 3 by closing the fingers into the palm.



WALKING 12/8 BALLAD

As you practice this beat, concentrate on the right hand as it sweeps, lifts, and taps. Subdivide each 8th note as you coordinate the hands.



Once you have control of the previous patterns, experiment and create some of your own beats by incorporating the sweep, slap, and snap sounds. You can also create sound effects using the following techniques.



THE TRILL

To produce a trill, pivot the fan quickly from left to right with your middle, ring, and pinkie fingers.



HANDLE FLEX

Holding the brush firmly, press the handle against the rim. This will cause the wires to flex, creating multiple strokes with one downward motion.

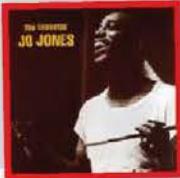


HANDLE ROLL

A roll effect can be created with the fan, by turning the handle on the rim rapidly with your palm.

Brush Up!

Here's a list of recommended albums that feature some incredible brush playing.



Jo Jones The Essential Jo Jones (Jo Jones) // **Hampton Hawes Four!** (Shelly Manne) // **Oscar Peterson Trio** We Get Requests (Ed Thigpen) // **Dave Brubeck Quartet** Gone With the Wind (Joe Morello) // **Tommy Flanagan Overseas** (Elvin Jones) // **Jeff Hamilton Trio** Hands On (Jeff Hamilton) // **Bill Charlap Trio** Written in the Stars (Kenny Washington) // **Anita O'Day** Anita Sings the Most (John Poole)



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



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SEEING SOUNDS

Part 1: All-Purpose Pop/Rock

by Donny Gruendler

MODERN DRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

All of us appreciate a signature and stylistically appropriate drum sound. This can range from the perfect overall kit tone on your favorite CD to a uniquely recorded snare tuning. In addition, many of us have read stories about famous studio players switching drums and tuning for each song or subsequent take. Of course it's great to have a wide variety of instruments at your disposal to get the sound just right, but what if you have only one kit? Can you still achieve stellar results? Of course you can!

This six-part series is a comprehensive study on how to choose, tune, muffle, and mike drums for a specific musical effect. We will be analyzing some of today's most fashionable snare, kick, and tom tones, with clear demonstrations on how to achieve them with your own gear. We'll start with a basic all-purpose pop/rock setup.

During the past four decades, drum sounds in pop music have migrated from the dry, dark, and muffled tones of the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac in the 1970s to the live and open sounds you hear on tracks from contemporary artists like Alabama Shakes, Bruno Mars, and Jack White. Obviously, the drum tones that get used on recordings are largely the result of the artists' and producers' aesthetic preferences, and they can range from low and dry to high and ringing. But the most prevalent sound you'll hear in current pop music involves deep and punchy bass drums, crisp snares, and wide-open toms. Let's take a detailed look at how to achieve these tones. (This type of sound will also be used as the foundation to build on for creating the tones we'll discuss in future articles.)

BASS DRUM

A low, resonant, punchy bass drum sound is best achieved by employing a standard double-headed 22" drum that's 16" or 18" in depth. (A shallower 14x22 or smaller 16x20 drum will also work for this sound, but you'll lose some of the width, depth, and sustain associated with the larger sizes.) A 2-ply clear batter head (Remo Emperor) or a single-ply head with a built-in muffling ring (Powerstroke 3) works best, with a



single-ply resonant that has a small hole cut in it for easy mic placement. Insert a medium-size pillow or small packing blanket in the shell, and make sure it's touching both heads slightly. It's important that only a small amount of the damping touches, and therefore muffles, each head.

Bring the resonant head to a medium tension and the batter side to a medium-tight tension. Not only will this help with pedal response, but it will also add some sustain to each bass drum stroke.

Next, place a dynamic microphone inside the drum, with the capsule pointing at the beater impact point on the batter head. This technique puts emphasis on the attack of the drum. If you want more sustain, place the mic closer to the resonant head, just past the middle of the shell.

Many engineers like to place a subwoofer-style mic outside the resonant head as well. This device is actually a speaker that's rewired so that the polarity is reversed, which turns the speaker into a subsonic microphone that picks up only the lower frequencies of the bass drum.

You should try a medium-size felt beater. This will provide some punch while retaining the low fundamental tone. You can add more attack by swapping in a wooden beater for the

felt one or by using a smaller two-sided felt/plastic combo.

When recording (or mixing), blend a small amount of the sub mic into the internal mic. This will fuse the low fundamental oomph of the shell's airflow with the pointed impact of the beater.

SNARE DRUM

Due to its high presence in most modern mixes, the snare tone is the most vital one in this study. A crisp and cracking snare sound is achieved by employing a 14" wood drum in a standard depth (usually 5" or 5½"). The depth can vary, however, depending on the style of music. For a straight pop track, many players prefer a 5½x14 drum, while for medium-tempo rock songs a 6½x14 snare is a staple. (Should you prefer a brighter sound, feel free to experiment with metal drums too. There are no rules, after all.)

Start by installing a single-ply coated batter head, and tighten each tension rod so that the head feels somewhat tight. The batter shouldn't be "tabletop" tight, but it shouldn't feel like a pillow either. Match the pitch at each lug, and then hit a few rimshots and adjust the snares until they stop rattling extraneously. If the drum begins to sound boxy and choked, you'll need to loosen the snares a bit. If you want more articulation, increase the tension of the bottom head.

You should also experiment with stick size. A larger stick will produce a lower tone and will increase the amount of overtones, while a smaller stick will have a thinner, more focused, and articulate sound.

If there's excessive ring coming from your snare, add some muffling, like a couple of Moongel dampening pads. (I've found that children's window decorations called Gel Clings also work well. I purchase the ones shaped like footballs and soccer balls and then cut them to size.)

For miking the snare, try using both a dynamic and a con-



denser microphone, with the capsules side by side and pointed directly at the stick impact point. The dynamic mic will pick up the fundamental tone of the drum, while the condenser will grab the high frequencies of the attack. In order to keep the mics in phase with one another, tape them together at the body.

Feel free to experiment with their angle too. The greater the incline and off-center placement of the mic toward the rim,



the more the overtones will be captured.

If your snare is lacking sizzle, or if your ghost notes aren't articulate enough, place a third mic on the bottom of the snare. Most engineers prefer to point the capsule

toward the snare wires at a 70-degree angle. The greater the incline and off-center placement of the mic toward the rim, the more sizzle will enter the track. When recording, mix in a small amount of the bottom mic with the top two. It's important to invert the phase of the bottom mic. This can be done in your recording software with a plug-in, or your mixing console or mic preamp might have a phase inversion button. You can also rewire a mic so that the polarity is reversed.

TOMS

An open, resonant tom sound is achieved by employing double-headed shallow or medium-depth drums. Focusing on a four-piece kit, today's most widely used tom configurations are 8x12 and 14x14, 9x13 and 16x16, and 9x12 and 16x16. For the sake of this demonstration, we'll set our sights on the third setup.

Double-ply batters, either coated or clear, work well alongside single-ply clear resonant heads. Coated heads add attack, while clear heads focus on tone. Start with an even-pitched



tuning on top and bottom, at a medium tension.

For a more open and resonant tone, leave the heads wide open and let them sing. Just be aware that the toms might ring sympathetically and get picked up by the snare and overhead mics. For increased attack and a touch less sustain, apply a little muffling, like a Moongel or Gel Cling, ¼" to ½" in from the rim of each tom. The amount of muffling required will vary depending on the room characteristics and the size of the drum itself.

To capture your tom tones, place the mic's capsule over the edge of the rim, pointed toward the impact point on the head. The greater the incline of the mic body and the off-center placement toward the rim, the more low-end frequencies and overtones will enter your mix. If the toms are ringing excessively while you play time on the bass drum and snare, raise the mics two to three finger widths above the drumhead.

OVERHEAD MICS

Now add two overhead condenser microphones to complete your drum sound. Since the overheads capture a snapshot of the entire kit from a very broad perspective, I tend to think

of them as “camera” mics. They also help bind the individual mics into a cohesive and collective mix. I prefer to place them as a spaced pair. This helps a standard four-piece kit appear much larger in a mix. In order to achieve this placement, stand behind your snare drum and extend your arms upward and outward to form an inverted triangle. This is where your overheads should be placed. Make sure they are equidistant from the snare in terms of both height and width. To be more exact, use a tape measure to go from the snare’s impact point to the capsule on each overhead. (Additional overhead miking techniques will be covered in future articles.)

To ensure that your overhead mics are placed correctly, record a test groove using just them and one of the top snare mics. Then look at the waveforms on your computer screen to see if they’re out of alignment. If so, move the overheads and repeat the test until the waveforms line up a bit more closely. (Because the overheads are placed farther from the snare than the direct mic is, their signal will always be slightly behind the snare track.)

HI^HAT

Some engineers prefer to rely on the overheads to capture the hi-hat. But when ultimate articulation or dynamic control is needed, a small diaphragm condenser or dynamic mic can be placed at the outermost edge of the top cymbal. You’ll notice that the capsule is positioned away from the snare, which helps minimize bleed from the snare drum into the hi-hat mic.



TIME TO EXPERIMENT!

Think of the techniques and concepts we’ve discussed here as a starting point in getting a great all-purpose drum sound. You’ll likely have to adjust one thing or another in order to achieve tones that are just right for specific sessions or gigs. And as with all musical skills, this will take time and practice to fully master. Rather than trying to tackle everything at once—tuning, muffling, mic placement, and so on—concentrate on one element at a time, starting with just one drum.



Donny Gruendler is vice president of curricular development at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.



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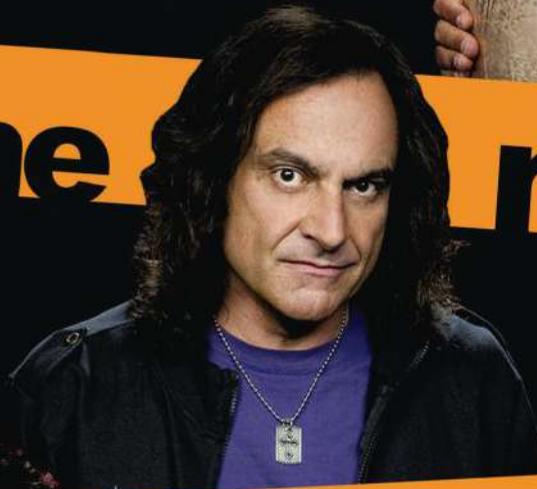
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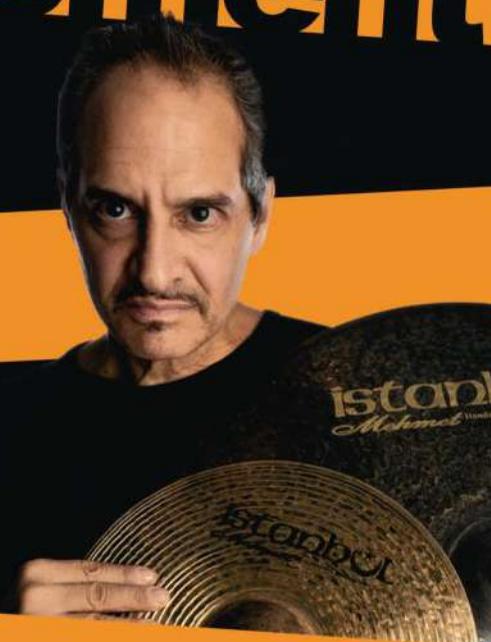
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PIERRE VAN DER LINDEN

by Ken Micallef

He's a free-jazz drummer playing in a Dutch progressive rock band. He finds inspiration in the work of French philosophers and twentieth-century classical composers. And he's probably the only drummer you've heard trade fours on an international rock hit made up of mad flute solos, whistling breaks, and operatic yodeling.

Focus's 1971 worldwide hit, "Hocus Pocus," was an exhilarating composition comprising not only the above-mentioned rock oddities but also brain-searing guitar by the masterful Jan Akkerman and over-the-top drum breaks by Pierre van der Linden. Burning at gale-force tempo, van der Linden seemed to channel Buddy Rich, Milford Graves, and a very angry thunderstorm.

Thirty years on and the drummer has rejoined Focus leader (and yodeler) Thijs van Leer for the band's fourteenth album, *X*. Surprisingly, Focus sounds like it never left. Van der Linden's drumming, particularly his open jazz tuning, remains the same, as does van Leer's organ-fueled compositions and the group's trademark acetylene guitar, now handled by Menno Gootjes. From opener "Father Bacchus," which recalls "Hocus Pocus," to the carnival-esque Latin groove of "Amok in Kindergarten" to the weird funeral dirge "Hoeratio," Focus proves that it remains one of the most original, entertaining, and enduring bands from the '70s. And

van der Linden is easily keeping pace—and then some.

MD: You've been in and out of Focus since its inception, but your drumming sounds as open, energetic, and dynamic as ever. It's fresh and vibrant.

Pierre: I still play every day, at least one hour on a practice pad for my technique. And I listen every day to concerts and drum solos and other drummers and all music—good drummers, good music. I keep in condition!

MD: What's your practice routine?

Pierre: I play and improvise with my technique—all the possibilities as fast and as slow as possible. With silence, and with noise. Everything in time and out of time.

MD: What do you mean "with silence, and with noise"?

Pierre: As I've gotten older, it's become more important—the silence. The very little tactile things, it's very important. And the opposite too: the very fast things, everything regarding the notion of time.

MD: Why are those extremes important,

from the silence to the noise?

Pierre: For the control of the sticks.

MD: You trade fours on "Father Bacchus" and other tracks, in the same free-ish style one might associate with "Hocus Pocus." You've played in many different groups since the '70s, but those breaks were like a wave of sound. You surged around the kit, really blazing.

Pierre: I am always surging, keeping it fresh. Never routine.

MD: What were your inspirations for that approach?

Pierre: I listened to a lot of Elvin Jones and Tony Williams, and the free drummers such as Milford Graves and Sunny Murray. I heard drummers that play in time and out of time. They created a stream. And I listened to a lot of free-jazz musicians, like Cecil Taylor. That really inspired me as well. In free music, every moment is present. It's never routine but surging in its stream.

MD: You also play in a free-jazz group called Advanced Warning, which doesn't perform anymore but still records occasionally.

Pierre: Yes, we've made four records together, *Cut the Crap*, *Regroovable*, *Hot House*, and *HiFi Apartment*. I also made a trio record with Hammond organ player Herbert Noord and tenor player Rinus Groeneveld. That is my evolution as a drummer. A lot is happening on the drums there. But there's not so large an audience for the music; it was too different.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Van der Linden plays a set of white Premier APK drums from 1990 that includes 12" and 13" rack toms and two 16" floor toms, along with a 10x14 Premier 2074 marching snare drum. His cymbals include a K Zildjian crash, an A Zildjian ride and crash, and a set of Sabian hi-hats. He uses Pearl hi-hat and bass drum pedals.

MD: As with free jazz, there are some great European progressive rock and jazz records from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Pierre: I was very proud of another record I made with the Rinus Groeneveld trio in 1990, called *Dare to Be Different*. There are very heavy, very good pieces on there.

MD: Was the new Focus album recorded to a click?

Pierre: No, we recorded live, no click.

MD: Are all the band members of a similar age?

Pierre: The newer players are younger.

The guitar player is thirty-four. We are very happy with him. The live concerts are really great with him. He plays great guitar solos, it's very together, and the feel between us is right. And we are improvising more in concert.

MD: Focus is not a fusion group, but it's looser than most progressive rock bands. There are marches, dirges—it's all very orchestral. Is the approach based in any way on being from the Netherlands?

Pierre: It's all from Thijs van Leer. He's a classical player originally. He was always multidimensional, playing both folk and jazz. And Focus was multidimensional in this style. We know about many styles—folk, classical, jazz. In the past I played different styles of music as well. I played with many artists in Holland, and I learned my instrument.

MD: Your tuning is very open, closer to that of a jazz player than a rock drummer.

Pierre: Yes, I like that. I don't like modern tuning. I want to avoid it. I want drums to have a musical tone.

MD: In general, how did you find your parts for the music on *X*?

Pierre: In the studio I heard some of the pieces for the first time. We played it two or three times, then recorded it. Of course it was very spontaneous. If we had played it ten times it would sound very different.

MD: On "Crossroads" you're playing a samba with a cowbell pattern, correct?

Pierre: Yes, it's based on an altered 16th-note paradiddle. On the first song, "Father Bacchus," I quite like my drumming. I like the free-flow jells there—that's what I call them. But the rest of the album I don't feel what I am playing is so special. I like what I do live much better. It's full of imagination.

MD: Why do you like free jazz?

Pierre: Because it feeds my soul. It's open chords and melodies, and it's abstraction. John Coltrane in his last period, like on *Ascension*, or Pharoah Sanders—I like that music very much.

MD: You play traditional grip.

Pierre: Yes, only in solos, though most of my concept is from using traditional. But I use matched grip in the rest of the song. And I practice with matched grip. It gives more power.

MD: So why do you play solos with traditional grip?

Pierre: For the touch. I change the grip within the solo. I can play rhythms between one hand and my bass drum, which gives me time to change grips.

MD: What hobbies do you pursue in your free time?

Pierre: I like painting, and I write poetry. I like to think about life. And the music of Boulez—painting in tones.



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NEW DRUM GEAR FOR 2013

This year's Winter NAMM music industry trade show saw the addition of many great new products, as well as some thoughtful updates to existing lines and brands that you already know and love. **Here are some highlights.**



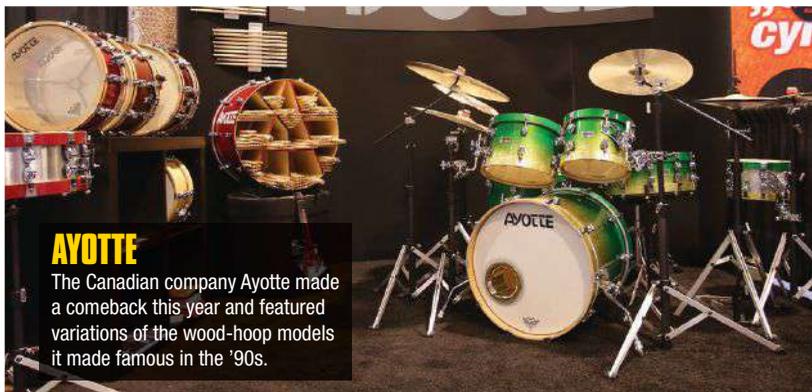
ALESIS

The new DM Dock Pro combines an iPad dock with a high-end six-piece kit with four cymbal pads.



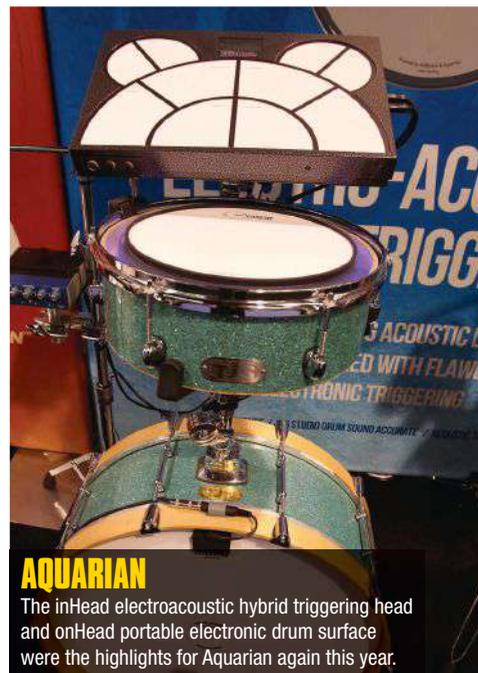
AMEDIA

Amedia always shows up with some unusual cymbal designs. Check out the mega bell on this model.



AYOTTE

The Canadian company Ayotte made a comeback this year and featured variations of the wood-hoop models it made famous in the '90s.



AQUARIAN

The inHead electroacoustic hybrid triggering head and onHead portable electronic drum surface were the highlights for Aquarian again this year.

BIG BANG

In addition to great accessories like a digital DrumDial and electronic Ahead practice pads, Big Bang displayed a variety of bell-brass and wood Ahead snares, Spinal G thrones, and Armor cases, including new models for cajons.



BOSPHORUS

Bosphorus showed a cool New Orleans line, as well as perforated effects models and prototypes for an Ari Hoenig signature series.

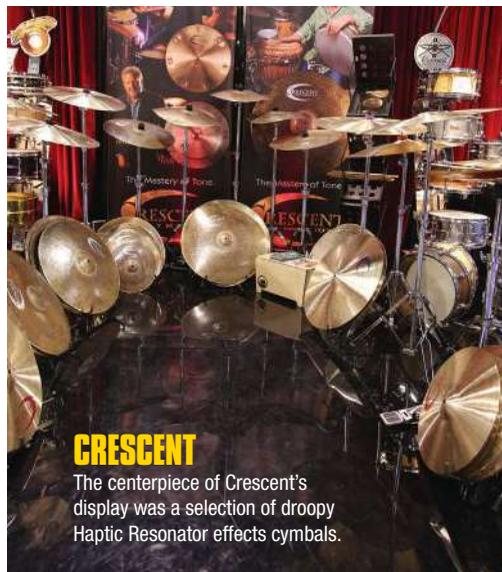
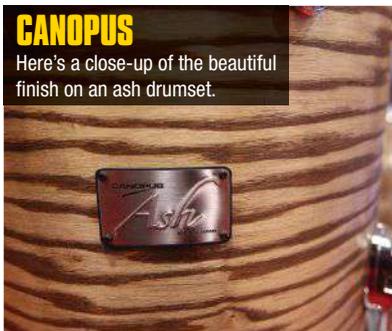


C&C

Player Date II drumsets are made with 3-ply maple/mahogany/maple shells to give the drums a livelier sound when compared with the ultra-warm, round tones of the original Player Dates, which are all mahogany.

CANOPUS

Here's a close-up of the beautiful finish on an ash drumset.



CRESCENT

The centerpiece of Crescent's display was a selection of droopy Haptic Resonator effects cymbals.



CRUSH

Limited Reserve Birch and revamped Sublime Maple E3 kits were just some of the new offerings by Crush, which also included simple, functional M1 and M4 hardware and special U.S.-made solid snares.



DDRUM

In addition to its industry-standard drum triggers and electronics, ddrum presented a new Paladin High Boy six-piece shell pack with 10", 12", and 14" rack toms, plus a variety of wood and metal Vintone snares.



DIXON

Between the production-level Blaze series and the custom-shop Artisan line, Dixon offers top-quality drums for all types of players.



DREAM

The Crop Circle, from the Re-FX line, is a ring of cymbal material outfitted with tambourine jingles for jungle/electronic effects when played on top of the snare drum.



DUNNETT

A stainless steel kit and super-sleek metal, wood, and hybrid snares were highlights from Dunnett, as was the ultra-versatile R-Class utility clamp, shown here holding a small splash cymbal on the rim of a rack tom.



EVANS

The Level 360 drumhead has a steeper collar for a flatter fit. All Evans heads will feature this collar from here on out.

DW

Among a slew of new snares from DW are the Collector's series Concrete and a Limited Edition Vault Edge, which has a birch core and Sabian edge rings. The company also debuted the professional, production-level Design series and is taking on the Moon Mic subkick microphone as an accessory item.



GIBRALTAR

The G-Class pedal is designed to be simple, smooth, and sturdy. Gibraltar also displayed nice low-profile cymbal and hi-hat stands and debuted new R-Class throw-offs.

GMS

This gorgeous mappa burl Special Edition drumset had some of the best tom sounds at the show.



GRETSCH

Gretsch debuted a bunch of new snares including a bell brass model, a prototype Brooklyn series cocktail kit, a limited edition Gold Satin Flame 130th-anniversary finish, and a funky, compact Catalina Club Street kit with a segmented bass drum. Upgrades to the Renown series include a new suspension mount and a round badge.

GON BOPS

New Gon Bops signature products include Orestes Vilato timbales and Alex Acuña cowbells.



INNOVATIVE PERCUSSION

This display includes new Joey Waronker, Sheila E, and Chad Wackerman signature drumstick models.

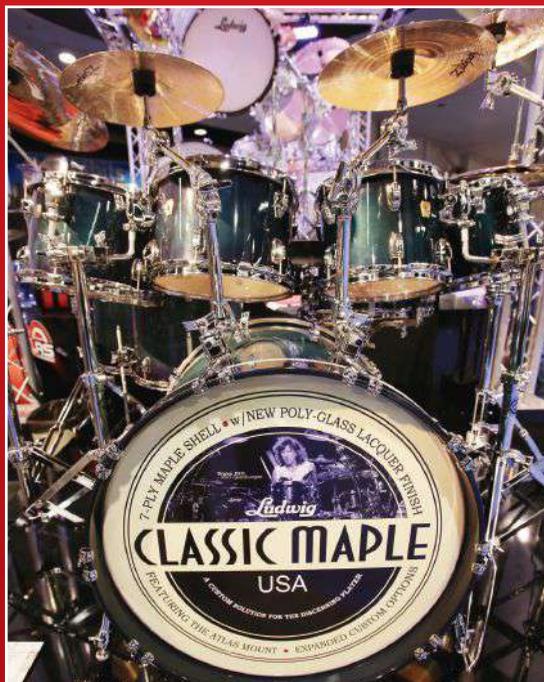


ISTANBUL AGOP

The Xist line is a more affordable yet highly musical alternative to Agop's pricier vintage-style offerings.

ISTANBUL MEHMET

Mehmet has commemorated its sixty-first anniversary as a cymbal maker with some special raw rides.



KAT

Known for high-end drum and mallet keyboard MIDI controllers, KAT recently expanded into full electronic drumsets with the K1 and K2.



LOS CABOS

Los Cabos debuted a new Grip-Dip grip-enhanced series, as well as red hickory wire brushes.

LUDWIG

The versatile Atlas mount, which attaches to drums using existing lug holes, was the biggest buzz for Ludwig, but the company also debuted cool Keystone finishes, a new brass badge, and fade finishes for Classic Maple drumsets.



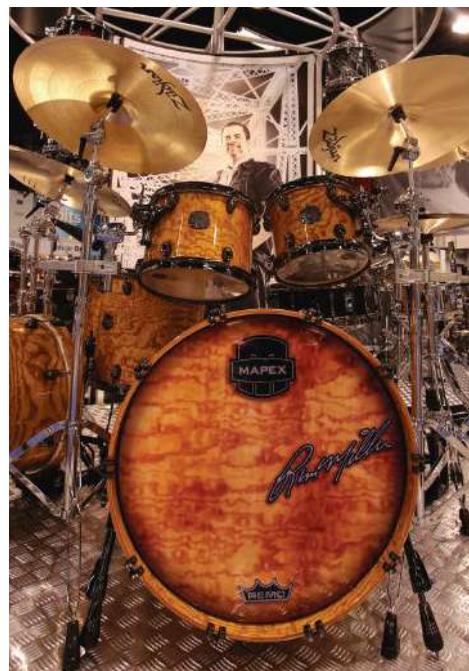
LP

Among a slew of new accessories and world percussion instruments, LP introduced lightweight durian wood congas and the projection-increasing Conga Sound Platform.



MAPEX

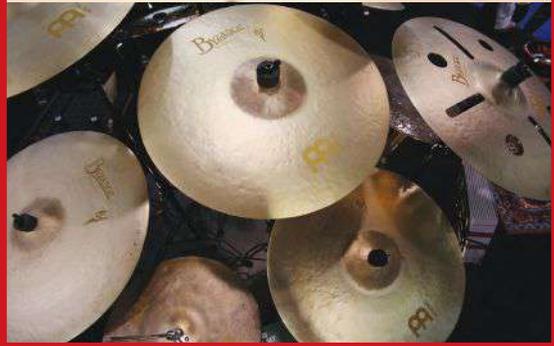
New Falcon hardware, a Black Panther Black Widow drumset, cool Black Panther snares, and artist kits for Chris Adler, Russ Miller, and Nick Crescenzo were among the new items released by Mapex.





MEINL

Meinl has stepped into the symphonic and marching arenas with new cymbals and gongs for those genres, while continuing to push the envelope with the percussion world with creative cajon additions. The company has also streamlined the way it markets its various cymbal lines, to allow drummers and dealers to make more informed purchasing decisions.



NATAL

Natal and Bullet & Kitch teamed up to create the unique direct-drive FBD-007 bass drum pedal. Natal also debuted the affordable Spirit series drumset and displayed the acrylic kit that was used by celebrity guest drummers at the Bonzo Bash evening concert.



PAISTE

Black Alpha Hyper series cymbals were designed especially for Slipknot's Joey Jordison, and Formula 602 Modern Essentials include crashes, splashes, Chinas, hi-hats, and rides made to drumming icon Vinnie Colaiuta's specs.



PDP

The new PDP Concept pedal is smooth, sturdy, and very affordable.



PEARL

The entry-level Export series made a triumphant return, and Pearl launched a new chain-drive Demon Chain pedal, as well as a more affordable variation called Demonator. Much of the company's hardware also got upgraded with easier-to-adjust features.



PEACE

This unique-looking drumset features a combination leopard/zebra-skin print.

PORK PIE

This high-gloss cherry-finish kit is a new addition to Pork Pie's competitively priced Little Squealer import line.



PREMIER

Premier revived the affordable XPK drumkit and showed some sweet high-end Aviation series snares.



REGAL TIP

Regal Tip added signature sticks for Nickelback's Daniel Adair, jazz drummer Ulysses Owens Jr., and percussionist Daniel de los Reyes.



PRO-MARK

Pro-Mark sticks are now being made with centerless grinders rather than traditional lathes.



REMO

White Suede Emperors are Remo's latest drum-head offerings. Also on display was a cool frame drum stand.



RHYTHM TECH

Rhythm Tech introduced some interesting Metalworks bells.



ROLAND

The BT-1 provides drummers with greater flexibility and more options when adding electronic trigger pads to their kits. The TD-4KP is an extremely portable, high-functioning kit that folds up into itself for easy transport.



ROC-N-SOC

Roc-n-Soc thrones remain some of the finest in the industry.



2BOX

Hoshino (Tama) is now distributing 2box electronic drumsets.

SABIAN

Cymbal Vote 2013 winners include AA Bash rides, AAX Freq crashes, AAX X-Plosion hi-hats, and AAX Air splashes. Sabian also debuted the Hoop Crasher, which was designed by Jojo Mayer and is made from two circles of premium cymbal alloy.



SUPERNATURAL

Supernatural showed new hybrid lathed/unlathed cymbals, called Revelation.



SONOR

Galvin Harrison's Protean signature snares come with interchangeable snare wires.



SOULTONE

Vintage Old School series cymbals, with their heavy patina, sound like they were made in the 1950s, while new extra-hammered Custom Brilliant crashes have a touch of trashiness.



TAMA

The new super-high-end Star series comes with maple or bubinga shells and features a cool quick-release tom mount. Tama also displayed an extensive range of Sound Lab Project, Starphonic, and signature snare drums.



TOCA

Toca is celebrating its twentieth anniversary with some limited-edition congas. Also of note is this cool Triple Conga Cajon hybrid hand drum.



TREWORKS

When it comes to chimes, no one makes them better than TreeWorks. The bottom model shown here, the Tre555, is tuned to create a chorus effect.



TAYE

Here's a new Vintage Brass MetalWorks snare, shown by Taye's Todd Trent.



T-CYMBALS

The Turkish newcomer T-Cymbals offers a wide array of models, from jazzy Swing Kings to edgy Punkheads.



TRICK

The Predator remote hi-hat, Dominator double pedal, and Speed Riser pedal attachments were highlights for Trick, as was a tree of metal snare drums.





TRX

The Thunder and Lightning duo of effects cymbals and the CRX China-made series were attention-getters for TRX.



TURKISH

Rhythm & Soul cymbals sound smooth and buttery, and Clatter effects crashes wobble and shake when struck.



TYCOON

Tycoon is commemorating its third decade with dark-finish 30th Anniversary series congas, bongos, djembes, and cajons. Also displayed was a unique Rhythm Rack, which allows you to play cowbells, woodblocks, and other instruments with bare hands.



YAMAHA

In addition to acoustic kits such as the new Live Custom oak and the classic Recording Custom, Yamaha displayed various DTX electronic setups and several artist kits, like Matt Halpern's Live Custom, shown here.



VATER

New Vater models include longer 7A and 5A Stretch sticks, a poly-bristle Flex Brush, and medium-weight Splashstick Rock rods.



VIC FIRTH

The American Classic Extreme series now includes an X8D model, and Japanese white oak has returned to the Vic Firth catalog with Shogun 5A and 5B sticks. The company is also celebrating fifty years with limited edition sticks and mallets that feature wood-branded logos.



WORLDMAX

This Vintage Classic drumset features all-metal shells and brass hardware.

ZILDJIAN

Rather than introduce all-new models, Zildjian decided to redesign the classic A series to be lighter and thinner, while the more cost-conscious ZBT line now features lathing on both sides and an updated logo. For drumsticks the company added a Ringo Starr Artist series model, and the Gen16 AE cymbal system now comes with a redesigned Direct Source pickup.



A BEVY OF BOUTIQUES

Here are some choice offerings from various custom-shop drum builders.

ACOUTIN

These primo snares feature a metal shell core sandwiched between single-ply or stave-shell segments.



ANCIENT TREE

Built from centuries-old river-reclaimed heartwood, Ancient Tree's snares and kit have a big, warm, dry sound.



CRAVIOTTO

Craviotto debuted its latest line of high-end, small-batch metal snare drums, Masters Brass.



DYNAMICX

Dynamicx is now offering solid single-ply snares in addition to hybrid metal/wood-veneer drums.

GAAL

These drums have unique finishes constructed from cut strips of wood veneer.



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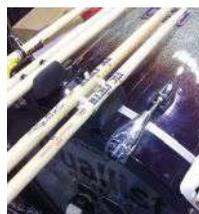


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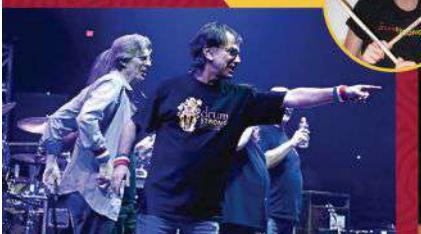
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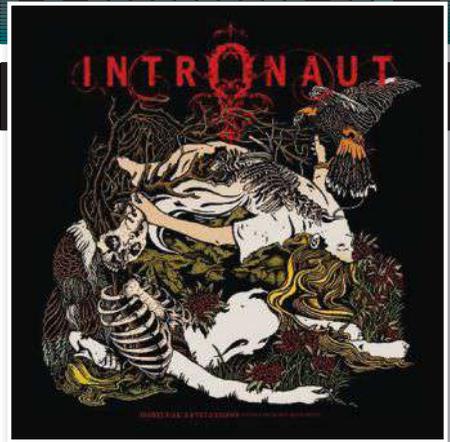
CRITIQUE

RECORDINGS

INTRONAUT *HABITUAL LEVITATIONS (INSTILLING WORDS WITH TONES)*

The psychedelic prog-metal band brings its A game to album number four.

Prime musicianship and haunting melodies make excellent bedfellows, especially when mixed with mesmerizing polyrhythms and punishing heaviness. On Intronaut's latest, drummer **Danny Walker** proves that he's perfectly suited for whatever feel is waiting around the next corner. The infectiously jilting ri" of "The Welding" is matched by Walker's broiling snare beat and thick kick sound. The album shows the ample breadth of the band and gives Walker an expansive playground to demonstrate serious chops; marquee moments include the unfolding of the second half of "Eventual" and the jazz feel of "Harmonomicon." (Century Media) **Billy Brennan**



PINNICK GALES PRIDGEN *PINNICK GALES PRIDGEN*

A rhythmic shredster gets extra funky, but the yreworks remain.

The groovy power trio of bassist Doug Pinnick (King's X), guitarist Eric Gales (Lauryn Hill), and ex-Mars Volta drummer **Thomas Pridgen** creates an old-school blues-rock vibe that draws the listener in with raw emotion and an infectious feel. "Hang On, Big Brother" and "Hate Crime" (the latter features a rolling Ginger Baker-meets-Keith Moon texture) highlight Pridgen's unique rhythmic creativity, while the heavy, bluesy "Lascivious" ynds the drummer strutting a commanding attitude while showing musical restraint. On the other hand, Pridgen brings Cream's "Sunshine of Your Love" to life by channeling the advanced rhythmic vocabulary of Vinnie Colaiuta. Thomas matures with each new project, as he explores fresh musical territory with a more groove-oriented yet still adventurous spirit. (Magna Carta) **Mike Haid**

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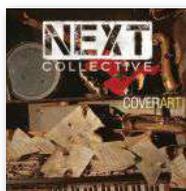


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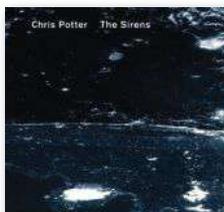
CHRIS BUCK 3 CROWS
Two heavyweight prog/fusion drummers go to town on this shred-fest.

Instrumental prog/fusion always tastes better when the ingredients include a blend of advanced musical talent, a well-engineered mix, solid compositions, and interesting improvisation and interplay. And when the menu allows drumming gurus like **Virgil Donati** and **Marco Minnemann** the opportunity to create and explore, you've got yourself a rhythmic smorgasbord. This recording began with the core group of bassist Chris Buck, guitarist Brett Garsed, and Donati, who had been working together in Buck's Progasaurus project. A host of other monster players subsequently became involved, including guitarist Andy Kodiwein, keyboardists Otmaro Ruiz and George Whitty, multi-instrumentalist Chris Taylor, and Minnemann. On his tracks Donati displays graceful, imaginative, dynamic technique, and his interplay is rhythmically fascinating. On the other end of the spectrum, the straight-up prog vocal tune "Pathway" allows Virgil to simply groove hard. Minnemann shines brightly on the outlandish odd-meter extravaganza "Andius Maximus," delivering his signature "am-laced bass drum" rumbles and blazing stick work. This is a must-have disc for anyone who's inspired by today's superdrummers. (cdbaby.com) **Mike Haid**



NEXT COLLECTIVE COVER ART
A group featuring some of contemporary jazz's hottest players is even greater than the sum of its parts.

Next Collective includes saxophonists Logan Richardson and Walter Smith, keyboardists Gerald Clayton and Kris Bowers, guitarist Matthew Stevens, bassist Ben Williams, guest trumpeter Christian Scott, and the remarkable, unpredictable **Jamire Williams** on drums. The surprising, mostly acoustic set of covers pulls from contemporary pop, rock, and hip-hop sources, including Bon Iver, Jay-Z and Kanye West, Pearl Jam, Frank Ocean, N.E.R.D., and Drake. Each compelling track unfolds cinematically, as the lines between lead and foundation voices blur. Unlike many supergroup attempts, this band has a unified vision in its sophisticated, mysterious, and beautiful ensemble sound. Williams is transporting with his drumming soundscapes and breathing pulse. Whether he's phrasing funky or emitting over-the-bar whirlwinds of sound, he's a multi-hued, grooving percussion section all by himself. But foremost he's an emotive, storytelling drummer. If this is what's "next," the future looks bright. (Concord) **Jeff Potter**



CHRIS POTTER THE SIRENS
Eric Harland melts into the fabric of saxophonist Chris Potter's latest.

Alongside brilliant improvisers like pianist Craig Taborn and bassist Larry Grenadier, **Eric Harland** is given plenty of room to indulge on Chris Potter's first outing as a leader on ECM. On "Wayfinder," the drummer completely owns the triplet-feel pulse, commenting atop and underneath the horn lines before settling into a hi-hat-plus-backbeat jousting session with the piano. "Kalypto" features an energetic vamp workout, while the soft cymbal colors on "Nausikaa" reflect light and shade. ECM, as usual, ensures the finest recorded drum sound possible. (ECM) **Ilya Stenkovsky**

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SOUND CITY: REAL TO REEL

Dave Grohl's musical ambition is relentless. Now Grohl has applied his famously high energy level to film production. The soundtrack tells the story.

Who would dream up a project featuring Corey

Taylor (Slipknot, Stone Sour), Paul McCartney, Stevie Nicks, Josh Homme (Queens of the Stone Age), and Lee Ving (Fear)? **Dave Grohl**, of course. The musician's directorial debut is a tribute to the doomed Sound City recording studio, home to Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Neil Young's *After the Gold Rush*, and Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, among other classic albums. On the film's soundtrack, Grohl writes and records with the aforementioned cast as well as with Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails), Rick Nielsen (Cheap Trick), and L.A. session legend **Jim Keltner**, corralling an exuberant, well-crafted set of performances. It's a true rock extravaganza.

Grohl and his Foo Fighters bandmate **Taylor Hawkins** shine throughout, the former's two-tysted pummel balanced by the latter's nimble sticking, popping groove, and airy, spacious beat. The fat, Mick Fleetwood-ish punch of Stevie Nicks' "You Can't Fix This" would seem to be Grohl, but it's actually Hawkins, who also burns through Rick Springyeld's gleefully sarcastic "The Man That Never Was" and the prog/punk rager "Your Wife Is Calling." Keltner adds his trademark lithe atmospherics to the gentle "If I Were Me," and **Brad Wilk** (Rage Against the Machine, Audioslave) grooves mightily on "Time Slowing Down." *Real to Reel* closes with "Mantra," a Reznor/Grohl/Homme track fueled by Dave's metronomic pulse. (RCA) **Ken Micallef**



SCOTT HENDERSON, JEFF BERLIN, DENNIS CHAMBERS HBC

These three fusion giants crossed paths in the past but have never sounded as in sync as they do on this instrumental tour de force.

Covering such fusion classics as Herbie Hancock's "Actual Proof," Wayne Shorter's "Footprints," Weather Report's "Mysterious Traveller," and Billy Cobham's "Stratus," guitarist Scott Henderson, bassist Jeff Berlin, and drumming powerhouse **Dennis Chambers** exhibit musical ESP as they follow each other's improvisational moves with style, passion, and big ears. Chambers explodes with rhythmic genius while improvising in his own secret metric-modulated code. It's obvious on "Footprints" that he has acquired outlandish Latin chops during his time with Santana. His jazz, funk, and soloing skills are in top form as well. And on "Stratus," Chambers pays rhythmic tribute to Cobham, who laid the groundwork for the light-speed style of play that has become Dennis's signature. This is arguably the best Dennis Chambers we've heard in years. (Tone Center) **Mike Haid**



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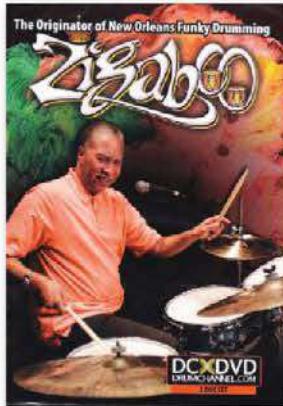
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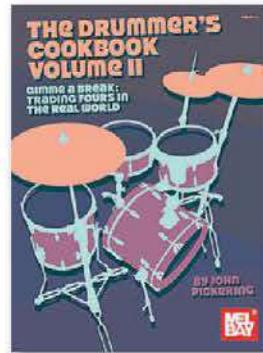




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In this book, subtitled *Gimme a Break: Trading Fours in the Real World*, author Pickering digs into the meat and potatoes of what makes for tasty rhythmic phrases in this too-often-overlooked aspect of drumming. The 136-page manual presents hundreds of two- and four-bar phrases that can be applied in a variety of musical settings. The rhythmic tools offered include uneven note groups, rhythm fragments, implied tempo changes, ghost notes, and various triplet groupings, all categorized by appropriate tempos. Although the book is a bit pricey, especially considering the absence of an accompanying CD or DVD, the information is valuable, well organized, and easily understood. There are limitless possibilities laid out that can increase your rhythmic vocabulary, knowledge of song form, and advanced soloing skills—particularly if you go beyond the written page and explore the concepts in a musical setting. (Mel Bay) **Mike Haid**



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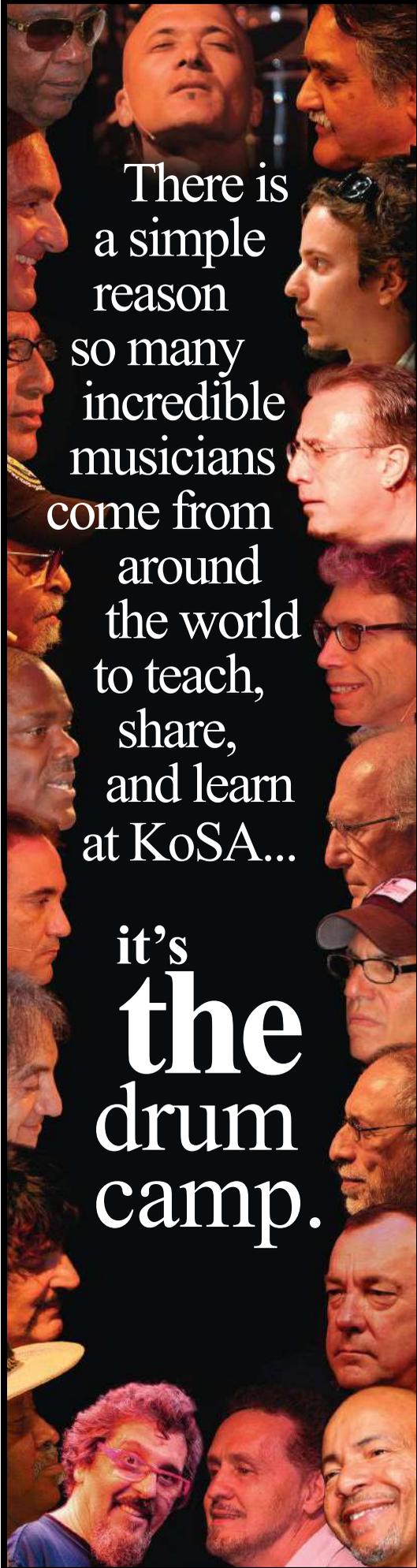
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Juan Carlos Mendoza



Guitar Center Drum-Off Grand Finals

This past January 19, Club Nokia in downtown Los Angeles was packed with drum enthusiasts for the 2012 Guitar Center Drum-Off Grand Finals. More than 5,000 amateur drummers entered the competition, beginning with in-store preliminaries last September, and the grand prize included \$25,000 plus gear and endorsements, with the value totaling nearly \$45,000.

Hosted by Jane's Addiction drummer Stephen Perkins, the night began with a performance by Darren King, who was joined by his MuteMath bandmates and displayed a serious backbeat with a nontraditional approach. Blending blistering breakbeats with electronic jazz pieces was a great way to start the evening. In his final solo, King had the crowd on the edge of their seats as he lifted and tilted different drums sideways and struck them with masterful conviction.

Next, Gerald Heyward (Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott) performed a medley of songs from the great artists he's played with, on a beautiful black DW kit with Zildjian cymbals. His powerful gospel chops and deep feel set the stage for the contestants waiting in the wings to perform.

The first competitor was Devon "Stixx" Taylor, who chose an OCPD Newport kit with Zildjian cymbals to make his mark on the crowd. (The finalists picked between the OCPD outfit and a white Tama Starclassic Bubinga set.) Taylor displayed excellent independence, beginning with a left-foot clave rhythm played on a cowbell. He was very methodical and well prepared in his delivery, and his clean stick technique and funky footwork set the bar high.

Next up was Aric Impröta, who immediately wowed the judges with a handstand while playing a quick pattern with his hands on the bass drum and hi-hat. He then set off on a crazy tear of glancing cymbal blows and blazing hand and double bass patterns that brought many to their feet, before his solo moved to the Roland pad, which is now a feature in the



John Blackwell



The finalists, from left: Alphonso Lovelace, Devon Taylor, Aric Impröta, Juan Carlos Mendoza, and Robert Johnson



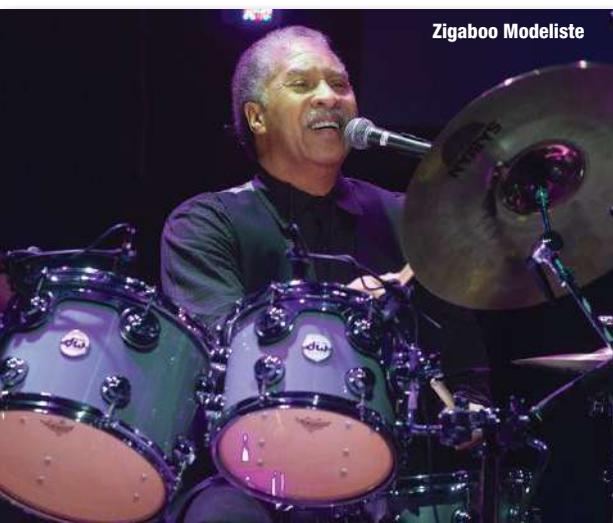
Steve Gadd joins GC's RockWalk.

competition. Improta ended with some wonderfully ~ashy stick tricks and a couple of super-high jumps o° the kit. In terms of showmanship, Aric was deynitely the one to beat.

Batting third in the lineup was Robert "Diamond" Johnson. Stick tricks on the kick drum and a mean left-hand ride made a great combination for this young hopeful, whose samba and Latin patterns were well thought out and perfectly executed. Johnson also utilized the Roland pad as auxiliary percussion. He displayed a rock-solid backbeat, which helped prove why he'd made it through to the Grand Finals.

In the fourth spot was middle school music teacher Juan Carlos Mendoza, who started out with a groove utilizing the Roland SPD-30. He then applied syncopated melodies over a slamming beat, which morphed into Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." Mendoza ~ipped over his snare, grabbed a splash cymbal, and muted the drum with the splash on the resonant side, creating a unique sound. Breaking into a hip-hop groove, he was able to scrape his stick across the snare wires to mimic turntable scratching. Demonstrating e° rtless Latin and left-foot clave patterns set Mendoza apart from the rest.

The ynal contestant was Alphonso "Fonz" Lovelace. Fonz also began with a ~owing groove incorporating the Roland pad, and then he shifted into a fusion rhythm. The highlight of his performance was when he grabbed the ~oor tom and placed it on his lap. He blew air into the vent while playing the bottom head, and the pitch went up and down. It was a distinctive way to end the competition, and now the judges had their work cut out for them, as this was one of the best Drum-O° s in recent history.



Zigaboo Modeliste



Keith Carlock

The panel of judges included ten of the world's best: Kenny Arono°, Nisan Stewart, Glen Sobel, Ray Luzier, Dave Elitch, Josh Freese, Brooks Wackerman, Tony Royster Jr., Adrian Young, and Jamal Moore. While the scores were being tallied, Keith Carlock entertained the crowd with a wonderful band of celebrated players, including guitarist Wayne Krantz, a frequent collaborator. Carlock shined on an array of hard-hitting fusion/rock jams and once again proved why Steely Dan and Sting have called on him in recent years for tours and recording.

When the time came to announce the winner, it was no surprise that thirty-one-year-old Perth Amboy, New Jersey, resident Juan Carlos Mendoza emerged victorious. Of his process, Mendoza says, "I started to prepare this piece in August. I practiced at least three hours a day and kept changing it until I had it right. The coordination with the pads and the drumming was really critical. I ylmed myself on my iPad and just kept studying it until I felt good about it. It was di° cult the last few days. We didn't have access to drums, so I just watched that over and over."

MD asked Alice Cooper's Glen Sobel how he felt about Mendoza's performance.

"Being a GC Drum-O° winner from the '90s," Sobel says, "I can totally relate to the anxiety and anticipation before performing a free-form solo in front of not only hundreds of drummers in the audience but a panel of judges. Juan Carlos Mendoza pulled o° a beautiful solo that had so many musical elements covered and showcased his technique, groove, independence, and showmanship. It wasn't easy to pick one winner, as all yve ynalists were spectacular. Congrats to Juan—you earned it!"

After the champion was crowned, John Blackwell, who recently left Prince's band in order to teach at Berklee, and Zigaboo Modeliste of the Meters laid down funky grooves and got everyone clapping along as they traded ylls, grinning all the way. And the ynal act of the evening was Steve Gadd, who yrst was inducted into the Guitar Center RockWalk. Placing his hands in wet cement and smiling for the crowd, Gadd seemed pleased to be receiving this honor. He played with New York City percussionist and bandleader Pedrito Martinez and his band, displaying a complex type of worldly funk. Weaving together rumbas and vocal chants of Yoruba and Santeria, Gadd, Martinez, and their mates ylled the theater with incredible sounds.

Text by Anthony "Tiny" Biuso
Photos by Alex Solca

Brian Tichy



Bonzo Bash NAMM Jamm 2013



Charlie Benante



James Kottak

As the first day of NAMM 2013 concluded and the doors of the Anaheim Convention Center were closed for the night, just a few miles away the Observatory in Santa Ana was opening to host the sold-out Bonzo Bash NAMM Jamm, the brainchild of drummer Brian Tichy (S.U.N., ex-Whitesnake). A bevy of heavy hitters paid homage to Led Zeppelin's legendary John Bonham, with the help of house band the Moby Dicks, featuring Tichy on drums and guitar.

Perched at center stage was a stunning replica of Bonham's amber acrylic kit made by event sponsors Natal, outfitted appropriately with Remo heads and Bonzo's cymbals of choice, Paiste. (Other sponsors were Marshall, Paiste, Regal Tip, Remo, Gorilla

Snot, and Jim Dunlop.) The marathon night, emceed by Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) and Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden), was broken into three sets, and quick changeovers



Carmine Appice and Nicko McBrain

allotted just enough time for your jaw to return to its natural resting position before becoming agape again. Special guests included Doug Aldrich (Whitesnake, Burning Rain), Nuno Bettencourt (Extreme, Rihanna), Billy Sheehan (Mr. Big, Niacin), Derek Sherinian (Black Country Communion), and Eddie Trunk (radio/TV host).

Drummers who've practiced along with Zeppelin records and later performed some of their favorite tunes live know that these songs are far more forgiving when Bonzo is in your ear helping you steer the ship. Yet here a revolving door of musicians pulled out some of the most intricate songs in the band's catalog, with little to no rehearsal time. The fact that all the players used the same kit resulted in an honest representation of each drummer, with regard to sonic balance, meshing with the other musicians, and capturing the essence of Bonham's unique feel.

A rendition of "Good Times Bad Times" by Jojo Mayer showed that Mayer clearly wasn't up there to inject his drum 'n' bass style

into a classic Zeppelin tune. To no surprise, though, the freakishly feet-footed drummer nailed Bonzo's famous triplet pattern with power and clarity. Hearing metal powerhouses like Gene Hoglan, Dave Lombardo, and Charlie Benante play on stripped-down kits with an organic sound proved those guys can drive a band just as well as they can play dynamically. James Kottak absolutely crushed "Nobody's Fault but Mine," and Tichy's playing on "The Rain Song" and "In My Time of Dying" would have made Bonzo proud.

Text by David Ciauro • Photos by Alex Solca

THE BONZO BASHERS

- Steven Adler (Guns n' Roses), "All My Love"
- Seven Antonopoulos (Opiate for the Masses), "Living Loving Maid"
- Charlie Benante (Anthrax), "Dazed and Confused"
- Tod Burr (Bonzo Bash drum tech), "Communication Breakdown"
- Will Calhoun (Living Colour), "Fool in the Rain"
- Jimmy D'Anda (BulletBoys), "Royal Orleans"
- Virgil Donati (Allan Holdsworth, Seven the Hard Way), "Kashmir"
- Chris Frazier (Foreigner, Whitesnake), "Whole Lotta Love"/"The Crunge"
- Gene Hoglan (Dethklok, Testament), "The Song Remains the Same"
- Brandon Kachel (Barbarian Overloads, Bonzo Bash video director), "Moby Dick"
- James Kottak (Scorpions), "Nobody's Fault but Mine"
- Dave Lombardo (Slayer), "Down by the Seaside"
- Ray Luzier (Korn), "Achilles Last Stand"
- Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden), "Immigrant Song"
- Jojo Mayer (Nerve), "Good Times Bad Times"
- Jonathan Mover (Joe Satriani, Aretha Franklin), "The Wanton Song"
- Xavier Muriel (Buckcherry), "The Ocean"
- Billy Orrico and John Hummel ("We're All Bonzo Wanna-Bes" contest winners), "Heartbreaker"
- Stephen Perkins (Jane's Addiction), "The Rover"
- Simon Phillips (Toto), "Trampled Under Foot"
- Mike Portnoy (Adrenaline Mob), "How Many More Times"
- Rikki Rockett (Poison), "Dancing Days"
- Khurt Maier (Salty Dog), "The Lemon Song"
- Glen Sobel (Alice Cooper), "Four Sticks"
- Tommy Stewart (Godsmack, S.U.N.), "Stairway to Heaven"
- Brian Tichy (S.U.N.), "The Rain Song," "Rock and Roll," "In My Time of Dying"
- Simon Wright (Dio Disciples), "Houses of the Holy"
- Yael (Ugly Kid Joe), "Carouselambra"

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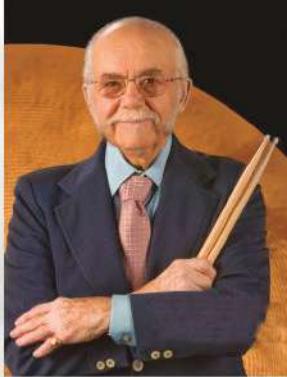
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Sabian Live 2013

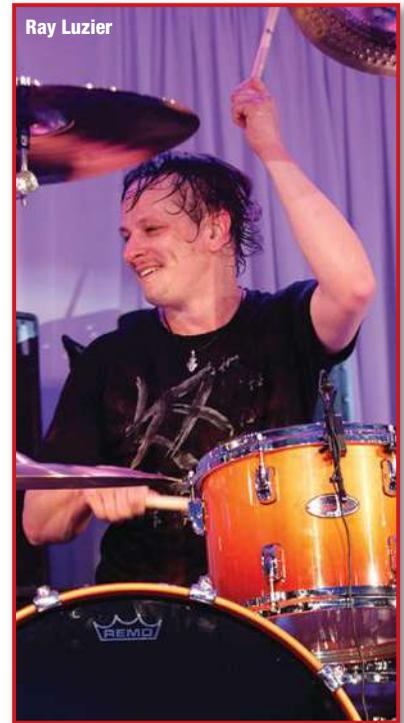
One of the best-attended Sabian Live shows in recent memory, the edition held after hours at NAMM this past January 25 was a cross-genre hit that drew a record crowd and kept it there to the very end. "The NAMM audience is unique," says Chris Stankee, Sabian artist relations manager and Sabian Live organizer. "They appreciate all styles of music. Sabian Live is about bringing them world-class talent while introducing the next generation of rising stars."

The night kicked off with a Latin-jazz-

avored set by Alex Acuña and the Unknowns, featuring percussionists Walfredo Reyes and Walter Rodriguez. A tasteful cajon/conga/timbale introduction soon gave way to polyrhythmic fusion as Acuña parked himself behind the kit and Pedro Eustache (sax and oboe), John Pena (bass), Ramon Stagnaro (guitar), and Otmaro Ruiz (piano) joined in. It was a high-energy start to the hottest Friday-night ticket at NAMM.

For many in attendance, this was a first look at Chris Dave, whom Questlove has

called "the most dangerous drummer alive." Dave and the Drumhedz (including Isaiah Sharkey on guitar, Kebbi Williams on sax and oboe, and Stephen Bruner on bass) played their new *Mixtape* set and blew many minds, bringing a trippy, improvised vibe to the atmosphere. These days you can tell how well a band is going over by the number of people recording



Ray Luzier

the show, and there was a virtual sky of iPhones, iPads, and other devices floating over the crowd with red lights glowing.

Closing out the evening in style was the power trio of Ray Luzier with George Lynch (guitar) and Billy Sheehan (bass). They rocked at a blistering pace, never more so than when joined by original Korn guitarist Brian Welch for a cover of Korn's "Blind" and later by King's X vocalist Doug Pinnick.

"Sabian Live is a great chance to see the world's best drummers in a unique blend you won't find anywhere else," Stankee said as the night drew to a close, "and we're grateful to our partners at KMC Music, DW Drums, Remo, Gon Bops, Evans, Pro-Mark, Audix, and Vic Firth for helping put on such a great show." Then the crowd and the good vibes spilled out into the hallways and back terrace of the Sheraton Park Hotel. All the talk was about the music.



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POP DRUMMING

This colorful rig comes from Robert J. Laurin of Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Quebec, who says, "I recycle acoustic drums, either to give them a new look or to convert them to electronic drums. Many people convert drums to electronics with DIY kits, but my main focus is to recycle them to become works of art for the drumming artist."

"Last summer," Laurin continues, "I was in a pop-art mood and decided to express this in a full acoustic kit. I had many trials printing with my inkjet printer on various kinds of paper, which I tried to gloss with clear varnish. But the varnish kept smudging the paint. I then put my hands on some full-sheet Avery transparent stickers that have a plastic-like finish. The best result is printing on the clear label and pasting it on top of a white label; the white beneath gives the needed contrast and strength. That gave me a much better finish that I could gloss using spray varnish. I might add as a warning: Leave at least a quarter inch free of sticker near the edge on both sides, or else the head will push down on the sticker and wrinkle the artwork."

You might notice pieces by Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein on the drums. "There are many artists from which I found images on the Web," Laurin says. "I downloaded many but kept the ones



that matched my creative mood." Laurin, who started playing at age forty ("My eight-year-old son wanted to take drum lessons, and I finally took some myself rather than staying in a waiting room for hours week after week"), painted the chrome parts in red and yellow pop-art colors.

Visit Laurin online at erjl.ca. "The artistic recycling of drums requires patience and passion," the drummer/designer concludes. "Fortunately, I have a lot of the second!"

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



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