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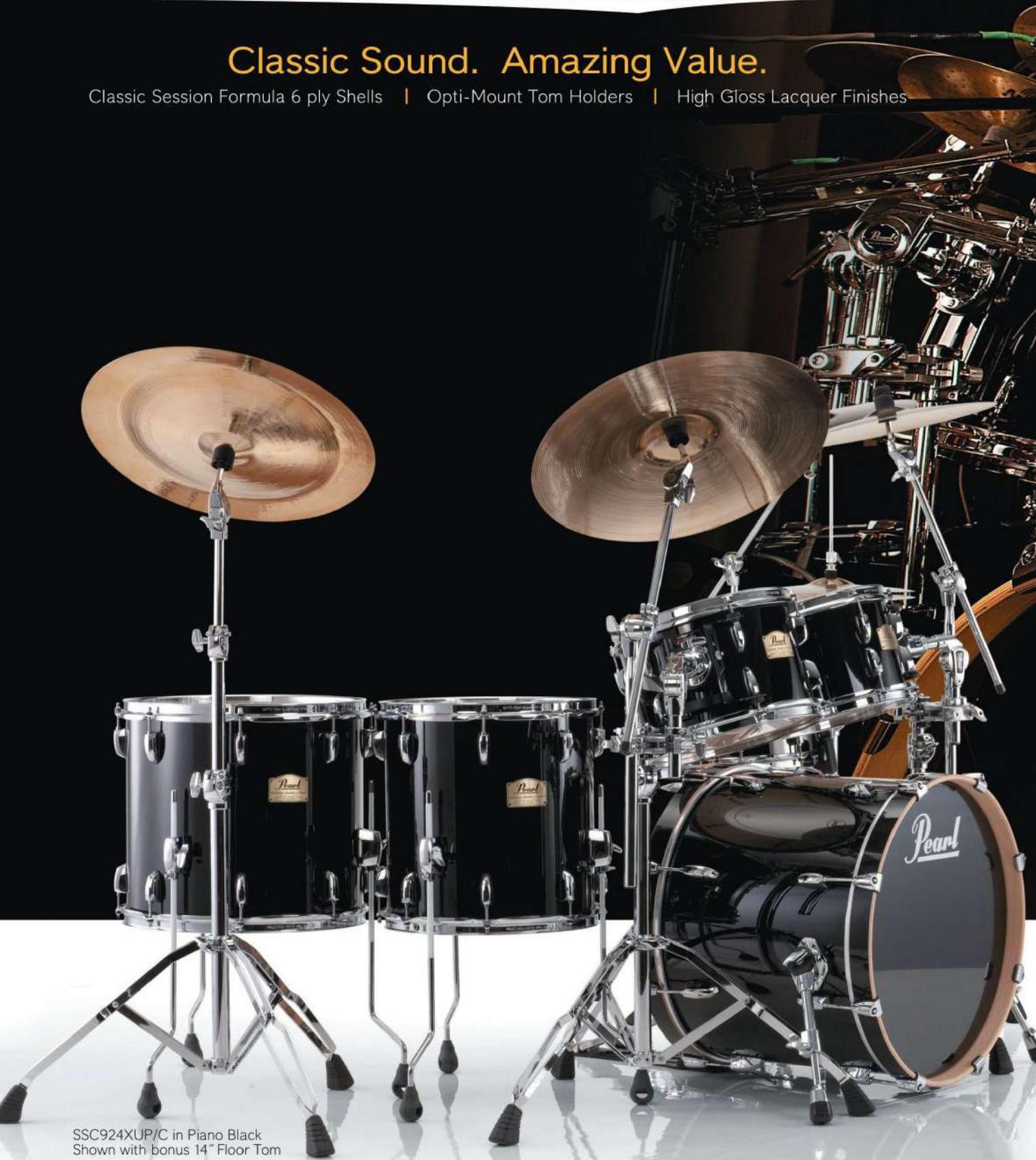
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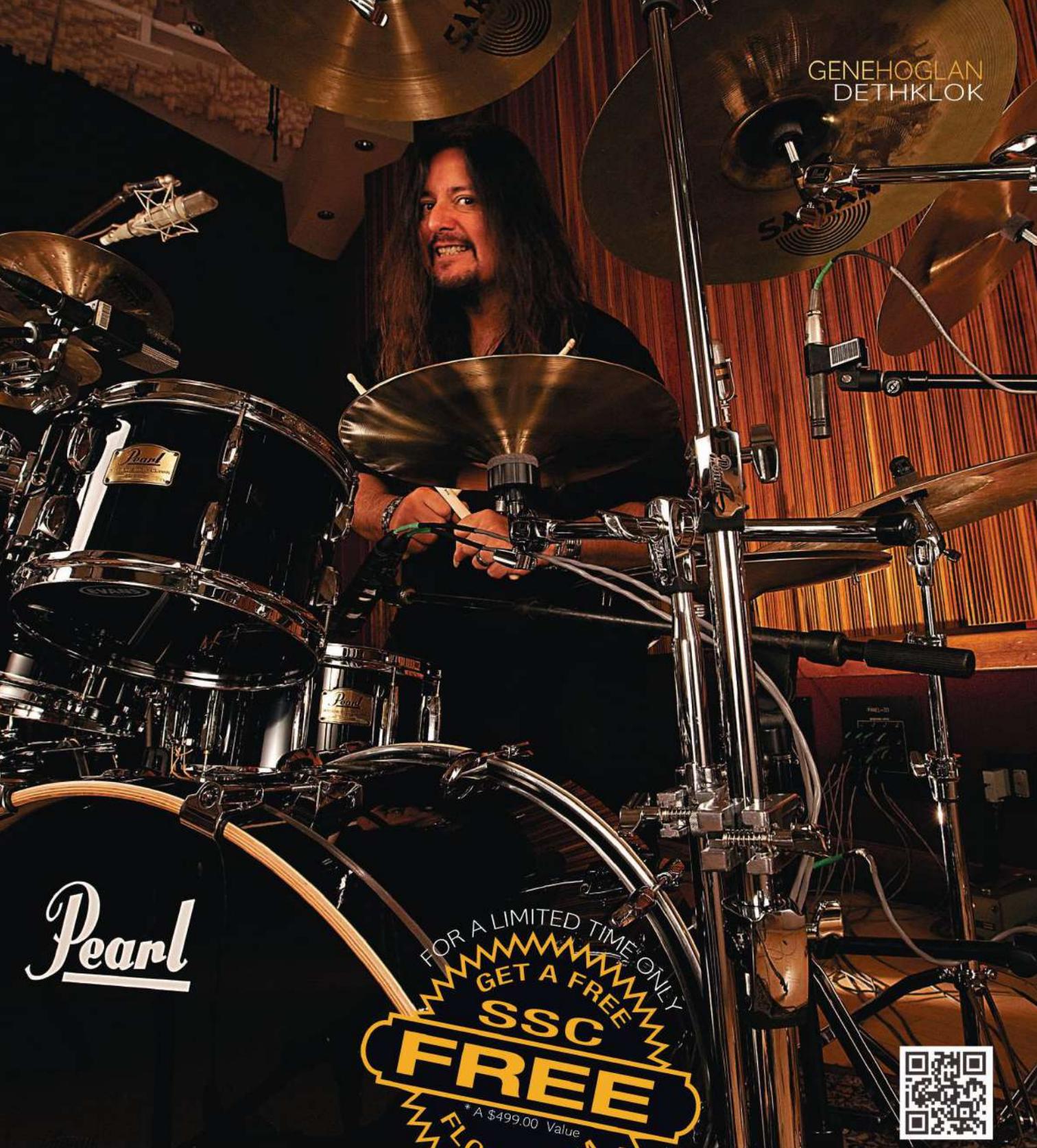
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# Get Back to Where You Once Belonged

When we're young, we never think about the day when we may no longer be able to enjoy the things that give us the most pleasure. And that's as it should be. But as we grow up, many other interests and responsibilities enter our lives, and long days spent playing drums, listening to music, and hanging with friends are replaced by the sometimes overwhelming challenges of keeping ourselves and our families clothed, fed, and protected from the elements.

For many of us, playing the drums simply doesn't bring in enough cold cash to cover the bills. So we either supplement our paying gigs with other types of work, or we fully commit ourselves to a "straight" job—always with the thought that we'll find ways to keep ourselves in the drumming game, even if it's on a less time-consuming basis.

Again, as adults who've made a commitment to face life on our own two feet, this is as it should be. We may believe with all our heart that we are, and always *will* be, drummers—members of that special group whose shared interest is our passion for our instrument and the joy we experience when we play it. But no spouse, collection agency, or judge on the planet is going to take our side if we try to argue that we weren't out working to pay the mortgage because what our swing feel *really* needed was a few weeks holed away in the basement, playing along to *Kind of Blue*.

Just like that eleven-year-old version of us had no business worrying about feeding a future Mini-Me, when we grow up and are immersed in the day-to-day activities of family life, we tend not to spend much time pondering future scenarios that would allow us to return to having drumming be a central activity in our life. Once again, this is as it should be; to fully enjoy the commitments we make, and to do well by those we've promised to have and to hold, we must in a way surrender to our situation and not be dragged down by pipe dreams of stardom. A *woulda-shoulda-coulda* life is no life at all. You brought this date to the dance—you might as well dance with her. If you chose well, you'll have one heck of a good time, even if you don't get to jump behind the drums as much as you wanted.

Then one day you'll take a look around and realize that life has changed yet again. Maybe your kids are old enough now to take care of themselves, or your wife or husband has become involved in activities that don't include you—and the idea of spending a couple nights a week rehearsing and performing with a band again, like in the old days, doesn't seem so crazy. Heck, your chops never really went away; you've even begun to notice that your kids have been pulling out your Black Sabbath LPs—could it be that you've become cool again in their eyes?!

Okay, don't get carried away, cowboy. But you're on the right track. Rock 'n' roll truly never forgets, and neither does jazz. Lucky us!

This issue of *Modern Drummer* magazine features a piece called "Passion and Perseverance: Profiles of Four Drummers Keeping the Fire Alive." Check it out—you might see a bit of yourself in there. And if you've been thinking at all about returning to the drums more fully than you have since "life" took over, perhaps these players' inspirational stories are enough to push you over the hump.

Because we *are* drummers—for the long haul. Maybe it's time to get back behind the wheel and drive that sucker home.



*Adam Budofsky*

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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:**  
Patrick Berkery, David Ciauro, John Emrich, Mike Haid, Dr. Asif Khan, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Martin Patmos, Jeff Potter, Will Romano, Bernie Schallehn, Ilya Stenkovsky, Stephen Styles, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, Paul Wells.

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## READERS' PLATFORM

### JOEY WARONKER

Great article on Joey Waronker (June 2013). It was reassuring to read about his somewhat lighter touch. I have struggled with playing above my physical threshold, so it was great to know success is possible without sacrificing my body! MD does it yet again.

Stephen Kentala,  
via Facebook



### DDRUM REFLEX POWERHOUSE REVIEW

I am a professional drummer, touring ddrum artist and clinician, and longtime *Modern Drummer* subscriber. I am writing in regard to your recent review of the ddrum Reflex Powerhouse kit (Product Close-Up, June 2013) and wanted to share my personal experience. The review, though informative in parts, suggests that the set is not road worthy, and it did not highlight the kit's higher points. For example, the snare drum was mentioned as having a narrow tuning range, which I have to disagree with, especially as it is an "included kit snare." Frankly, it is one of the best snares I have ever played and is both open and punchy. It has plenty of volume and body, while maintaining a tone comparable to snares twice the price.

The Powerhouse is my second Reflex kit, and I'm using it with blues artist Popa Chubby all around the U.S., Canada, and Europe, with nothing but positive reviews. With my first Reflex kit I toured through the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. on the Monkees' forty-fifth-anniversary tour. In both settings, the drums maintained consistently musical and versatile qualities, and an ease with both tuning and miking, while providing a professional and classy look. They've held up to touring relentlessly. Their mounting system is the most stable, simple, and reliable that I have ever worked with. The drums feel comfortable and have a style all their own, as they are the only ones being manufactured with alder wood.

I thank you for your hard work in providing all drummers with the best drum magazine in the world, and I hope this message shares both my love for my ddrum Powerhouse and my respect for *Modern Drummer*. When I was a young teenager reading your magazine and dreaming of my perfect kit—big rock sizes, black with black hardware—years later ddrum made that a reality, in a set that is professional, reliable, affordable, and timeless.

Felipe Torres

I read your review of the ddrum Reflex Powerhouse kit. I want to give you my input first as a drum-quality snob and second as a ddrum artist who's spent time with the kit, both on the road and in the studio. As far as construction and durability are concerned, the kit has been wonderful. I've had it for over six months. It still looks brand new, and we're on tour over three-quarters of the year. The wood hasn't seemed soft or fragile in the least.

This is the ultimate rock kit! It is very easy to tune, and it stays in tune. I've never received more compliments at soundchecks, after live shows, and in the studio about the sound of a kit in my twenty-five years of drumming and fifteen years of recording and touring. I strongly urge you to spend more time with the kit, playing it and putting it through tour-related situations. I think you'll end up with the same love for it as I have.

Jake Smith, drummer for Royal Bliss

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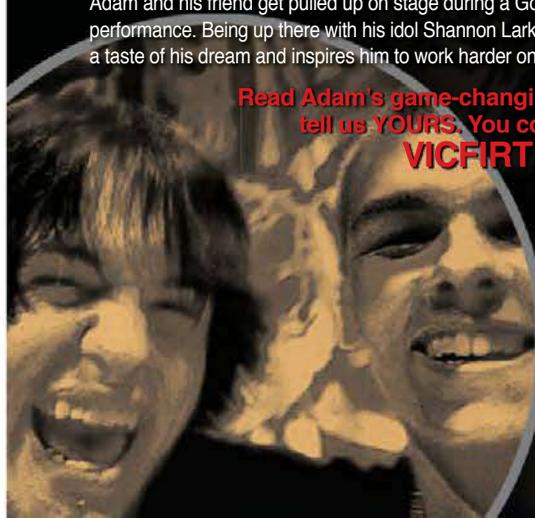
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Adam and his friend get pulled up on stage during a Godsmack performance. Being up there with his idol Shannon Larkin gives Adam a taste of his dream and inspires him to work harder on his music.

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*"EDUCATION PAYS OFF"*

Gregg is very excited to get in on the "cattle call" audition for his dream gig with David Lee Roth, who has just left Van Halen. The drummers auditioning before him tip him off to what the band is looking for, but ultimately it's Gregg's ability to transcribe the intricate riffs and play to them that makes an impression and earns him the gig.

See Gregg tell the whole story. [VICFIRTH50.com](http://VICFIRTH50.com)

Photo by Dennis Keeley

# UPDATE

## JOE RICKARD

His bandmates in the Christian rock group **Red** aren't afraid to let the drums lead the way.

On Red's latest opus, *Release the Panic*, drummer Joe Rickard lays down a barrage of heavy beats with such conviction that he practically shouts, "I was born to do this!" And, in fact, Rickard quit school at seventeen to hit the road and live out his rock 'n' roll dreams. "I was able to see lots of other touring drummers," Joe says of his early initiation into the ways of the road. "Every night really opened my eyes."

During the recording of *Panic*, Red's fourth disc, Rickard played a big role in defining the group's sound, often seeing his rhythms become the impetus for new tunes. "A lot of times the beats in my head end up being the actual beats of the songs," he says. "And a lot of our song ideas get started with the drums. I've got a little practice studio with a virtual setup, so I'll go in and start mocking up beats."

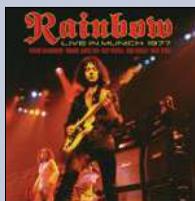
"I've been interested in songwriting all my life," Rickard adds. "I play a little bit of guitar, and that's helped me gain experience and write good drum parts."

*Release the Panic* is steeped in melody and hooks, and during its recording Rickard was conscious of how he could help contribute to building the perfect song. "I always try to bounce off what our singer's doing and keep the choruses pretty open," he explains. "The key is to keep the parts interesting while not getting in the way."

Rickard has been honing his craft with Red for three years, and he's been very purposeful with his sound and style, which he happily reports fans can now recognize. "Drummers can tell it's me by the way I lay out my fills and the way I dynamically build my choruses," he says. "A recognizable drum sound is something I've really tried to develop."

**Steven Douglas Losey**

## OUT NOW

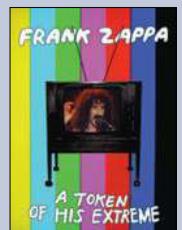


### CDs

**Rainbow** Live in Munich 1977 (Cozy Powell) /// **The Almost** Fear Inside Our Bones (Joe Musten) /// **Black Sabbath** 13 (Brad Wilk) /// **Michael Gallant Trio** Completely (Chris Infusino) /// **Joe Satriani** Unstoppable Momentum (Vinnie Colaiuta) /// **Dust** Dust/Hard Attack reissue (Marc Bell) /// **Armed With Legs** Armed With Legs (Nick Krivchenia) /// **Ben Folds** Five Live (Darren Jessee) /// **Black Host** Life in the Sugar Candle Mines (Gerald Cleaver) /// **Os Mutantes** Fool Metal Jack (Dinho Leme) /// **Emily Bear** Diversity (Francisco Mela) /// **Bob James and David Sanborn** Quartette Humaine (Steve Gadd) /// **Peter Joseph Burt and the King Tide** Bone to Stone (Mike Adamo) /// **California Transit Authority** Sacred Ground (Danny Seraphine)

### DVDs

**Frank Zappa** A Token of His Extreme (Chester Thompson) /// **Styx** The Grand Illusion/Pieces of Eight Live (Todd Sucherman) /// **Jethro Tull** Around the World Live (Clive Bunker, Barriemore Barlow, Gerry Conway, Doane Perry)



## ON TOUR



**Steve Gorman** with the Black Crowes /// **Tyler Greenwell** and **J.J. Johnson** with the Tedeschi Trucks Band /// **Keith Carlock** with Steely Dan /// **Greg Upchurch** with Three Doors Down /// **Brian Frasier-Moore** with Justin Timberlake /// **Fredrik Andersson** with Amon Amarth /// **Dave Smith** with Robert Plant Presents the Sensational Space Shifters /// **Kane Ritchotte** with Portugal. The Man /// **Deantoni Parks** with Boshian Rainbows /// **Anthony "Tiny" Biuso** with T.S.O.L.



# DAVE MATTACKS

For the king of classic folk-rock drumming, England's loss is Boston's gain.

This year marks the thirteenth anniversary of legendary British session ace Dave Mattacks' decision to migrate from England to New England. "I've always loved New England, Boston in particular," says Mattacks, who has recorded with a remarkable cross-section of the most important artists of British folk and rock, including Fairport Convention, Nick Drake, George Harrison, Cat Stevens, and Jimmy Page.

At first, you might wonder why Mattacks chose Boston over larger music cities like New York City and Los Angeles. "The singer-songwriter thing here definitely contributes to its appeal for me," he explains. "There's a wonderful diversity of music, musicians, and recording facilities around here."

Mattacks performs on around six albums per year while teaching at home and at Berklee College of Music, conducting clinics, and producing. A few years back he toured with the country artist Rosanne Cash throughout the U.S., Europe, and Australia for eighteen months. And last summer Dave reunited with his old mates in Fairport Convention to celebrate the legendary band's forty-fifth anniversary at its annual Cropredy Festival, double drumming with fellow vet Gerry Conway.

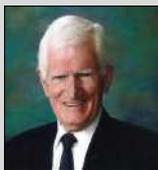
Mattacks' current project, Feast of Fiddles, is a twelve-piece band comprising six rhythm-section members and six electric fiddle players. The band, whose 2013 tour marked its twentieth anniversary, recently released the album *Rise Above It*. The multifaceted Mattacks not only produced the album but played drums, percussion, and keyboards, all of which he tracked in Boston, while the rest of the band recorded in the U.K.

As a contributor to some of the most popular—and most timeless—music to emanate from England during the golden era of classic rock, Mattacks is in an interesting position to comment on the current state of mainstream music. "The entertainment/look-at-me/quick-fix aspect seems to be heightened," he says. "But there's cool stuff on the edge of the radar. The only thing that disappoints me is that there seems to be a new generation of listeners who expect recorded music for free or want to cherry-pick it. But I just try to keep my head down and do my best, whatever the situation."

And what does the future hold for Mattacks? The ever-humble drummer's reply is as succinctly profound as his inimitable playing style: "Produce more and improve my grooves!"

"Pistol" Pete Kaufmann

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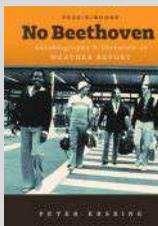
This past February 15, Bill Crowden, founder of Chicago's Drums Ltd. and a veteran of the music business for over half a century, passed away at the age of eighty-one in Irving, Texas.

Located on downtown Chicago's Music Row, Drums Ltd. was among the nation's most popular drum retail shops for decades. Crowden recalled his time there during a January 2012 interview with *Drum Business* magazine:

"It was fun seeing the kids come in from drum corps, and standing next to them was somebody like Max Roach or Tony Williams. This was before these drummers had roadies, so they shopped for themselves. Fridays and Saturdays were great times at the store." The shop also hosted clinics with drummers like Gene Krupa and Cozy Cole, to name a couple.

After selling Drums Ltd. in 1991, Crowden moved into the manufacturing side of the music industry, spending the next five years as director of product development for Paiste before joining the Brook Mays Music Group in Texas, where he helped the company resurrect the Rogers brand.

Donations in Crowden's name may be made to the William F. Ludwig Jr. PASIC Scholarship Fund at pas.org.



## PETER ERSKINE RELEASES MEMOIR

*No Beethoven*, the new book by Peter Erskine, from his own Fuzz/E/Books publishing company, chronicles the time the famed drummer spent with the groundbreaking fusion band Weather Report. The book also covers Erskine's time with Steps Ahead and Steely Dan, plus his experiences with Joni Mitchell, Freddie Hubbard, and Diana Krall, and with fellow drummers Steve Gadd and Elvin Jones. Throughout, Erskine provides a revealing view of the creative process on stage and in the studio and takes a behind-the-scenes look at how the musical instrument industry operates.

Alfred Publishing is distributing *No Beethoven* in print, as well as Kindle, Nook, Sony, and other e-reader platforms, including an iPad version, which Erskine describes as the definitive and deluxe edition. Peter adds that the text is currently being translated into German and Japanese for all platforms, and that a CD-ROM version will be released in Japan later this year. For more info, go to petererskine.com.



## ON AIR

Bush drummer Robin Goodridge has recently begun cohosting the weekly *Friday Night Live* show on Static Beach Radio, out of Hermosa Beach, California. Goodridge is pictured here with guest Orianthi. For more, go to staticbeach.com.



## A TASTE FOR LOBBYING?

This past March 19 and 20, Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers joined former New York Yankee and Latin Grammy-nominated jazz guitarist Bernie Williams, plus leaders of the music instrument and products industry, in Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress on the importance of comprehensive music education in our nation's schools. To read about Smith's experience, go to moderndrummer.com.

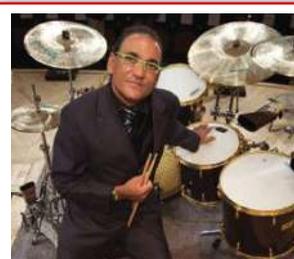
## IN YOUR FACE

Nike recently issued the SB Dunk High Premium Chuck Treece McRad model sneaker. Besides being a pro skateboarder, Treece founded the skate-punk band McRad, has remixed songs for Amy Grant and Sting, played the bass line on "The River of Dreams" by Billy Joel, filled in on drums at a Pearl Jam concert, and toured with Urge Overkill and Bad Brains. In 2010, he was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts.



## THE "ART" OF DRUMMING

Steve Smith, in conjunction with SceneFour, has released a visual art series titled *The Fabric of Rhythm*, with the drumset as canvas and lighted sticks as paintbrushes, resulting in a modern piece of fine art. "It's a view into the inner workings of the motions I use to make rhythms," Smith says. "You see both the impacts and the spaces between the notes." For more, go to moderndrummer.com.



## EL NEGRO, NATIONAL TREASURE

In celebration of the launch of the 12th Annual Jazz Appreciation Month at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., a selection of Horacio "el Negro" Hernandez's musical instrument artifacts were accepted into the Smithsonian's Jazz Collection. The collection also includes items such as Benny Goodman's clarinet, Herbie Hancock's cordless keyboard, Dizzy Gillespie's angled trumpet, and Tito Puente's timbales.

## FESTIVALS

The third International Meinl Drum Festival will take place at the Svenska Mässan in Göteborg, Sweden, this coming November 2. Meinl is producing the event in cooperation with its distributor for Sweden and Denmark, Crafton Musik. Confirmed artists as of press time are **Peter Wildoer** (Darkane, James LaBrie) and **Dirk Verbeuren** (Soilwork), who will perform together, **Rodney Holmes** (Jim Weider Band, Lithium Tree), **Juan Carlos Mendoza** (winner of the 2012 Guitar Center Drum-Off), **Morten Lund** (Stefano Bollani), and **Benny Greb** (2013 *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll winner, Clinician and Educational Book categories). For more information, go to [meinldrumsfestival.com](http://meinldrumsfestival.com).



Among the more than 800 bands playing at this year's Summerfest in Milwaukee are the Violent Femmes (**Victor DeLorenzo**), the Yeah Yeah Yeahs (**Brian Chase**), Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (**Steve Ferrone**), Rush (**Neil Peart**), Silversun Pickups (**Christopher Guanlao**), and Neon Trees (**Elaine Bradley**). For more info, go to [summerfest.com](http://summerfest.com).

This year's Gigantour features Megadeth (**Shawn Drover**), Black Label Society (**Chad Szeliga**), Device (**Will Hunt**), Hellyeah (**Vinnie Paul**), Newsted (**Jesus Mendez Jr.**), and Death Division (**Tim Yeung**).

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## WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Sean Yennett

Recent additions to ddrum's artist roster include **Barry Kerch** (Shinedown), **Dave Culross** (Suffocation), **Simon Collins** (Sound of Contact), **Kevin Talley** (Six Feet Under), **Carlos Gutierrez** (Fueled by Fire), **Chris Julian** (Greeley Estates), **Victor Ribas** (Hurt), **Jake Kilmer** (Smile Empty Soul), **Kevin Fender** (independent), **Mike Cox** (Coal Chamber), and **Mo Bluntz** (Astronautilus).



**Josh Eppard** (Coheed and Cambria) and **Daru Jones** (Jack White, Talib Kweli, the Ruff Pack) are playing Evans and Pro-Mark products.



**Chad Sexton** (311) is using Vater sticks.

**Amir Ziv** (Droid) is endorsing Remo heads.



**Gregory Hutchinson** (independent), **Jon Larsen** (Volbeat), **Michael Cale Parks** (Yeastayer), **Matt Starr** (Ace Frehley), **Nate Coon** (Hudson Moore), **Gringo Starr** (Michael Bolton), **Fernando Sanchez**

(L.P.), **Ryan Parrish** (Smoke or Fire), **Juan Manuel Roura** (Los Amigos Invisibles), **Ben Jackson** (Greg Bates), and **Ian O'Neill** (Gavin DeGraw) have joined the Paiste artist roster.

New Vic Firth endorsers include **Corey Fonville** (Christian Scott, Nicholas Payton, Butcher Brown) and **Shaun Foist** (Picture Me Broken).





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# Must-Have Gear

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## This Month: Paul Gilbert/Puddle of Mudd's JEFF BOWDERS



I always prefer to play my own kit. But sometimes inspiration can come from the unfamiliar. So rather than looking at it as an obstacle, I choose to see it as an opportunity to grow and discover. For the most part, I try to make whatever I have to play on work for me. I actually enjoy the challenge of trying to make a “foreign” kit project the sound I want to deliver. That being said, *oh* what a difference a few essentials can make in the process.

The first essential would be my sticks, the Vater Punisher model. Beefy but not too weighty, they're the perfect balance for playing rock to metal while still maintaining a controlled, dynamic feel.

As with my hands, I want my feet to be comfortable, which is why I always

bring a Tama Iron Cobra Rolling Glide double pedal for dependable power and speed.

Sonically, I love hi-hats, especially closed or X-hats. My main X-hats that I take everywhere are Sabian 13" Fierce Hats. Because they're only 13" I can usually nudge them in anywhere, and the tone will cut through the loudest Marshall stack on the planet—definitely my favorite.

And finally, we drummers love trashy white noise, and my trash combination of choice is a Sabian 10" Glennie's Garbage on top of a Sabian 12" AAX Mini China. The combination allows me to articulate faster ride patterns, but it still spreads enough for crushing accents.

**Interview by Mike Haid**

## BACK *Through the* STACK

We tend to forget that, as kids, *MD* cover stars were just like the rest of us when we were growing up: music obsessives who daydreamed of someday playing with their heroes. In his July 1988 cover story, around the time of Billy Joel's album *The Bridge*, **LIBERTY DEVITTO** was downright giddy as he discussed playing with two of his childhood heroes.

The anticipation I felt while driving into New York to the studio for that session [Billy Joel's "Getting Closer," featuring Traffic's Steve Winwood on organ] was incredible. I have a high school yearbook from 1968. I was so into Traffic at that time that in my yearbook a guy wrote, "Keep your head, keep practicing, and someday you'll play with Stevie Winwood." I brought the book, and showed it to Stevie. I told him things about himself and about Traffic that he'd forgotten!

When that session started, Billy didn't want to get right into doing "Getting Closer." Our band has always done Traffic songs at soundcheck, so Billy started to play "Empty Pages." He was really straining to do a "Stevie Winwood" voice—he's very good at imitations. All of a sudden, Winwood stops the song and says, "Wait a minute. That's not the right key." And he goes up about *three steps higher* and just opens his mouth, and this beautiful voice comes out. And here we all are, just staring at each other and saying, "Oh, wow!" So we played about eight hours of Traffic tunes, and somewhere in that eight hours we also did "Getting Closer."

Right before the *Bridge* tour started, I got a phone call: "Can you

come into the studio?" "What are we doing?" "We can't tell you; it's secret. No wives, no nothing." Finally, I had to get it out of them: Paul McCartney was going to do a thing with [Billy Joel producer] Phil Ramone. So we went in and did two songs with Paul. It was an amazing experience. You know, I've played with Stevie Nicks, John Hiatt, Cyndi Lauper, and a lot of different people. But to be sitting behind the drums, have the tune start, and all of a sudden hear this voice—which I'm so familiar with because I've listened to Beatles records all my life—come through the headphones, and then to look up and *there's the guy singing...* At one point in the session I had to leave the room and tell myself, "Compose yourself, Lib, because you're gonna blow it." I couldn't believe that I was actually there playing the drums for Paul McCartney.

To read the entire Liberty DeVitto feature—and all the other great material from the July 1988 issue—go to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com) and click on the App Store link.



# Rod Morgenstein's Berklee Online Rock Drumming Course

**Virtual Yet Vital** by Jeff Potter



Juggling a go-go schedule of globe-hopping gigs and weekly commutes between New York and Massachusetts, where in Boston he teaches two days a week at Berklee College of Music, Rod Morgenstein was more than a bit busy when the school approached him about an additional course load. Morgenstein questioned whether it was possible to be in three places at once. As it turns out, it was. "Don't worry," Berklee told him, "you can carry on with the work wherever there's Internet service."

"They wanted me to spearhead what I believe is the first online three-credit college course in rock drumming," Morgenstein explains. "I felt from the onset that this is where technology was going. The college campus isn't going away, but this is an opportunity to seize the moment. I'm very into experiencing whatever it will become."

Rock Drums is a twelve-week online course offered four times a year. In each weekly installment, Morgenstein, via video, introduces a topic, offers analysis, and performs demonstrations. Text and transcriptions of the examples are also posted. In addition, play-along tracks written by guitarist John Roth, one of Rod's Winger bandmates, are offered.

Each track is specifically designed by Morgenstein to illuminate lesson goals. Students can observe the drummer demonstrating his interpretations of selected numbers; they then video-record their own performances over the tracks and upload the results for feedback and critique from their hard-hitting instructor.

Also integrated into the curriculum are Morgenstein's rewarding books *The Drumset Musician* and *Drum Set Warm-Ups*. Throughout the week, Morgenstein posts announcements and responds to questions, and students contribute to group discussion questions. Once weekly, a Skype-style town hall meeting is conducted between teacher and collective students. "It's a phenomenal thing," Rod says, "to be sitting at your laptop on the road, looking at and speaking with one student in Switzerland, one in China, one in Chicago...."

Course installments are also designed to reflect a survey of rock history. "I wanted to make sure that every generation of rock drumming was represented," Morgenstein says. When first developing Rock Drums, Rod conducted extensive research to target ideal recorded examples of the featured topics.

"Over the twelve weeks, there's upwards of 300 drum audio examples that I've also transcribed, from one measure to longer. I first demonstrate what I call the seven tried-and-true kick/snare patterns that have flowed from the '60s until today. We hear them time and again because they *work*."

Morgenstein takes students from tracks like AC/DC's "Back in Black" to more complex drum parts. "As the course unfolds," he explains, "we progress into topics such as the influence of Latin rhythm in rock, and odd times and double bass. We cover specifics like ghost strokes, syncopation, rudiments applied to the drumset, and much more. Then there's one of my topics, the guys who started it all. That focuses on the players I grew up with, like Ringo, Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell, Charlie Watts, Ginger Baker, and John Bonham."

A central philosophy running through the course is also the title of the last segment, *Everything Is Connected*. "A lot of rock drummers don't realize there's a connection between rock and other styles of music," Morgenstein says. "A perfect illustration I use in the Latin-influences lesson is demonstrating a traditional Afro-Cuban mambo beat. Then I say, 'Check *this* out—you'll hear that John Dolmayan's fantastic groove on System of a Down's "Revenga" is actually using a mambo in the ride pattern.' I also show how rock drumming directly relates to rudiments and snare drum literature."

Students can enroll in the course at any level and may choose to simply audit courses or participate for full accreditation. Other classes currently offered are Jim Payne's Funk/R&B Drums, Yoron Israel's Drum Set Fundamentals, and Mark Walker's Afro-Cuban Drums.

Morgenstein is now in his sixteenth year at Berklee, and Rock Drums has been thriving since the spring of 2011. "You can't take anything away from the personal experience of being in a classroom," Rod says. "But what's so wonderful about this is that there are so many folks around the world who cannot come to Boston to study. What an amazing alternative!"

"New friendships are forged too. The students are encouraged to interact with each other, to share activities and musical ideas. The feedback I get from so many students...it's been extremely heartwarming to have people say that it's a rewarding experience—and for some, even life-changing."



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# Hi-Hat Bleed

by John Emrich

**I recently tracked an inexperienced drummer in my studio, and I had a difficult time getting a clean, isolated hi-hat sound. The hi-hat also bled pretty badly into the snare mics. What is the best way to minimize these issues?**

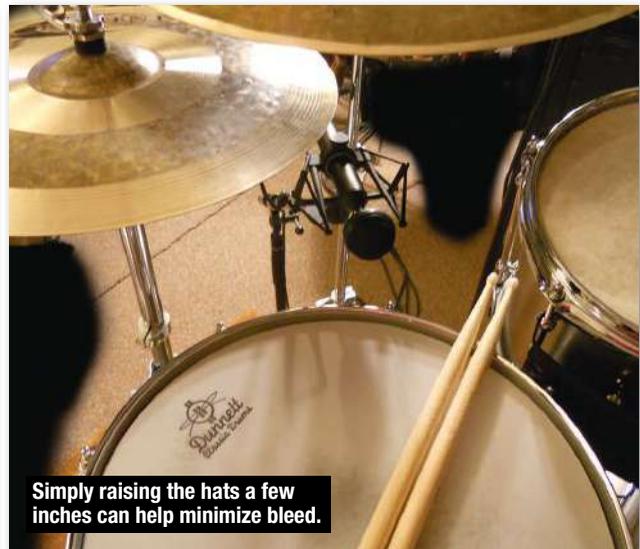
The best way to minimize this problem is to play correctly. In all seriousness, we can look at a few things that can help, but it does come down to the drummer taking ownership of the parts he or she plays.

The first thing I set up for a session is the monitoring environment. Drummers balance everything naturally with their ears. The overhead microphones are the closest representation of what your ears hear, so make the overhead signal your primary sound in your headphone mix. Adding extra microphones is fine, as long as you keep the natural balance in place so that the drummer isn't overcompensating and hitting something too hard. This will contribute greatly to a cleaner recording.

You should also keep the overall headphone volume low in order to get the drummer's internal mix working in your favor. It may seem more exciting and fun to have the headphones cranked, but it's not good for hearing health and will lead to complications with your recordings. With a very loud headphone mix, the tendency is to abandon internal dynamics and just start bashing.

Once your monitoring system is set up, look at the hi-hat cymbals themselves. Are they the correct size and weight for the environment you're working in? Heavy cymbals can be great for live gigs, when you need them to cut through on stage, but they can put out way too much sound, especially in a smaller studio. Moving down to a thinner set can do wonders for minimizing bleed into other microphones.

If you're using the right instruments and playing them in proper balance, and you're still getting too much hi-hat sound in your other mics, then it's time to consider microphone placement. The first thing to do is look at the physical relationship between the hi-hat and the snare. If they're really close together, you can have a difficult time getting a mic in a place that works well. An easy fix is to make a small adjustment, like raising the hi-hat a little.



You can also try putting the snare microphone in a position where its back is facing the hi-hat. Most snare mics have a cardioid pickup pattern, which looks like a heart coming out from the front of the capsule. The backside of that pattern is far less sensitive, so aiming the back of the mic toward the sound you want to eliminate can have positive results.



The next thing you might try is to switch to a microphone with a hyper-cardioid pattern, which is tighter and has a bigger null spot at the rear of the mic.

My last suggestion is to try miking the snare from the side. I like this position because it gives you a well-balanced sound for the snare, and it moves the microphone a bit farther away from the hi-hat. It's also easier to position the mic in this spot. Start by placing it at an equal distance between the top and bottom rim. You just need to be mindful of the air vent. Don't let it blow air straight into the mic.



If you still get too much hi-hat bleed, try putting a piece of thick foam between the mic and the hi-hat. You can get really creative with the mounting, but a simple option is to tape the foam to another mic stand.



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



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# YAMAHA

## LIVE CUSTOM DRUMSET

by Mark Parsons

The term *studio quality* is commonly used as an indication of better-made (and more expensive) drumsets, while outfits using tags like *stage* and *club* are often smaller and less expensive, implying that quality isn't quite as important in the live arena. These widely accepted marketing standards make it doubly intriguing that Yamaha has brought out a well-appointed professional-grade line of drums specifically targeted for live use.

### PEDIGREE AND DESIGN FEATURES

Live Custom drums are the offspring of the Oak Custom line, with some

updates in hardware and shells aimed at optimizing live performance. As with Oak Customs, Live Custom shells are

***As the first offering from Yamaha's Chinese factory, the Live Custom oak drumset is designed for optimal projection in the most demanding environments.***

100 percent oak and are made using Yamaha's Air-Seal System technology. The company owns and operates a musical instrument factory in China, where it's been making pianos and band instruments for several years, and Live Customs are the first drums to come from that facility.

Oak isn't easy to work with, but it has some interesting sonic attributes that make it worth the effort. Among other

things, it doesn't suppress the middle frequencies as much as other common drumset woods do, and the hardness aids in its projection.

Live Custom shells are 8-ply/9.6 mm for bass drums and 6-ply/7.2 mm for toms and snares, which makes these drums 10 percent thicker than the

corresponding Oak Customs. Thicker shells have a higher fundamental pitch, which is another factor in increased projection. Live Customs also feature hardware updates such as new die-cast bass drum hooks, floor tom brackets, tom holder bases, and bass drum legs and brackets.

### AVAILABLE PACKAGES

The Live Custom line is available in four different shell packs, as a complete set with hardware, and as individual components in a wide range of sizes. Our review kit was a shell pack consisting of an 18x22 kick, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, and a 15x16 floor tom (\$3,320). We were also given a 13x14 floor tom (\$700) and a 5.5x14 snare (\$590).

### FIT AND FINISH

The test kit was finished in emerald shadow sunburst—a rich green that fades to black at the edges. The transparent stain lets the grain of the oak show through, and the glossy lacquer clear coat was up to Yamaha's usual high standards. Such things are subjective, but I found this to be an attractive, classy finish, as did everyone who saw it. We were also given tom samples done up in two of the other available Live Custom finishes: black shadow sunburst and amber shadow sunburst. Those were done well too, and I particularly liked the amber finish—the striking reddish oak grain really came through on that one.

Complementing the deeper colors used in this series, the shell-mounted Live Custom hardware—hoops, lugs, claws, strainer, floor tom brackets, and kick-mounted tom base—features a special finish Yamaha calls dark silver, which is a high-polish black chrome. Yamaha chose the Absolute single-screw lug for these drums, and the bearing edges were clean, smooth, and flat, without voids or visible imperfections. The shell interiors sported a black stain that worked well with the darker aesthetic of the kit.

The drums are shipped with Remo heads. The toms have Clear Emperor batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, the snare has a Coated Ambassador batter and a Clear Ambassador bottom,

and the kick is fitted with a Clear Powerstroke 3 batter and a ported Ebony Powerstroke 3 logo head in front. The toms and snare feature 2.3 mm flanged hoops.

It appears as if Yamaha has hit the mark concerning quality control for the first drums coming from its Chinese factory. So, the remaining question is: How do they sound?

### IN USE

The Live Custom bass drum had a hard-hitting midrange sound that would cut through just about anything. From out front, it had a little warmth. But from behind the kit, it was all punch. I dropped the tuning on both heads, and the tone warmed up considerably. Then I placed a small muffling pad inside, just barely kissing the batter head. This setup retained the punch of the oak shell while balancing it out with the right amount of deep resonance, resulting in a good universal sound that could record just as well as it serves it up in a live setting.

The toms were very open and resonant, perfect for a raucous, hard-hitting rock sound. They had a strong attack followed by lots of sustain, with a linear (not “mid-scooped”) tone. These toms will definitely reach people in the back of the room. Swapping to a coated 2-ply batter head warmed and focused the sound a bit, and I really liked the tonal balance with this combo.

One thing that stood out was how integrated the toms sounded as a group. All four drums spoke with equal authority, and they sounded like a cohesive, if a bit boisterous, family. For a smoother, more controlled “studio” sound, all you'd have to do is throw on a set of thin muffling rings.

Of all the different drums in a kit, the snare is the one that benefits the most from the natural tonal properties of oak. This wood's increased volume, articulation, and upper-mid presence falls right in line with the personality we're often looking for in a snare drum, particularly in a live setting. Tuned fairly high, the Live Custom snare had all the cut and crack you could want from a wood drum, and rimshots were strong and superior to those of many other wood snares of a similar size. The overall tone

was almost like a hybrid, somewhere between that of a wood model and a metal one.

Dropped to a medium tuning, the Live Custom snare took on a very nice general-purpose sound. It still had a lot of bite but was balanced by the lower pitch. And like the other drums in the kit, it responded very well to dampening, whether just a little (gaffer's tape) or a lot (control ring). Articulation was also good, no doubt aided by the twenty-five-strand strainer.

Having someone else play these drums while I listened from twenty feet away reinforced the concept that—in an unmiked situation—what sometimes appears as bright and ringing from behind the kit frequently translates to big, full, and lively from out front.

### ON STAGE

It seemed only fitting that we try out drums named Live Custom in a live setting, so we took them out on a gig covering different styles and dynamic levels, unmiked, in a venue with lively acoustics. For the mellower stuff early in the evening, I had dampening on all the drums. They sounded and felt very good, blending well with the music. As things heated up, I removed the dampening on the snare and toms and easily kept up with the increased volume of the guitars and vocals. I never felt that I had to overplay in order to be heard.

### CONCLUSION

With punch and projection to spare, this is a kit obviously designed to excel in a high-energy performance environment, and it checks that box very well. In engineering terms, this is a drumset with authoritative mids and a lot of headroom. So if you're looking for something a little different that leans toward the big/bright/bold end of the sonic spectrum, you'll definitely want to give these guys a listen. But it's also a versatile kit, where attention to head selection, tuning, and dampening can really pay off, with a diverse repertoire of sweet sounds that would work well in more refined genres or even in the studio.

[usa.yamaha.com/products/musical-instruments/drums](https://usa.yamaha.com/products/musical-instruments/drums)



# MEINL

## BYZANCE EXTRA DRY THIN RIDE AND RAPC BONGOS

by Anthony Riscica



**MODERNDRUMMER**  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

From the ever-growing collection of cymbals and percussion from Meinl come the new 22" Byzance Extra Dry Thin ride and RAPC (Radial Ply Construction) bongos. The ride complements its previously released medium-weight counterpart, with a

***Meinl boasts a vast cymbal and percussion catalog and continues to come up with creative yet applicable ideas for new instruments. The Extra Dry Thin ride and RAPC bongos are no exceptions.***

softer feel and more crashability, while retaining a defined stick sound. The bongos represent an innovation in construction, by using plies rather than a traditional stave shell, and also in suspension, with the Free Ride system, which eliminates the need for drilling into the shell.

### BYZANCE EXTRA DRY THIN RIDE

This 22" B20 bronze cymbal features an unlathed finish, with broad and fine hammer marks on the bow and a raw bell. Its sound when hit with the tip of the stick was most definitely dry, with warm, dark undertones that were easily controlled but offered a pretty wide sonic palette for a cymbal of this nature. Add to that the way the ride opened up when crashed on the edge, and you've got an expressive cymbal that sets itself

apart from other "extra dry" models.

The bell sound was present but tended to resonate through the cymbal, keeping it from being a typical dry bell that cuts with definition. The bell is also relatively shallow for a 22" model, which is part of the reason why it vibrated

throughout the cymbal. Overall, I really enjoyed this ride. It's made with undeniable quality and is versatile enough to handle its intended jazz, funk, R&B, studio, and electro applications. I also used it in more of a rock setting, and it handled the live show well, adding a warm base to some harder-hitting music.

### RAPC BONGOS

You can tell these bongos are unique as soon as you pick them up, because they're lighter than most. The new 5-ply construction allows for a thinner shell, which sports a desert burl matte finish that's reminiscent of bird's-eye maple. The shells are fitted with Meinl's Free Ride suspension system, increasing the resonance by joining the drums at the bottom rings as opposed to the usual two-hole drilling system employed on

most bongos. The shells are outfitted with True Skin cowhide heads. The 6.75" and 8" drums feature chromed 8 mm tuning rods and 2.5 mm rounded SSR (Safe and Sound Rims) hoops.

The sound of the RAPC bongos was warmer and richer than that of most I've played. The only thing they really lacked is volume, which can be an important factor when you play these types of drums on stage. Because the drums are so resonant, the sound gets soaked up by the shell instead of being projected straight out, as with thicker solid-shell bongos. The flip side of that was a more controlled sound that was suitable for the lower-volume gigs on which we drumset players often find ourselves playing hand percussion. For those situations, and in the studio, these bongos would offer up a different quality of sound that could be a very desirable departure from the norm.

As someone who has played a wide variety of Meinl products, I found the high quality of these instruments to be no surprise. From the sound and looks to the overall craftsmanship, Meinl has created two fine additions to its cymbal and percussion lines. You should check them out.

**[meinlcymbals.com](http://meinlcymbals.com),**  
**[meinlpercussion.com](http://meinlpercussion.com)**

by Michael Dawson

Earlier this year, TAYE introduced a duo of professional-grade snares designed to appeal to drummers looking for classic sounds at a more affordable price than what's currently offered in the boutique and vintage markets. This intriguing pair, which includes a 7x14 Specialty series walnut/mahogany hybrid-shell drum and a 6.5x14 MetalWorks Vintage Brass, covers a wide sonic spectrum, from open and vibrant to warm and sonorous. Let's take a closer look at each of these new offerings.

#### SPECIALTY WALNUT/ MAHOGANY HYBRID

The Specialty series is TAYE's launching pad for more distinctive snare drum designs. Some models are produced in limited runs, while others stick around over the long term. The Specialty 7x14 walnut/mahogany hybrid-shell snare (\$479) features a 6-ply mahogany core with two plies of walnut on the interior and the exterior. The drum also comes with 6-ply North American sugar maple SoundRing reinforcement hoops; a SideLatch throw-off, which operates perpendicular to the shell; 2.3 mm triple-flange hoops; and classic tube lugs. It has a translucent silver/sandy finish called champagne mist that allows some of the wood tone to shine through.

The sound TAYE was going for with this snare is one that's "very fat but dry," according to company rep Todd Trent. The mahogany supplies the warmth, fatness, and depth, while the walnut

***What's almost as impressive as the distinct yet all-purpose sounds of these two boutique-style snare drums is their highly competitive prices.***

dries up the resonance and provides a darker, snappier flavor. When tuned medium (85 on the DrumDial), the drum had an extremely musical voice, especially with the snares disengaged, emitting a full, pure pitch with a clean



and short sustain and an even decay. No muffling was required at any tuning, as the overtones were a crucial component to the drum's overall musicality.

The snare also had a solid, woody

attack, which made rimshots sound punchy and satisfying. The drum blended perfectly with a vintage Slingerland bebop kit, and it had a chunky, warm, and open tone similar to that of an old '50s WFL mahogany snare

that I often use with this setup. This is one of those rare drums that inspire you to just play. I ended up spending my first half hour with it improvising free-form solos, à la Elvin Jones or Jack DeJohnette.

While I felt that this snare sounded best with the batter head at medium tension, the drum had a broad and versatile tuning range. Tighter tunings elicited a dry, clean "pop," which would be great for James Brown-style funk, while lower tunings led to a punchier and more open "honk" that could serve well for classic rock and contemporary country styles.

## METALWORKS VINTAGE BRASS

Taye's MetalWorks series features drums made from a variety of popular metals, including brass, steel, and aluminum, at very competitive prices. The new 6.5x14 Vintage Brass (\$999) is the company's first foray into more boutique styles, and it pays homage to the coveted heavy-gauge brass snares made by many manufacturers in the early to mid 1900s. The shell is 2 mm thick and features a weathered patina finish. Like the walnut/mahogany, the Vintage Brass comes with a SideLatch throw-off and tube lugs, but the hoops are 2.5 mm chromed brass and the snare wires are from PureSound's Custom series.

The Vintage Brass proved to be a perfect counterpart to the dark, dry, fat-sounding walnut/mahogany. It too had a big, broad, and highly musical voice and a wide tuning range, but it also brought more bite and had more rich, harmonic-laden overtones, which is a trademark of a high-quality brass shell. (Cheaper brass shells can often sound overly "pitchy.") When compared to a modern-made nickel-over-brass snare in my collection, the Vintage Brass sounded a bit fatter and thicker, had more clarity and presence, and required less muffling when being recorded. Tight tunings produced a great combination of "pop" and "ping," medium tunings offered an excellent all-purpose sound, and lower tunings provided a strong, pillowy punch that sat nicely over a bed of warm, pure overtones.

While my personal tastes tend to favor the warmer, darker sound of the 7x14 walnut/mahogany drum over the Vintage Brass, the two snares truly stand on equal footing, with each possessing exceptional diversity and distinct strengths, making for a powerful pair that could cover almost any musical situation.

tayedrums.com



## TRX DRK THUNDER AND BRT LIGHTNING CYMBALS

MODERNDRUMMER  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

by David Ciauro

Vented cymbals are increasingly popular among drummers across numerous genres, from gospel to extreme metal. The vents have a threefold sonic impact, making cymbals sound darker, drier, and trashier. For 2013, TRX introduced Turkish-made vented crashes

that consumed the trashiness during the decay.

### SIZING THEM UP

The vented pattern seemed to absorb the musicality of the Thunder and Lightning crashes as the cymbals decreased in size.

***Thunder and Lightning crashes are designed for a trashy ~ash of aggression, delivered in high and cutting or deep and earthy form.***

in its existing DRK and BRT lines, known as Thunder and Lightning. We had the chance the check out both types, in 16" (\$450), 18" (\$500), and 20" (\$550) sizes.

### SOUND-ESCAPING DESIGN

The BRT Lightning models are heavy-weight crashes with a brilliant finish and an unlathed playing surface. This design promotes power and projection, so it works best in louder environments where cutting through higher frequencies is a concern. The vented pattern boosts the amount of attitude and bite in the attack, followed by a fast-rising swell. The vents also reduce the sustain of the trashy wash, leaving an even metallic overtone to ride out the decay.

The thinner DRK Thunder crashes had an earthier vibe, created by the combination of the vented pattern, low-profile design, and unlathed, raw finish. Each Thunder crash offered a wider attack, with a gritty pang and moodier overtones

The 16" versions had the most "effected" sound and the fastest attack, giving them an almost cinematic quality of dismantling tension. They weren't the most sonorous of the batch, but they could be useful for accenting the most dramatic points within a composition.

Although the 20" crashes had dry stick definition, their eccentric decay and overtones, as well as their vents, likely limit them to crashing capacities. The big, trashy attack is the most important selling point for both 20" cymbals.

The 18" Thunder and Lightning crashes sat right in the middle. They borrowed from the immediate attack and trashiness of the 16" models, and from the more dynamic mood and character heard in the 20" cymbals. Regardless of the size or series, these are boisterous crashes that we found are best reserved for loud and louder effects statements and for times when you need an expanded sonic palette.

trxcymbals.com

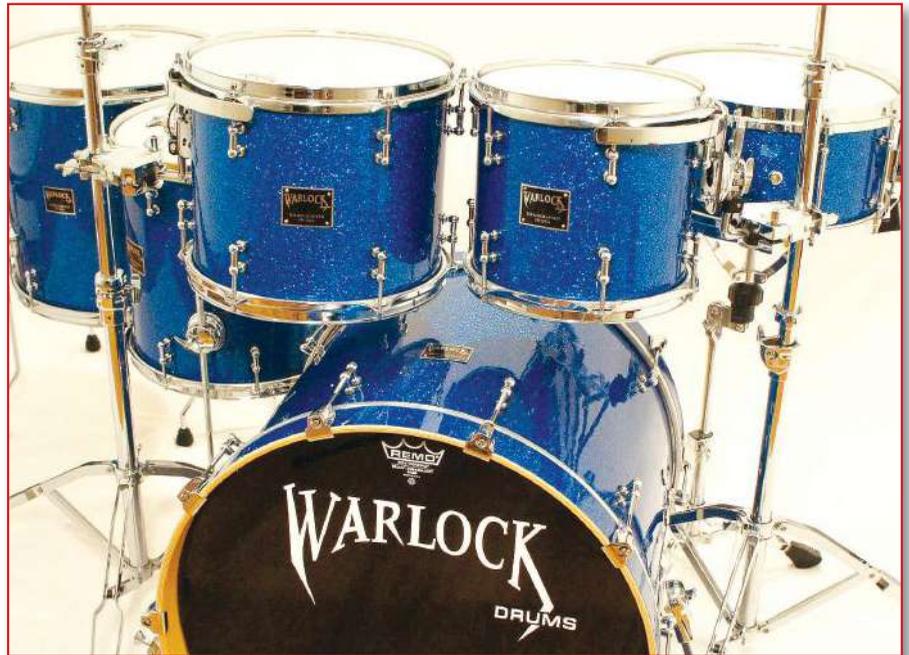
# WARLOCK

## MAPLE BLUE GLITTER GLASS DRUMSET

by Eric Novod

**W**arlock Drums is a budding custom company in Jersey City, New Jersey, run by Joe Dwyer. Inspired by a “frustrated search for the ideal drumkit,” Dwyer offers completely customizable maple or birch sets intended to capture an old-school sound and appearance.

A look at the company’s website reveals a wide range of construction options, including 8-ply shells for bass drums and toms (10-ply is also available); 10-ply snare drums; solid single-point or vintage-style tube lugs; triple-flange, die-cast, or wood hoops; and the choice of solid, satin, pearl, glass, or glitter wraps. For review, Warlock submitted a six-piece maple kit wrapped in blue glitter glass. The sizes included a 20x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a 6.5x14 snare. The bass drum and toms are constructed from North American rock maple shells and



### ***Can a modern-made drumset be designed to deliver the warmth of jazz drums with the all-out power of classic rock kits? Warlock thinks so.***

feature double-45-degree bearing edges and 1.5” tube lugs. The bass drum is equipped with 12-ply maple hoops. The matching 10-ply snare features a Trick throw-off and PureSound wires.

#### **TOMS**

The toms were the highlight of this kit. Both rack toms responded well at various tensions but really came alive when tuned medium-high. (Our best results were when the 9x10 was tuned close to the note F and the 10x12 was close to a C.) They sounded clean with no muffling, but a piece of tape or half a Moongel worked nicely as well. Muffling these drums too much defeats their ultimate purpose, which is to produce a classic, full-bodied tone.

On kits with two rack toms and two floor toms, I’m rarely drawn to the smaller of the two floor toms, which in this case is a 14x14. But as with the rack

toms, the smaller floor tom sang a bit higher, giving it a clearly defined and musical role within the kit.

The 16x16 floor tom was a monster. Its most natural resonance was revealed when it was tuned to an F, and its tone was enhanced with some mild muffling. Due to the wide range of tonal possibilities with these four toms, I had to be extra careful while tuning so that the drums sounded good individually and when hit in various combinations. The overtones could get a bit overwhelming if they weren’t tended to.

#### **BASS DRUM**

This 20x22 bass drum was a powerhouse. Like its counterparts, it could be pushed to medium-high tunings to achieve a focused, round tone. In bigger rooms, lower tunings unleashed some serious bottom end. My favorite option was at a medium-low tension with a little bit of dampening, which allowed the drum to carve out its own space in relation to the wide-open toms. The

kick came equipped with a pre-muffled Remo Powerstroke Pro batter head.

#### **SNARE**

This is a nice all-around snare drum. It could be tuned down to achieve the woof that a 6.5x14 shell provides, but it could also be cranked for a full “pop.” Regardless of the tuning, the drum came to life when the snare tension was on the looser side, so that it could open up and interact with the hefty sound of the bass drum and toms. The drum worked well with its supplied Remo Coated Ambassador batter, and I imagine it would offer an even bigger and darker tone with a Remo Coated Emperor or an Evans HD or G2.

#### **WRAP-UP**

Setting out to capture the tone coveted in the jazz world with the size and power of rock drums is no easy feat. The fascinating conclusion about Warlock drums is that they actually *do* live right in the middle of those two options. They’re big and rocking, yet they possess an impressively wide tonal range at any dynamic level.

[warlockdrums.com](http://warlockdrums.com)



# Bosnian Rainbows' DEANTONI PARKS

Interview by Dave Previ • Photos by Heather Courtney

### DRUMS:

**A.** 5x14 Masters Custom snare

**B.** 16x22 bass drum (from the '80s)

"This setup came from 2003, from something I did with John Cale," Parks says. "John said to get rid of the super-high and low frequencies, so no toms or cymbals. That showed me how full you can make things sound without having all kinds of toms and cymbals. The music drove it in that direction. It wasn't like I sought out to impress everyone with this thing."

"The actual drums aren't really important to me. Yes, tune them the way you like them to be heard, but what's important is what you're doing with them. The sound really is in your hands."

### CYMBALS:

**1.** 15" Pitch Black Mastersound hi-hats

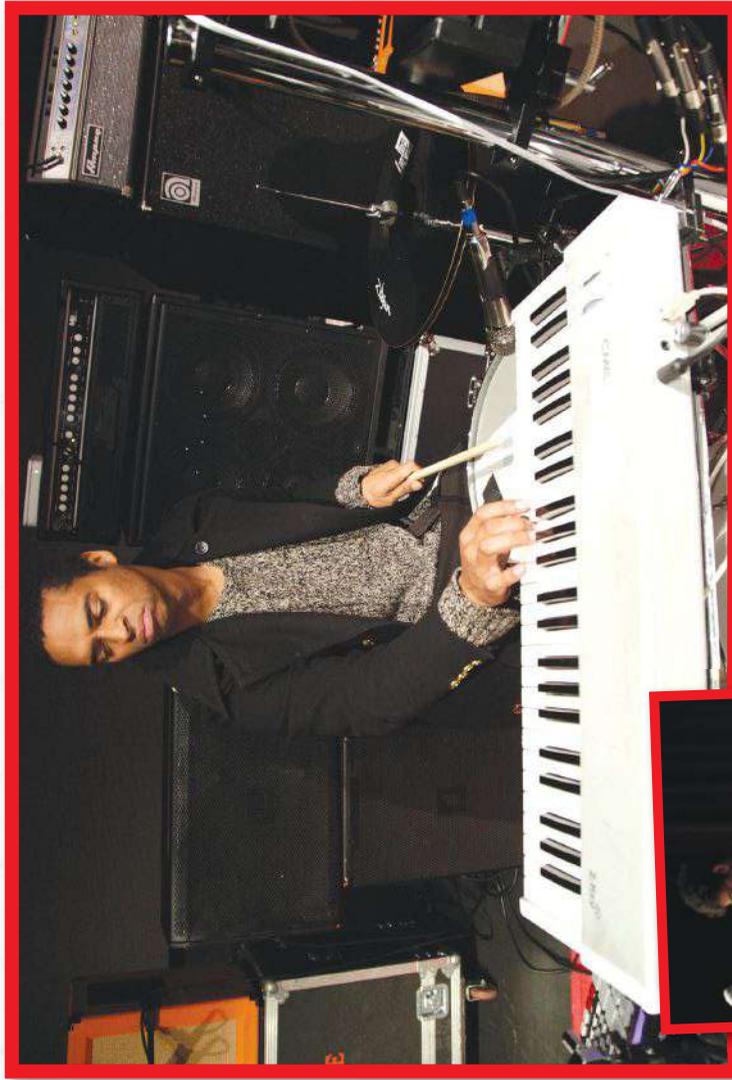
**HEADS:** Remo CS Coated Ambassador snare batter and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

"I hate tight heads; I don't like that sound. I love deep tones, especially in the snare. It forces me to not bounce the stick so much. I really have to play each note, and that's a big part of my sound. I like a lot of attack, but I need that deepness."

**HARDWARE:** Tama Iron Cobra bass drum pedal and Pearl hi-hat stand from the '80s

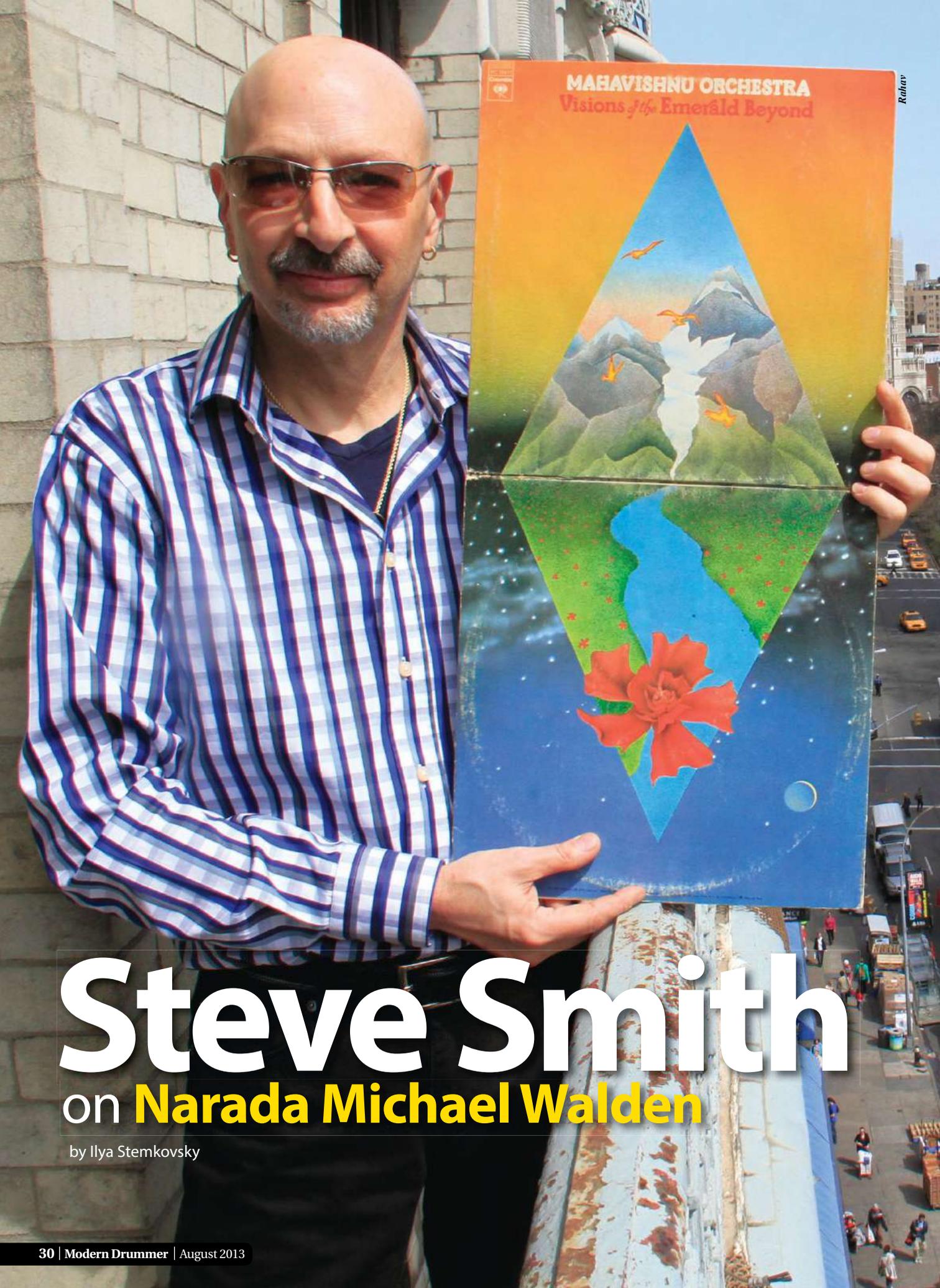
### ELECTRONICS:

Akai MPC500, CME Z-Key 49 keyboard  
"Instead of using a drum pad, I wanted to use a piano, because that's what I grew up playing. The keyboard obviously has many notes to choose from, and I use the MPC as the brain. I'm triggering my favorite Roger Linn sounds, some melodies, Minimoog basses, and whatever I think is going to enhance the song. Since I don't have real crash cymbals, I trigger huge, saturated crashes that come through in such a cool way. I'm doing it all organically, as if the keys were drums, with my right hand."



**"The actual drums aren't really important. What's important is what you're doing with them."**





Kahar

MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA  
*Visions of the Emerald Beyond*

# Steve Smith

on **Narada Michael Walden**

by Ilya Stemkovsky

**M**odern Drummer recently popped in on Vital Information drummer and 2013 Pro Panelist Steve Smith to chat about one of his favorite albums, the Mahavishnu Orchestra's *Visions of the Emerald Beyond*. The 1975 LP was the sophomore outing by Mahavishnu's second lineup, which included drummer Billy Cobham's replacement, Narada Michael Walden. Guitarist John McLaughlin's extraordinary fusion group had catapulted Cobham to international fame, ensuring that Billy's name and the very concept of fusion drumming were nearly synonymous among the genre's many fans. Yet Smith finds Walden's work with the group just as stimulating. We asked him why.

**MD:** What were your feelings about the lineup change in the band? Billy Cobham left some big shoes to fill.

**Steve:** I'd heard about this new drummer in Mahavishnu Orchestra, and I bought [the second lineup's debut] *Apocalypse* and liked it, but it didn't really thrill me the way those two first albums with Billy Cobham did. Narada Michael Walden's playing, good as it was, wasn't very prominent in the mix, and the overall conception on *Apocalypse* wasn't to feature the virtuosity of the players as much as the writing and orchestrating.

With *Visions of the Emerald Beyond*, from the get-go, "Eternity's Breath, Part 1," the opening fanfare that Narada plays is intense! Great playing, but also full of amazing concepts. What he plays, the way he plays it, and the fact that he's so loud in the mix with a huge drum sound that's right in your face and you can hear him go around the toms in the stereo spectrum the way it's panned—it's fantastic.

I listened to that first track over and over again, analyzing what he did. He took a lot of the stuff Cobham did, but he had his own innovations and way of playing fusion. He applied the double bass drums to his own stickings, so there were new hand-and-foot combinations that I hadn't heard before. He appealed to me because of the depth of his groove and the big sound that he got in the recording studio.

**MD:** *Visions* is more produced than the earlier stuff.

**Steve:** Engineer and producer Ken Scott did an incredible job; Narada sounds bigger than life. On the track "If I Could See," the drums were recorded at a faster tempo, and when the tape is slowed down to 30 ips, they sound super deep and heavy. Scott recorded the band's second album, *Birds of Fire*, and then went on to do *Visions*.

**MD:** So many great tracks on *Visions*, and such a thick pill!

**Steve:** On "Lila's Dance," Narada plays the shuffle groove in 10/8 that Billy played on "The Dance of Maya" from *The Inner Mounting Flame*, but he plays it with such a deep pocket and so much attitude. And "Can't Stand Your Funk" is a tune in 5/4 with a wickedly funky beat played with a lot of intensity.

Narada's a powerhouse. Traditional grip! This really appealed to me at that time because I was just discovering playing with that big sound and deep groove. "Cosmic Strut" has a section in 9/4—4 plus 5—with McLaughlin's solo 7-7-7-6, which equals 27. It's the first time we hear one of Narada's tunes and his aspirations to be a writer and artist.

"Be Happy" goes into a burning 7/4 where Narada turns the beat around like a rock/fusion James Brown drummer—very innovative and unique, with more use of the double bass drums in the groove. Cobham would use double bass and keep them going and

lift the energy, but Narada used double bass as part of the drumbeat itself. The energy is off the hook! And "On the Way Home to Earth" has McLaughlin with the ring modulator in a duet with Narada, then bassist Ralphe Armstrong enters and they take off in full fusion flight.

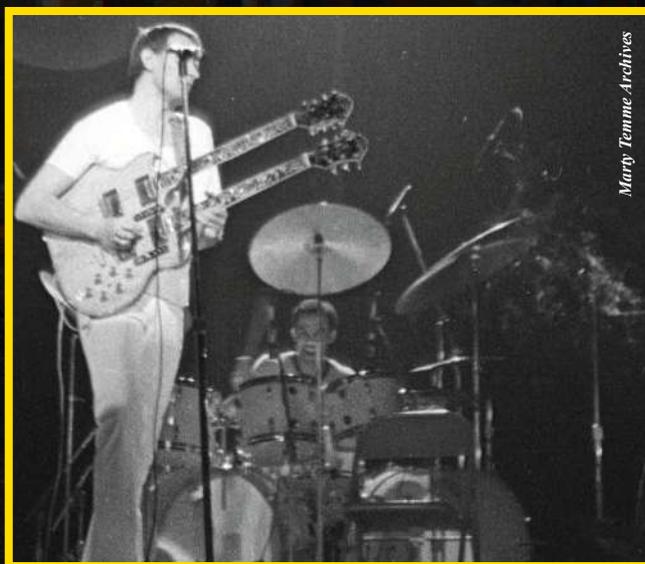
**MD:** What other effect did the album have on you?

**Steve:** It's had such a great impact—and not just at the time, but later and through the years, because I started to play with two of the main players from *Visions*, Jean-Luc Ponty and Ralphe Armstrong. Armstrong had grown up playing with Narada in Detroit and would constantly reference him and give me a hard time when I didn't play something he approved of. [laughs] Of course this made me listen to Narada even more.

When I joined Journey, I started to see that some of what Narada did would work in that rock setting. I copied the patterns and phrasing and used those on many recordings. You can really hear his influence on Journey's "Mother, Father." That's why Narada

**"Narada applied the double bass drums to his own stickings, so there were new hand-and-foot combinations that I hadn't heard before."**

was able to play with Tommy Bolin, Jeff Beck, Allan Holdsworth, Weather Report, and many others. He was deeply funky yet was as powerful as a rock drummer—close to Buddy Miles, Greg Errico, and Mitch Mitchell, but informed by Cobham as well. He had great rudimental chops with clean double strokes.



Mary Temme Archives

Also, the kinds of fills between the hands and feet that people call "quads" now—Narada was the first person I heard play those. Ginger Baker played some things like that, but Narada did it in a different way. Vinnie Colaiuta and I would study *Visions* together at Berklee and cop Narada's licks. I used to listen to the album first on vinyl and then later on cassette with my Sony Walkman.

I even loved the name *Visions of the Emerald Beyond* and the album artwork. I've gotten to know Narada very well over the years, because we both lived in San Francisco for a long time. When I moved there in 1978, I actually took some lessons from him. Later we became friends and played in a double-drummer band together called Been There Done That.



# Get the Best

Compilation albums that really pack a punch—plus further must-have tracks. This month: the holy trinity of classic jazz-fusion groups. by Ilya Stemkovsky

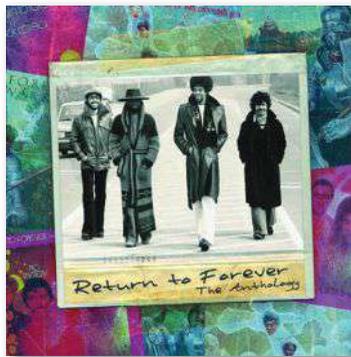


## MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA

### *The Best of the Mahavishnu Orchestra*

Guitarist John McLaughlin and drummer **BILLY COBHAM**'s relationship dates back to Miles Davis's 1969 *Bitches Brew* sessions, but it was on Mahavishnu Orchestra's 1971 debut album, *The Inner Mounting Flame*, that a true melding of jazz and rock took place and a new drumming language was born. This compilation highlights the crests reached by the pioneering Cobham as he whips out flurries of 32nd-note tom and snare rolls to open "Meeting of the Spirits" and perfectly underscores the menacing chord progression and odd-time triplet feel of "The Dance of Maya" (both from the debut). The 1973 sophomore album *Birds of Fire* is represented by the double bass assault of the title track and the light-brushes-turned-aggressive-funk workout "Open Country Joy." Interpersonal conflicts brought down the original lineup, but Mahavishnu reconvened with a twentysomething **NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN**, who gets his feet wet with the strings-heavy "Wings of Karma" (from 1974's George Martin-produced *Apocalypse*) and brings the hammer on 1975's *Visions of the Emerald Beyond*, where he adds shading underneath beautiful guitar arpeggiations before executing ridiculous fills on the twisted blues section of "Lila's Dance" and lays into his kit with a raging cymbal-wash attack on "Be Happy." Want to know where jazz really stopped swinging and the volume was turned up to 11? Then look no further. **Amazon.com physical CD (from 2011): \$12.86**

**EXPAND THE PICTURE:** The aforementioned best-of set isn't available on iTunes, but Mahavishnu's individual early albums are. Explore the band's subtle side through Cobham's incredible sense of drama and space on the drum breaks of "You Know You Know," and dig the hyperkinetic 9/8 groove of "Vital Transformation" (both from *The Inner Mounting Flame*). Then move on by downloading "Eternity's Breath, Part 1" and "Part 2," from *Visions of the Emerald Beyond*, to hear Walden's over-the-top tidal-wave rolls and thick pocket.

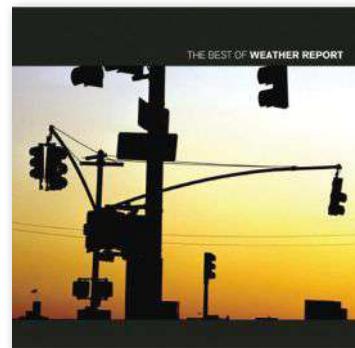


## RETURN TO FOREVER

### *The Anthology*

*The Anthology* focuses on Return to Forever's "classic" period featuring drummer **LENNY WHITE**, during which leader Chick Corea's Latin-flavored compositions coexisted alongside jazz-funk and were interpreted by way of distorted guitars and synthesizers. Like Mahavishnu's leader/drummer duo, Corea and White played together on *Bitches Brew*, and their musical simpatico is evident on "Captain Señor Mouse" (from 1973's *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy* album, presented complete here) and "Vulcan Worlds" (from 1974's *Where Have I Known You Before*), where the drummer punctuates sinewy melodic keyboard lines and locks in with virtuosic bassist Stanley Clarke. The funk quotient is raised significantly on 1975's *No Mystery*, and White's own composition "Sofistifunk" benefits from slick drum syncopations, while the two-part "Celebration Suite" even features White and Corea performing a marching snare duet. By the time of 1976's *Romantic Warrior* (also presented in full here), the group was selling tons of records and playing large venues, but the music was as demanding as ever. "Medieval Overture" switches from super-fast tom flams to half-time backbeats to a ghost-laden double time underneath a bass solo to a swirling odd-meter section. And check out the sheer number of notes coming from White and legendary guitar shredder Al Di Meola on "The Magician." Remember to strap yourself in. **Amazon.com physical double CD (from 2008): \$14.99**  
**iTunes full album download: \$16.99**

**EXPAND THE PICTURE:** *The Anthology* eschews **AIRTO MOREIRA**'s excellent work on the first two RTF records, so go to iTunes to download "Captain Marvel" (originally on 1972's *Light as a Feather*) from an earlier compilation, *Return to the 7th Galaxy*. You'll hear Moreira's dancing ride, and you can check out Lenny White's successor, **GERRY BROWN**, playing a wonderful linear pattern on "The Musician" (from 1977's *Musicismagic*). Then study the unison lines of "Romantic Warrior" from 2008's live *Return to Forever Returns*, a thirty-two-years-in-the-making classic-lineup reunion.



## WEATHER REPORT

### *The Best of Weather Report*

Keyboardist Joe Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter, yet more Miles Davis alums, formed Weather Report to play their unique brand of fusion, and the guitar-less instrumentation allowed for a generally more textural approach. Like the Return to Forever compilation, *The Best of Weather Report* narrows the focus to the band's most commercially successful years (1973-80), though the presence of many musical titans reminds us why the period was so fertile, even if the lineup was ever shifting. Drummers **ISHMAEL WILBURN** and **SKIP HADDEN** and percussionist **DOM UM ROMÃO** combine their efforts on the dotted-feel title track of 1974's *Mysterious Traveller*, while **LEON "NDUGU" CHANCLER** plays some intricate hand-and-foot combos along with percussionist **ALYRIO LIMA** on "Man in the Green Shirt" and "Freezing Fire," from 1975's *Tale Spinnin'*. Selections from 1976's *Black Market* feature both **NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN** (the title track) and **CHESTER THOMPSON** ("Elegant People"), alongside percussion work from **DON ALIAS** and **ALEX ACUÑA** (who also plays understated drums on "A Remark You Made" and the famous rimclick pulse on "Birdland," from 1977's *Heavy Weather*). **PETER ERSKINE** is sadly underrepresented on the comp, though his funky half-time shuffle drives the title track from 1980's *Night Passage*. **Amazon.com physical CD (from 2002): available used**  
**iTunes full album download: \$9.99**

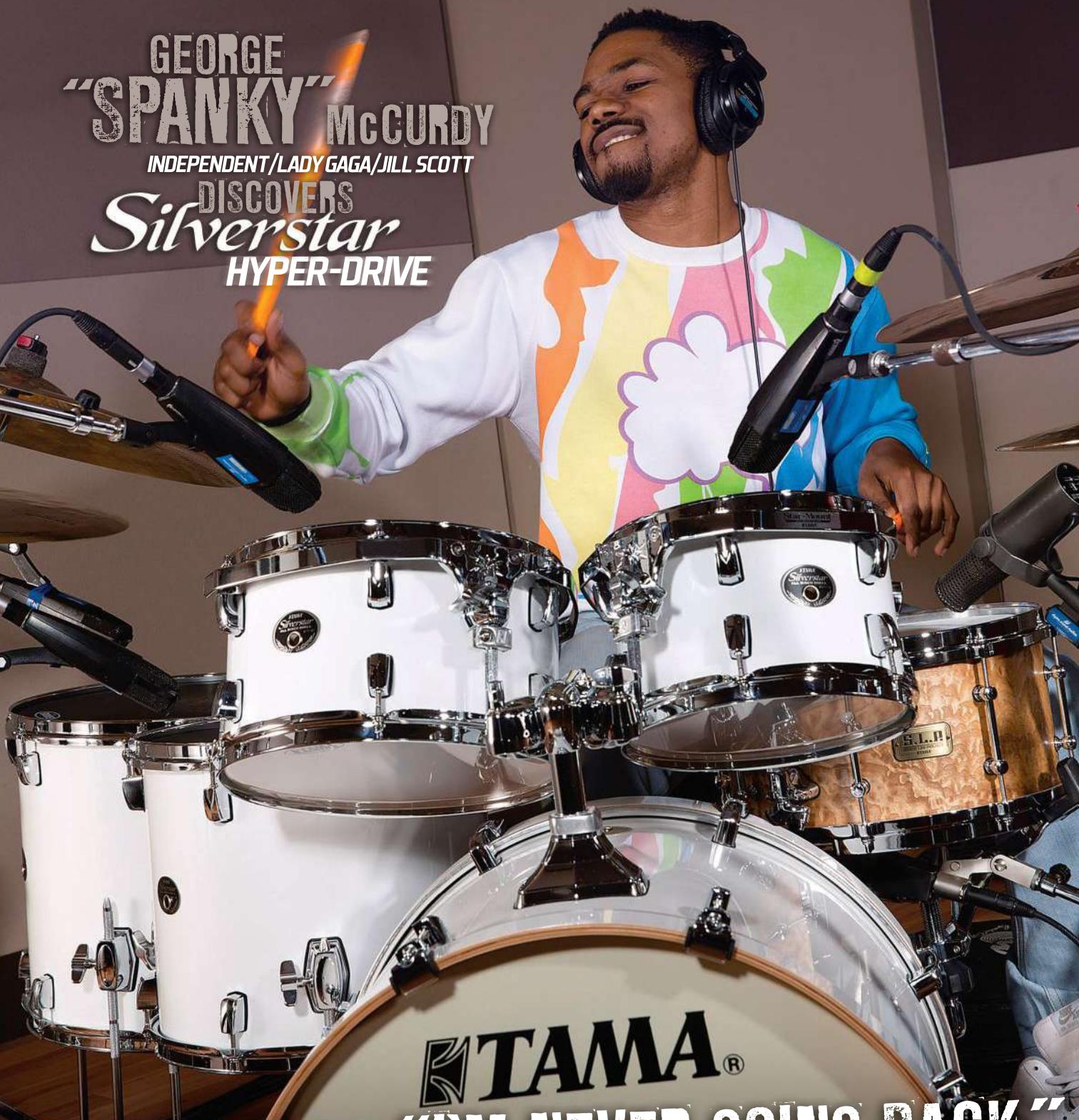
**EXPAND THE PICTURE:** Weather Report was a drummer/percussionist factory, and no single disc can cover it all, so download from iTunes some up-tempo Erskine swing from 1979's live *8:30* ("Sightseeing"), then check out **OMAR HAKIM**'s two-handed hi-hat work on the grooving "Predator" from 1984's *Domino Theory*. Also search out early stuff with **ERIC GRAVATT** and **ALPHONSE MOUZON**. And don't forget the titanic **JACO PASTORIUS** (appearing on several tracks on *Best of Weather Report*), who not only changed the game when it came to electric bass but also throws down a mean disco hats/syncopated kick pattern on *Heavy Weather*'s "Teen Town."



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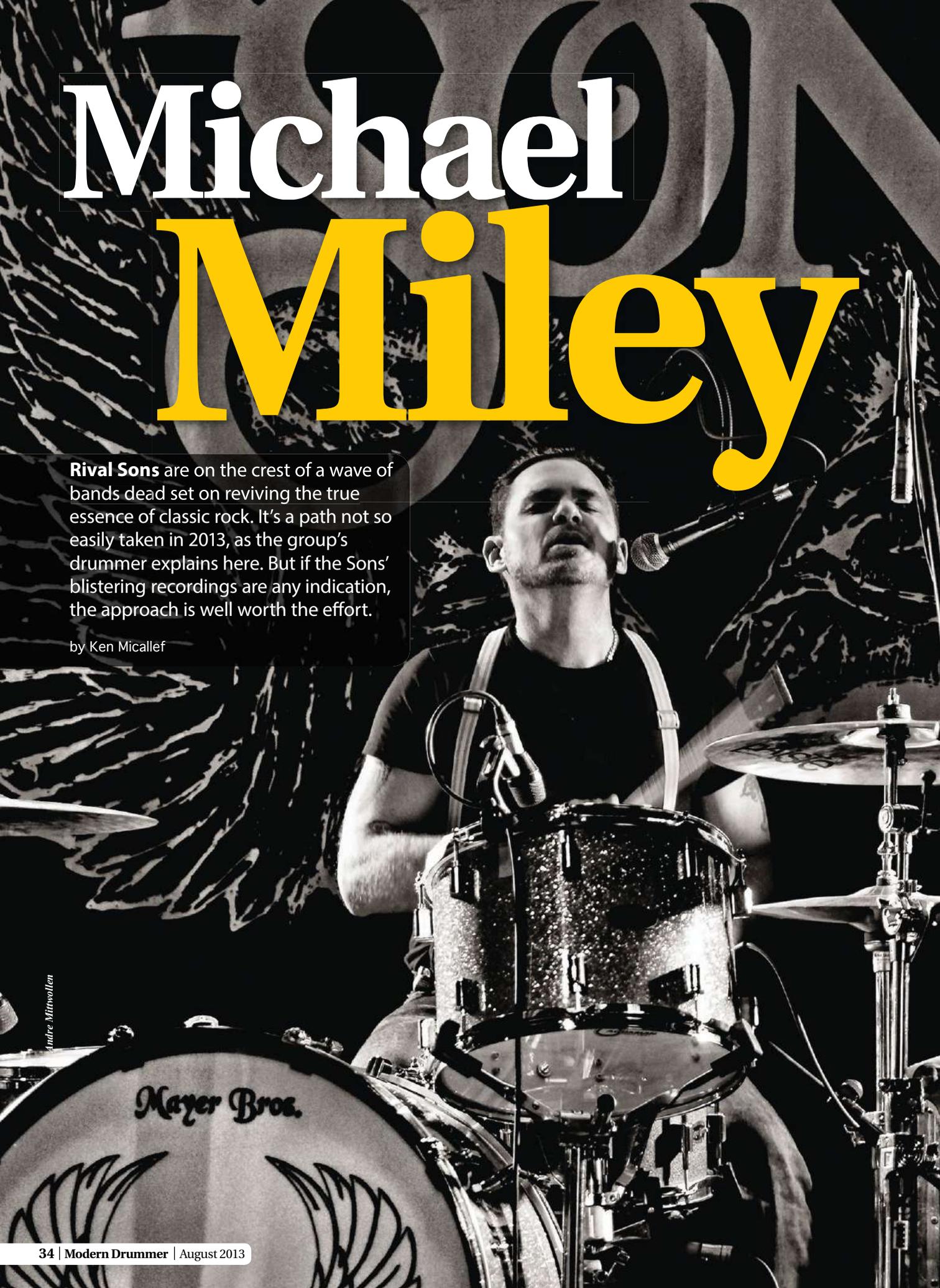


To hear what Spanky has to say about Silverstar visit [tama.com/silverstar](http://tama.com/silverstar)



LIMITED EDITION HYPER-DRIVE WITH S.L.P. G-MAPLE SNARE

# Michael Miley



**Rival Sons** are on the crest of a wave of bands dead set on reviving the true essence of classic rock. It's a path not so easily taken in 2013, as the group's drummer explains here. But if the Sons' blistering recordings are any indication, the approach is well worth the effort.

by Ken Micallef

Andre Mitwollen

**R**ival Sons—drummer Michael Miley, guitarist Scott Holiday, bassist Robin Everhart, and vocalist Jay Buchanan—play authentic rock 'n' roll as dictated by such pioneers as Led Zeppelin, the Yardbirds, Cream, and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. At the heart of the band's

get inside the song and let my influences take over. We all have our influences, and you tend to wear them on your sleeve.

**MD:** When the band presents a new song, you're not thinking classic rock influences necessarily?

**Michael:** In Rival Sons, we lock ourselves away in the studio and try to complete

***"There's an innocence to older music that we all love. They weren't nitpicking every little thing. I can play to a click. But you have to rest on your years of practice."***

blues-drenched roar is Miley, whose heartfelt grooves might sound passé in lesser hands.

On the band's third album, *Head Down*, Miley consistently achieves passion, power, and inspired invention. From the pounding four-to-the-bar pummel of "Wild Animal" to the skull-destroying opening salvos of "You Want To" to the implied violence of "Manifest Destiny, Part 2" to the Simon Kirke-style impact of "All the Way" to the swinging groove of "Until the Sun Comes," Miley and Sons chase authenticity like they're in a battle to reclaim the very soul of rock 'n' roll.

**MD:** What's key to playing a classic rock style with freshness and energy?

**Michael:** You have to play the song, first and foremost. And songs generate feelings and emotion and truth. I try to

one song per day. We write everything together. Maybe the first reference I'll think of when someone comes up with an idea is the Kinks, or the Rolling Stones—real riff-oriented music. Obviously I wouldn't play a busy or complex funk beat to that style of music; I'll lay down a simple beat, and little nuances will come from what Jay is doing. I'm a very singer-oriented drummer.

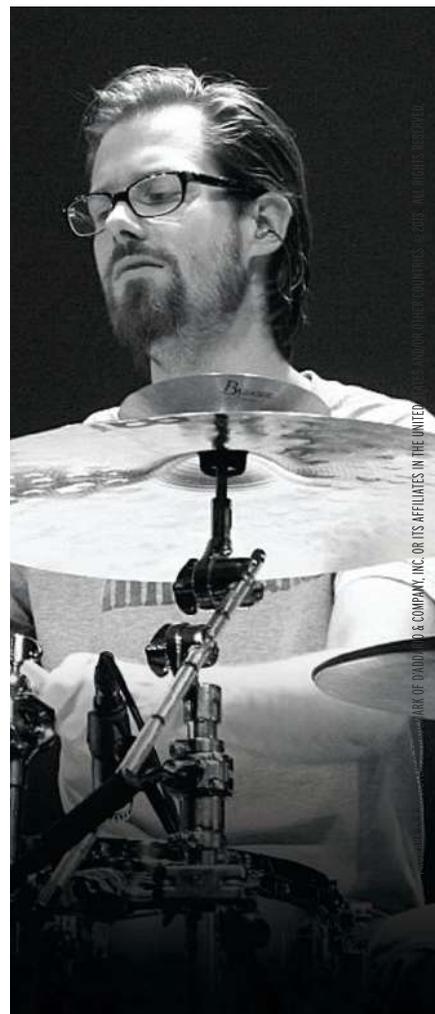
The nuances build as we start jamming. Sometimes our producer will record the rehearsal and then piece together a take from different performances. So we'll have a real raw intro and chorus, for example, where none of us really knows the song yet. It has that looseness, and that's our formula—a forced, visceral gut reaction to the first time we hear the riff or song structure.

**MD:** Don't you get better ideas later?

**Michael:** Oh, yes! I have fought tooth and nail with the band and producer. I might say, "This is the worst drum take!" But they'll love it. "But that fill sounds like I dropped a beat!" But they'll say, "It made it urgent!"

**MD:** Do you push to replace parts?

**Michael:** I have punched in maybe one time. It's always a group decision. Our first engineer, Greg Gordon, said the way they fixed mistakes in the old days was to punch up the volume. Make it louder; make it like you meant it. You can hear that on the early Beatles or Stax or Motown or Who recordings, before they began tape splicing and fixing mistakes. There's an innocence to older music that we all love; they



Ed Miles

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## Tools of the Trade

Miley plays a Mayer Bros. drumset featuring a 6.5x14 aluminum or titanium snare, a 10x14 tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 14x26 bass drum. His Paiste cymbals include 15" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats and 19" and 20" 2002 Wild crashes. His kick and tom batter heads are Aquarian Classic Clears, and his snare is fitted with the Texture Coated model; all of the batters have a dot. He uses Wincent Michael Miley signature sticks, Cympad cymbal washers, and Scosche in-ear monitors.



Sam Scott Hunter

weren't nitpicking every little thing. Our goal is "What you see is what you get." It's how music used to be before it was over-thought.

**MD:** So no gridding in Pro Tools?

**Michael:** No grid, and no click. I can play to a click—I did it with Kelly Clarkson. But you have to rest on your years of practice. Once we have a riff going, it sits in the pocket and the tempo is naturally agreed upon between us. It's about that truth. That allows us to adjust the groove and stick it where it belongs. It's a feeling. And the reaction we get is the result; people say

that they haven't heard music like this in years.

**MD:** You have an interesting warm-up based on Tony Williams' drumming on Miles Davis's *Filles de Kilimanjaro*.

**Michael:** Any rhythmic melody is based on a double, a single, or a paradiddle. Then there's flams, right? On every solo section on that album, Tony is playing 8ths on the hi-hat and ride cymbal and then freely expressing himself with the left hand and right foot around the rest of the kit. Based on that, I warm up with doubles between the snare and kick, with the

pulsing 8th-note ostinato. Then I break up triplets between the kick and snare, then spread it around the kit. I also got that idea from *Stick Control*, taking page one and playing the L/R patterns between the left hand and right foot against a ride cymbal ostinato.

**MD:** There are instances in Rival Sons' songs where the band drops out and you carry on with a groove or a more active fill. What dictates what you play in the rests?

**Michael:** It's like setting up figures in a big band. You're telegraphing what's about to happen. There's a part in "All the Way" that has the big swing beat on the toms. Originally



Ed Miley

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## MICHAEL MILEY

when I played that we were going to create a drum sample and make it sound like two drummers, but I ended up playing the two parts, doubling myself. You want to telegraph all the big moments, basically.

**MD:** What is your training?

**Michael:** At Los Alamitos High School my big band instructor was Chad Wackerman's dad, Chuck Wackerman. Brooks Wackerman and I used to skateboard together and pick up girls. In big band I listened to everything from Frank Zappa to Miles Davis. I went through Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer* with Chuck Wackerman. I went to Fullerton College and played in big band there too. In college I studied with everyone from Chuck Flores to Chuck Silverman, and when I was twenty I went on tour with the Furthur Festival after Jerry Garcia died. I had been studying with Sergio Mendes's percussionist Chalo Eduardo; I was obsessed with Brazilian music. I went to Brazil to study, and I played with two different samba schools. Being there for two weeks changed my life.

**MD:** How did you come to play with the samba schools? That's an honor.

**Michael:** I just walked into the rehearsals. I was trying to memorize the repinique and surdo parts. I led the samba band at California State University at Long Beach. [Miley graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in performance.] In Brazil, no one

could enter on the right beat. They're all just working guys in the samba bands, not professional drummers. They don't count anything. There were thirty surdo drummers, and no one could find the beat. So I raised my hand and the leader let me play. He kicked it off, and I came right in on the beat. All the other drummers gave me dirty looks! There were seventy-five drummers total, and that was just an afternoon rehearsal. After being in Brazil I came back to the U.S. with some fresh ideas.

**MD:** What did you play at your senior recital at Long Beach?

**Michael:** I played "The Black Page" on the drumset, a Bach piece on steel drums, and a Chopin piece, "Nocturne in E Minor," on vibes.

**MD:** How did you join Rival Sons?

**Michael:** When I graduated I played in a band called Bird 3, then with Joe Firstman on Atlantic Records. He was hired as music director for the house band on *Last Call With Carson Daly*, which I did for five years until 2009. I had met Scott and Robin in 2007 in Bird 3, and I got them in the house band as well. I had been on Jay's solo project. In this band we really *are* rival sons—sometimes we want to tear each other's heads off. But we all love soul music.

**MD:** How do you keep your chops in shape on the road?

**Michael:** I do yoga and work with resistance bands. And I do aerobics to get the blood flowing. On the pad, I do RLRL and double it in unison with my feet and hands, then change the tempo. Then flams and Swiss triplets.

**MD:** How does it feel to be in an American band that had its first success in the U.K.?

**Michael:** It's a tradition, from Jimi Hendrix to Kings of Leon. All of my rock 'n' roll heroes are from England. We played at the Electric Ballroom last year during the *Classic Rock* awards show [the band won for Breakthrough Artist], and when I looked over, Jimmy Page was watching us. That's incredible. If you can win over the U.K. fans, who throw pints of piss at bands, you've really achieved something.



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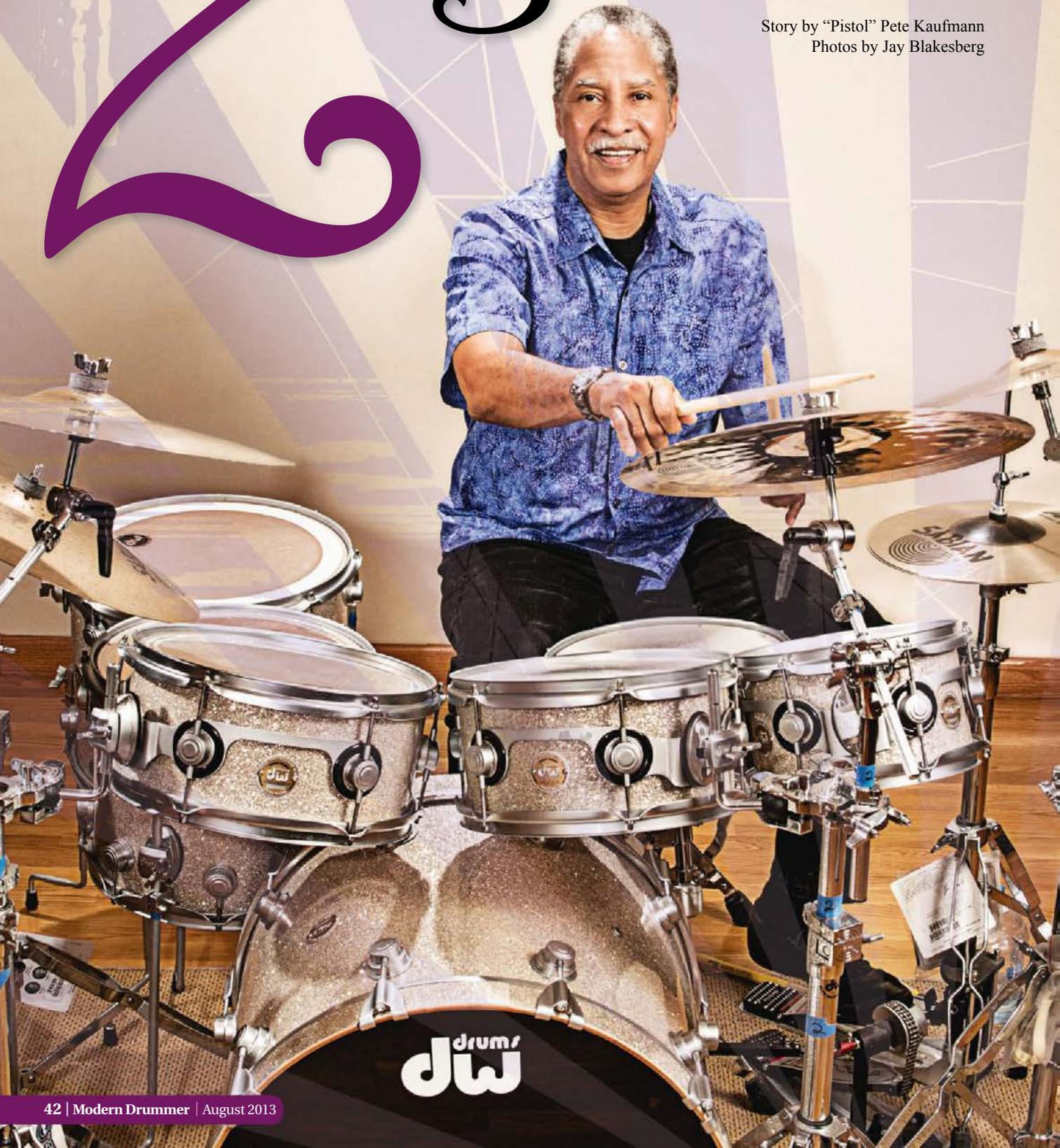
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Story by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann  
Photos by Jay Blakesberg



drums  
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# Modeliste

**How is it that his drumming approach is so unusual yet so fully representative of the breadth of New Orleans' remarkable rhythmic legacy? In his first-ever *Modern Drummer* cover story, the Meters' legendary beatsmith provides more than a few clues—and heaps of timeless wisdom.**

**I** flash my ticket stub to the frazzled security guard, who gives me a quick nod of approval and ushers me toward an elevator. "Take it to the seventh floor," he says. I maneuver myself into the ancient-looking contraption with a throng of fresh-faced twentysomethings, many of whom are donning Phish apparel.

As the rickety old beast fights to climb each story, the distant sound of pulsating music gradually gets louder. Fifth floor. Sixth floor. The vibrations from the bass are now traveling through my boots. Seventh floor. Ding! As the elevator doors slowly open, I recognize the song, now blazing at full volume, as "Africa" by the Meters. The drums sound powerful, primal, yet modern at the same time. I shimmy my way through the crowd to get a better look at one of the most influential funk drummers who's ever graced a stage.

**S**omehow, Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste is bringing it just as hard in 2013 as he did when he first came to prominence in the late '60s with the New Orleans funk institution the Meters. Strength, finesse, and the ability to weave in and out of unique yet commanding grooves like a champion fighter are among the traits that have

made him a top influence on a hugely diverse group of drummers. It would be nearly impossible, for instance, to imagine what the playing of monsters like Little Feat's Richie Hayward, Wynton Marsalis's Herlin Riley, or Lettuce's Adam Deitch would sound like without Modeliste's influence. In

*"When I was young, I was a good dancer. That was the spiritual and physical thing that made me gravitate toward R&B."*

interviews, major players like Galactic's Stanton Moore and the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Chad Smith regularly note Zigaboo's impact—not only on the art of drumming, but on all of contemporary groove music.

Like fellow rhythmic magicians such as Tower of Power's David Garibaldi, Bob Marley's Carlton Barrett, and James Brown's Clyde Stubblefield, Modeliste has an approach that's deeply nuanced yet immediately gratifying. And as with all great groovers, when you hear Zig play, you want to play like him. He's timelessly cool.

**T**he band performing tonight at the Grand Ballroom in New York City is the Meter Men, a recent variation on

the original group's lineup that, besides Modeliste, features founding members Leo Nocentelli on guitar and George Porter Jr. on bass, along with Page McConnell of Phish on keyboards—which at least partially explains the dress code of my elevator mates.

"Africa" comes to a rousing end, and Zig grabs the mic. "How many of y'all like New Orleans music!" he shouts. The crowd goes *berserk*. Then comes a kick-and-snare groove that, ironically, many in tonight's audience likely first heard as a sample on the Beastie Boys' 1989 track "B-Boy Bouillabaisse" but which in fact has its roots in New Orleans' pre-jazz history. The legendary drum intro permeates the old ballroom, infecting young and old. The crowd has been magically

transported to the streets of New Orleans, smack-dab in the middle of a Mardi Gras Indian parade.

Modeliste holds the audience in the palm of his hand as he enthusiastically sings "Little bitty boy, with a heart of steel/You can't boogie now, but your sister sure will/Feel-good music, I've been told/Good for your body, and it's good for your soul/Gonna do it now..." The crowd joyfully frolics and chants the chorus in unison, cups of beer in hand: "Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey pocky a-way!"

"Feel-good music" has been an integral part of New Orleans culture from as far back as anyone can tell. Although Modeliste hasn't lived in the city in over twenty years—he currently

resides in Oakland, California—the culture of his hometown is imbedded in his DNA. It's his foundation. And it's his continuous energy source. Fifty years into his professional career, Zig remains busy fronting his own groups (he retains bands based in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and the Bay Area) and

his way through modern-day music while paying respect to his roots and his colorful past.

**MD:** How did you get your nickname?

**Zig:** It was mostly out of dark satire. It was supposed to be a derogatory name. When we were coming up we used to

before. Now I wear it like a badge.

**MD:** What was it like growing up in New Orleans when you were a kid discovering drums?

**Zig:** Around 1957, maybe a little earlier, was when I first started listening to music on a regular basis. But basically I'm a product of the '60s, when I was in high school.

**MD:** Earl Palmer left New Orleans around 1957, when you were still a kid, right?

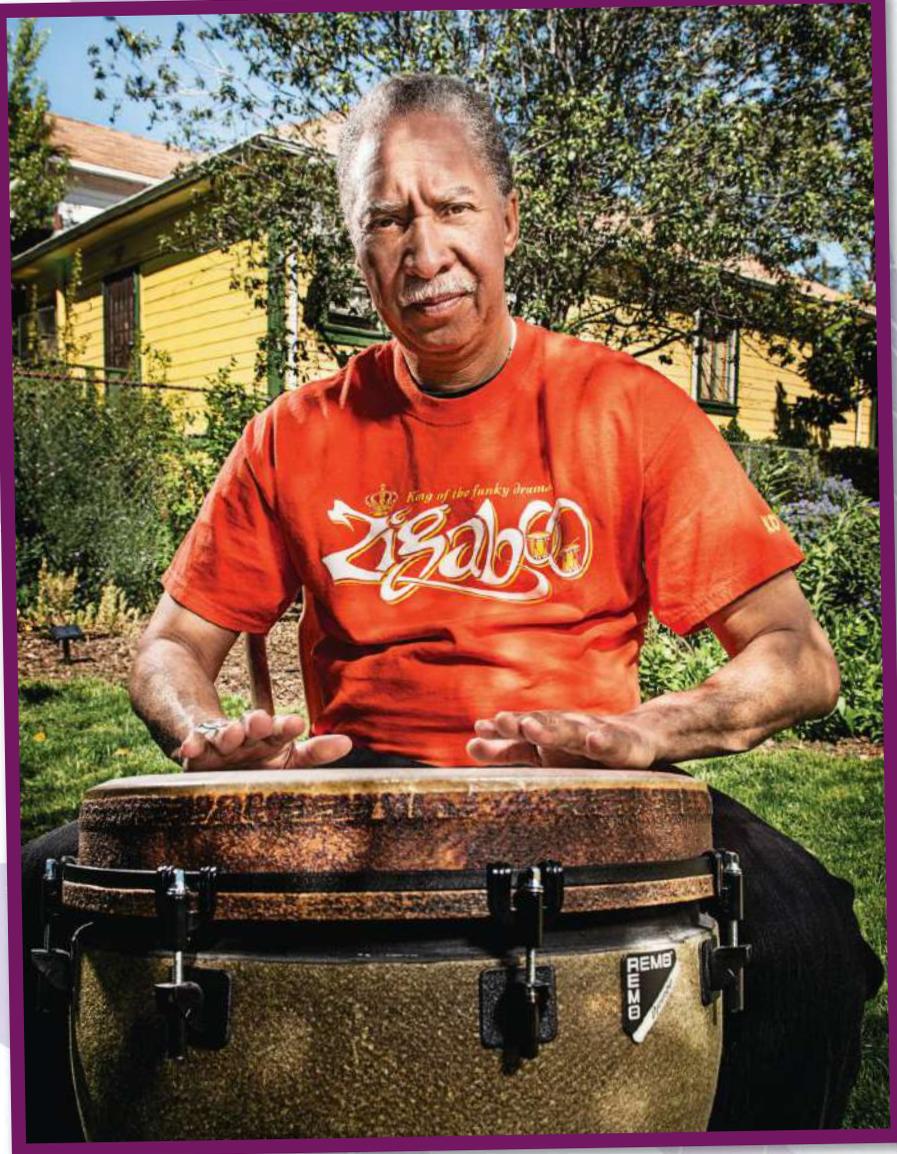
**Zig:** Earl Palmer was pretty much gone and entrenched in session work out in California. Earl's story was fascinating because he started out as a professional dancer. That cat was doing paradiddles with his feet! He made that transition from being a dancer to a drummer. I kind of got a little bit of that too.

When I was young and going to parties, I was an extremely good dancer. That was the spiritual and physical thing that made me gravitate toward R&B. In the 13th Ward we were going to parties, dancing, the girls...you know. There was this song by James Brown called "Good Good Lovin'," and it had a drum break that was the bee's knees. [The James Brown box set *Star Time* lists Nat Kendrick as the drummer on the track.] At parties *everybody* loved that record. You put that record on and all the dudes in the room were trying to play the drum part on their legs. I thought, *This is some unusual, crazy stuff goin' on here.*

**MD:** Was that one of the turning points when you really started getting into music and rhythm?

**Zig:** Exactly. That's the earliest thing I can remember. Then I started around the house, playing on the sofas and coffee tables with my hands. I tried to convince my parents to get me some drums, because that's what I wanted to do. But they weren't really thrilled about it. It took a while for them to get that I was really serious, but then they bought me a beautiful marching parade drum. Then I started trying to learn how to play the drums, doing little rudiments here and there.

**MD:** Was Fats Domino's Smokey Johnson one of your influences around that age?



contributing to other musicians' projects. He also has his own record and publishing companies. And this year he released a long-awaited instructional DVD, *The Originator of New Orleans Funky Drumming*. From the looks of it, the sixty-four-year-old master of funk and R&B isn't ready to slow down at all. Zigaboo Modeliste remains *the* "fire on the bayou," blazing

have a thing called ribbing—who could out-rib the other person—and I was the king! When I was a kid, a friend of mine said, "You look like a zigaboo" or something like that, and everybody started laughing. The word got out that people were calling me Zigaboo, and it just stuck. The people at my school never based it off anything racial; it was just a cool name they never heard

**Zig:** New Orleans had a few other drummers around before I even knew about Smokey, local guys like June Gardner, Eugene Jones, and Clarence Brown, who were all very tasty players. They had a different spin on the music that was being played down in New Orleans. I started playing gigs and clubs

at an early age, so I got to see a lot early on. Most of the bands I played in were with the elder statesmen.

**MD:** What kinds of gigs were you playing around that time—R&B, Dixieland?

**Zig:** If you played with a band that was *really* working, you had to play a little of

everything. You couldn't get hired in the French Quarter if you didn't know something about jazz or Dixieland. It was a mandatory part of New Orleans culture, like Mardi Gras music.

**MD:** Your approach to drumming sounds rooted in the beats of the Mardi Gras Indians.





## Zig's Setup

Modeliste plays DW Collector's series maple drums. He'll use different numbers of toms depending on the situation, such as the three-up/two-down setup shown in the photos, but his standard arrangement consists of a 5.5x14 snare, 8x10 and 9x12 toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and an 18x22 bass drum. Zig's typical array of Sabian cymbals includes 14" Hand Hammered Bright hi-hats, a 21" Hand Hammered Dry Bell ride, a 21" Vault Universal ride, a 17" HHX Stage crash, a 16" HHX Evolution crash, a 15" HHX X-Plosion crash, and an 18" China. His Evans batter heads include a 14" Power Center Reverse Dot on the snare, clear EC2s on the toms, and an EQ4 on the bass drum. His hardware is from DW's 9000 series, and he plays Vic Firth 5A sticks.

**Zig:** That's definitely one of the highlights of the way I think and play—I stay true to my roots. I play the Mardi Gras Indian and second-line rhythms, and I also play *against* those rhythms and try to create different scenes as I perform. Regarding my drumming, some people ask me, "What is it you're doing, and where do your ideas come

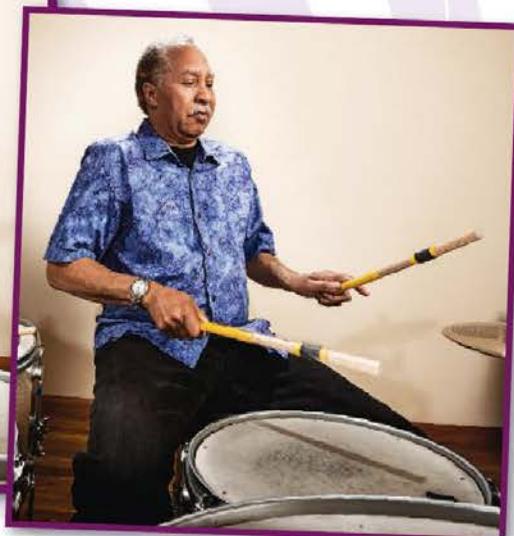
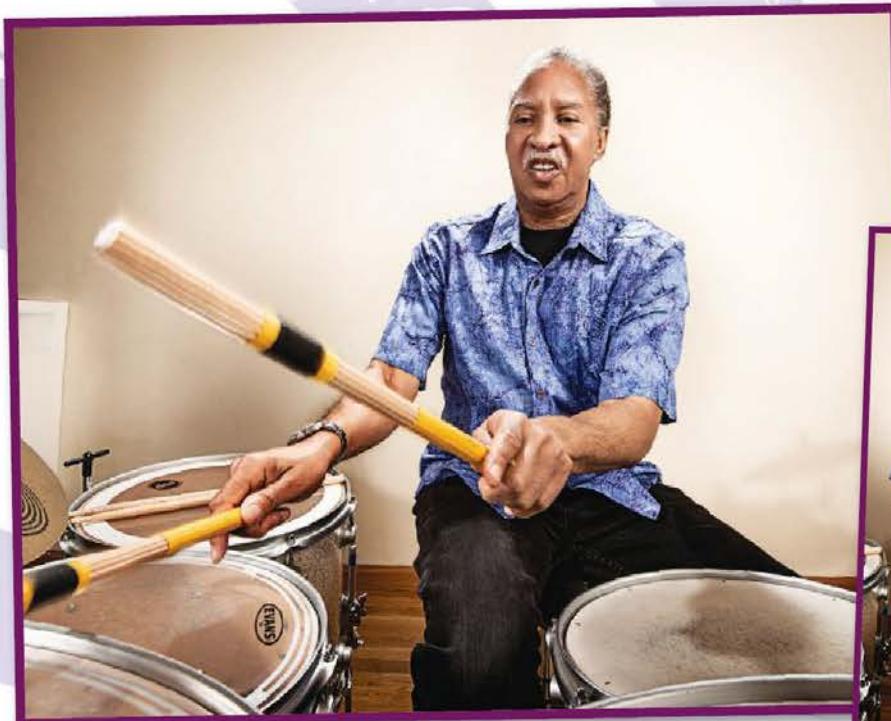
from?" First you need to understand the cultural aspect, so you can start at the beginning, the foundation. *After* you learn and develop the foundation, it's about being creative.

**MD:** Most drummers make one of your most famous beats, "Cissy Strut," more complicated than the way you actually play it. Instead of using two hands

alternating on the hi-hat [RLRL], which gives the groove more of a forward motion, like "Hey Pocky A-Way," they use one hand, which gives it a choppy feel.

**Zig:** It wasn't meant to be a sleight of hand or anything tricky. I use both hands on the hi-hat often. At the time, I was caught up between doing New Orleans music and fatback drumming. I really loved fatback drums and wanted to mix it all together.

**MD:** On your new DVD, you mentioned you were sent home on your first gig when you were nine or ten years old because your band didn't play well.



**Zig:** The guitar player only knew one or two songs, three at the most. He talked this lady into letting us come over and play. These people were upper middle class and had this whole thing in their backyard—a Hawaiian barbecue. But man, after we got to about three songs—and we played them as long as we could play 'em—we had to start all over. After maybe an hour it was time for us to take a break, and the lady sent us home. She was so disgusted—but she was very nice. [laughs] I said to myself right then and there: Man, if I'm going to continue, I'm going to have to do better than this!

**MD:** Another turning point in your life.

**Zig:** That would be a turning point for anybody. Either you're going to quit right there on the spot or continue.



There are other musicians that have had to overcome a lot of things regarding music. I have friends that have seen a lot of adversity and wanted to quit on many occasions because they

just got frustrated, or didn't have time to practice, or didn't have a place to practice, or didn't have anything to practice *on*. You have to develop perseverance, and you really have to

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have a lot of patience.

**MD:** What did you work on when you would practice?

**Zig:** To perfect something requires a lot of trial and error. I worked on the snare drum a lot, and when I finally did get a set of drums, I worked on trying to develop groove and consistency—something very simple but consistent. I'd start with backbeats, and then I'd add the hi-hat. But that wasn't the style that I was asked to play when I got my first professional job. They wanted me to play blues on the ride cymbal. I had to learn all of these *bones*. And then once I got all of those things down it was just a matter of practice and stability in tempo.

**MD:** So you practiced things that were required of you to work, as well as your own ideas.

**Zig:** Yes. I relied a lot on the bass player too. On a gig, drummers and bass players have to almost be meshed together so they can really create the effect of what they're trying to accomplish. Bass players tend to love me because I give them a lot of space to do what they do. I try not to get in their way, so we can grow together in the song. And that makes it that much more enjoyable, because we accomplish things together.

**MD:** On your DVD you use the term *staying at home* in regard to playing with the bassist. One player "stays at home" and holds it down, while the other "goes out" and plays a little more. Can you elaborate?

**Zig:** I hear some drummers today that sound like they didn't

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come to the gig to play with the band. It seems like the attitude is that the band has got to catch up with what *they're* doing. I would rather not be doing a whole lot of stuff—just play very basic and simple, until I know positively that the bass player gets it. There's no sense going up there tinkering, trying to do a whole bunch of different things, when you and the bass player are not on the same page. So I'll "stay at home" and just play real simple until *we* decide, musically, that we're ready to experiment together. That makes our musical adventure more rewarding.

**MD:** I think of George Porter Jr.'s "staying at home" bass line and your busier bass drum parts on the Meters' "Dry Spell." You're playing some *heavy* bass drum. Certainly those kinds of

syncopated beats would have required a lot of practice between the hands and feet.

**Zig:** A lot of the stuff I was doing was really just exercises—paradiddle exercises, and some of it was broken up—but a lot of it was kind of linear. I was playing longer phrases by incorporating my fills *into* my grooves. That's what made it different and interesting.

It also depends on the bass player. A lot of bass players are frustrated guitarists. They want to play a thousand notes, and then the bottom just slips away. When that happens, the foundation disappears. Each instrument is different for a reason; they have different functions. Drum and bass, we are the foundation, and you have to know how to apply when it's time to



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apply and how to reserve when it's time to reserve. But during the time when I was doing that, I didn't hear any other drummers attempting to play [linear phrases] in that manner.

And I was really trying to emulate somebody who I admired immensely, and still do. I watched him a bunch of times, but I could only take away so much from what he did. So I used that and tried to incorporate linear phrases into my own playing.

**MD:** Who did you learn that from?

**Zig:** Smokey Johnson. He was one of those drummers you run across once in a lifetime. He's still living in New Orleans. He doesn't play anymore. [Johnson suffered a stroke in 1993.] He played with Fats Domino for years. Fats had some real famous drummers, like Idris Muhammad and of course Earl Palmer.

**MD:** How did you develop your signature hi-hat barks, opening the hats on 2 and 4 and on the "e" and "a" of random beats, like on "Sophisticated Cissy"?

**Zig:** That all came from Smokey Johnson. He could do stuff on the hi-hat and incorporate that in his playing. He was a much better drummer than I am, really phenomenal. He wasn't even playing that genre of music. He was playing other stuff.

**MD:** Wasn't Smokey playing in a big band at the time?

**Zig:** He played in jazz groups, funk groups. But the last thing he did, I guess—you know, to get seniority and the bigger salary—was tour with Fats. When you're off tour you play around town or do whatever you want to do, till it's time to go back on tour again. I played in Art Neville's band [the Neville Sounds] when I was younger. I lucked out and started doing gigs with them. Art couldn't find the drummers he needed, and I was in the neighborhood. Most importantly, Art thought I was good enough to play in his band.

When we first started, it was a little rough, because I didn't have the experience that I needed at the time. Art took a chance and was very patient with me until I learned to play the stuff he wanted me to learn to play. Some nights he would hire Smokey to play on the gig, and I would be there watching and I'd

play a few songs. Smokey really played the kind of music that we were trying to play at the time.

**MD:** So Smokey Johnson was like your teacher?

**Zig:** Smokey never sat down and taught me, because that wasn't the way it was done back then. Your biggest teachers were those two things you got on the side of your head. Nobody saw any videos; they didn't have iPhones or any of this electronic stuff where you can just dial up anything.

Music is a language that transcends and travels through all countries and borders. Music doesn't need a passport. All it needs is some people with ears who want to know what it's really about, or what they perceive it to be about. It's got nothing to do with rudiments, nothing to do with time signatures, but it's got a lot to do with what you hear. When you go to a concert, you *listen*. There's no professor or expert you're taking to the concert—it's your *ears* you're taking to the concert.

**MD:** Early on, the Meters backed up Lee Dorsey. You must have been a teenager when you played on those early records.

**Zig:** I got in at around seventeen years old. I was doing recordings when I was sixteen.

**MD:** On your DVD, the great R&B leader Deacon John Moore says that you were around fifteen or sixteen when he first hired you.

**Zig:** Deacon John was like a chameleon—man, that's the first time I got on a gig where we played *all* genres of music. But he did all the work! I had to learn songs I would never dream about playing, so it opened up my musical vocabulary. We were doing country and western...he might break down and do some polka!

**MD:** A lot of your drum practice was playing gigs—learning on the bandstand.

**Zig:** That's the best way—the apprenticeship. Practicing at home is good for endurance and being more specific about what your delivery is going to be and all. But it's nothing compared to playing in an ensemble. When you're playing in an ensemble, everyone in the band develops a sound. That's what went down with the Meters. We didn't start off

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as a touring band or a showcase band; we were playing small gigs.

**MD:** And you were backing up artists in the studio for [famed New Orleans performer and producer] Allen Toussaint.

**Zig:** We did a lot of studio work for Allen and his projects. Lee Dorsey, Eldridge Holmes, Betty Harris, Curly Moore, Ernie K-Doe, and Robert Palmer were some of the artists who came through. We got that opportunity because we were in the right place at the right time. We were all on Bourbon Street playing a gig that was five sets a night, six nights a week. Play for forty-five minutes, off for fifteen minutes.

**MD:** You really had an opportunity to develop your style playing six nights a week.

**Zig:** Exactly. That's the thing that knocks off the intimidation and gets your chops together. And if you're doing that with the same personnel, you learn to *speak* to one another. They know pretty much what you're going to do, and you have a good idea of where they may be going. You'll see cats that have been playing together for so long, and when one musician does something different, the other musician starts laughing because they added something to the musical equation.

**MD:** Tell us about your relationship with bassist George Porter Jr.

**Zig:** George and I started off together in Art Neville and the Neville Sounds. It was me, George, Leo Nocentelli, and Cyril, Art's younger brother, who was a drummer but decided to play congas and be more of the frontman. We did that for a year or so, then we went to the French Quarter for a more lucrative deal—more nights, more money—and with that, you'd develop certain things. You couldn't play too loud, you had a tip jar.... People would come in and they'd want you to play "St. Louis Blues," "Hello, Dolly," "When the Saints Go Marching In," songs like that. The whole idea was to be able to play all these songs on call for the people to enjoy.

**MD:** Looking back on your long career, do you ever listen to certain songs you played on and say, "Oh, man, I should have done this or that"?

**Zig:** Well, hindsight is 20/20; it's easy to

criticize yourself about your earlier work. I'm sure all artists do that—I know I do. But I don't take it too serious. The information I had at the time was all I could draw from. With Allen Toussaint, he had a distinct method for the drums that he wanted to hear, so it was about acquiring the patterns that he wanted. Even though the parts were very simple, people have a way of explaining stuff that gets you very confused. So you just try to do your best.

**MD:** Today producers use Pro Tools to manipulate parts. Back then it was all about getting a perfect take.

**Zig:** That's true. Back then you had to do as many takes as it took to get a good track. You still were able to overdub, but the main thing was the continuity of the track itself, keeping the tempo as stable as you could get it from the beginning to the end of the song. Whatever breaks the songs had, you had to nail them. If you were overthinking, you could fall apart.

**MD:** On all those older records, from Lee Dorsey to Earl King to the Meters, your drum sound is very recognizable. Your snare is high pitched and your cymbals sound so trashy. Was there a specific sound you were going for?

**Zig:** My whole snare drum sound was about getting in real tight while trying to have a meaty sound. I had drums that almost sounded like metal drums—tink, tink. Even though you could hear the snares, you'd hear that metal sound when you'd attack it. That was something I got used to hearing. I also recorded on different kits—some on a Slingerland kit, some on a Ludwig, and some on a Premier.

**MD:** So on those Meters records you weren't always playing on the same drumkit?

**Zig:** We did different sessions. We recorded a lot of it down in New Orleans at various studios. Cosimo Matassa had the big studio at the time. Anybody who was anybody recorded at Cosimo's at the time that we started. I think we also recorded in Atlanta, and we might have cut a little bit in Miami, but the majority of it was done in New Orleans. After that, Allen Toussaint bought his own studio and we started recording there.

**MD:** After the Meters, you played with

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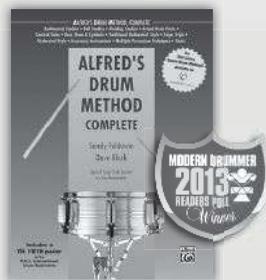
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## ZIGABOO MODELISTE

Ron Wood's band in the late '70s, the New Barbarians.

**Zig:** Charlie Watts sent me Ron's album *Gimme Some Neck*, which Charlie had played on. [All of the Rolling Stones—Watts, singer Mick Jagger, guitarist Keith Richards, and Wood's predecessor Mick Taylor—appear on the 1979 album, along with other musicians, including drummers Jim Keltner and Mick Fleetwood.] The record company wanted to work the album by going out on the road, but Charlie didn't want to do that. So they called me in to do the tour. Working with Keith and Ronnie was cool. I had never played a gig where I was playing *all* rock. I don't know if I handled it well, but it was a new experience, and I appreciate being asked to do it.

**MD:** You sang in the Meters. When did you start singing lead on gigs?

**Zig:** I've been doing it for a while. Some of it has been because of economics, but a lot of it has to do with control. Singing was a necessary thing I had to do with my own band, because the first things people want to hear when they see me play are Meters songs—I guess because of my origins. Fortunately I sang on a lot of the Meters songs that were popular, like "People Say" and "Funkify Your Life." I got a chance to do that because Art didn't want to. He wasn't that kind of singer. He was a person with a beautiful voice—a balladeer. He came through the doo-wop era.

**MD:** That's you singing on "People Say" and "Funkify Your Life" on the albums? What other Meters songs did you sing lead on?

**Zig:** "They All Ask'd for You," a few others. I don't really look at myself as a singer; there are so many things I can't do. I just use whatever strengths I have and try to stay as true to the art form as I can.

**MD:** The group on your DVD sounds great. Bassist Jimmy Earl was in Chick Corea's Elektric Band II in the early '90s and plays in Jimmy Kimmel's house band now.

**Zig:** When I go down to Southern California, I'm fortunate to use those heavy-duty musicians from Jimmy Kimmel's band. Those guys can do *anything* as far as I'm concerned. Jimmy Earl's my main man. I call him Governor Earl—he loves that name too. And guitarist Toshi Yanagi, organist Greg Mathieson, they're fantastic. Greg came there on the fly and helped me put that video together. Also, Don Lombardi and all the cats at Drum Channel did an excellent job on that DVD and should be commended. It turned out even better than I thought it would. In the past a few people approached me about doing an instructional DVD, but I just didn't see myself doing that at the time. But this time I thought, why not?

**MD:** Tell us about JZM Records and Jomod Music Publishing. What inspired you to start those?

**Zig:** The record company name is my initials: Joseph Zigaboo Modeliste. I call myself a drummer, but I'm trying to work my publishing. My wife, Kathy, is a very astute businesswoman and helped me organize all of these different things that we have in motion. She deserves a lot



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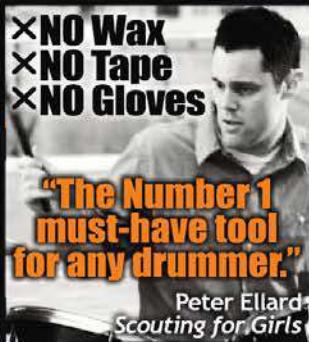
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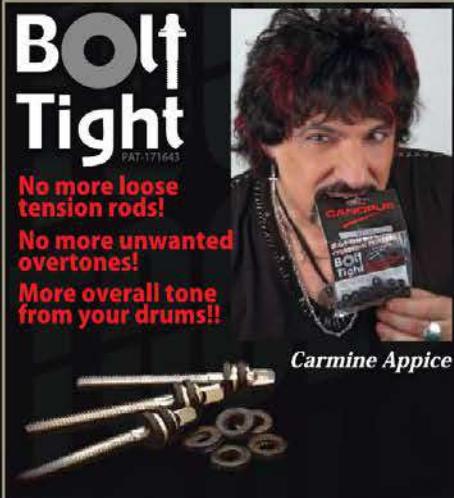
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## ZIGABOO MODELISTE

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A lot of those gifted musicians—it'll bring tears to your eyes. What happens to great musicians, it challenges you in a poetic way...the ones we don't even hear about. You hear them on the radio and you don't know it's them. That's one of the reasons for starting my record and publishing companies.

**MD:** You've been in the music business for a long time now, and you've touched a lot of people's lives doing it your own way.

**Zig:** Music is truly a language. You could be from New York and I could be from Florida, and we could say the exact same sentence, but due to our accents, based on where we're from, it's going to sound different. Every person has their own internal clock, their *feel*, and that's something you really can't teach somebody. I try to do my best to speak the language that people are interested in hearing. And so far I've been very successful at doing just that. In my golden years I hope I can still play with the same tenacity until I get ready to hang it up.

# Zig's Signature Beats

Here are some of Zigaboo Modeliste's funkier grooves and fills with the Meters, most of which fall in the cracks between straight and swung feels.

by Mike Adamo

**MUSIC KEY**

open	○	C.C.	R.C.
H.H.	●	bell	●
F.T.	●		
S.D.	●		
F.T.	●		
B.D.	●		
H.H.	●		
w/foot	○		

Ghost note

**"Cissy Strut," *The Meters* (1969)**  
 This is Zigaboo's most popular groove. The pattern is linear, except for the bass drum/hi-hat combo on the "e" of beat 3 and the snare/hi-hat combo in beat 4. Notice the two-handed sticking on the hi-hat. This enables Zig to get in the cracks between straight and swung time and gives the part its unique feel.

**"Here Comes the Meter Man," *The Meters* (1969)**  
 Notice the interesting texture created by the cymbal pattern on this classic instrumental track. Also check out the yin/yang effect between the bass drum and snare in the first and second beats of the measure. (0:17)

**"Look-Ka Py Py," *Look-Ka Py Py* (1969)**  
 This is a great example of Modeliste's "chordal" approach, where two or three components of the drumset are played at the same time. Zig uses a bass drum/snare/open hi-hat combo on the "&" of beat 3 of each measure to provide a syncopated yet consistent rhythmic anchor for the rest of the band. He improvises from this framework throughout the song. (0:05)

The drum break at 2:29 has been sampled countless times. Notice Modeliste's skillful expansion of the basic framework groove, including the turnaround in beats 3 and 4 of the second measure and the across-the-barline polyrhythmic phrasing that spans the third and fourth measures.

The two-bar drum break at 0:49 is ridiculously funky. In the second measure, notice the three bass drum notes in a row on beat 1, as well as the open hi-hat/bass drum combo on the "e" of beat 2.

### “Thinking,” *Look-Ka Py Py* (1969)

This isn't a technically complex groove, but it's the perfect foundation for the song. The quarter-note hi-hat pattern propels the band, and the rock-solid backbeat keeps everything in check. The bass drum notes on beat 3 set up a snare/open hi-hat “answer” on beat 4. This is a great example of Zig holding down a static yet extremely funky groove for an entire song. (0:00)



### “Funky Miracle,” *Look-Ka Py Py* (1969)

This track starts out with a tight rhythm-section groove. Notice how the accented snare notes lock in with George Porter Jr.'s bass pattern.



### “I Need More Time” (released as a single in 1970)

This epic Meters tune includes a reflective organ/vocal/floor tom/cymbal intro that leads into dramatic full-band hits with drum fills, tight verse grooves, a huge chorus, and a grandiose outro. The verse part is based on a four-bar phrase that follows a basic AABA format. In the A sections, Modeliste uses a bass drum/open hi-hat combo to hit the “&” of beat 2 along with the rest of the band. In the B section, he uses a bass drum/crash combo to match the hits on beat 1, the “a” of beat 1, and the “&” of beat 2. (0:55)



### “A Message From the Meters” (released as a single in 1970)

This classic track features some great lyrics, and the drum groove is ultra-funky. The open hi-hat notes on the “&” of beats 2 and 4 create a nice pull in the pattern. The bass drum part switches from on the beat on 1 and 3 to off the beat on 2 and 4.



### “Stay Away,” *Cabbage Alley* (1972)

This is one of the Meters' more experimental songs. Modeliste's treatment of the verse is appealingly unorthodox and inventive. The verses are based on a two-bar phrase. Zig uses a light quarter-note crash/ride with a basic backbeat in the first measure and matches the riff note for note in the second. He improvises from this foundation during each verse. Be sure to check out the drum break at 2:07 for even more syncopated funk mastery. (0:41)



### “Just Kissed My Baby,” *Rejuvenation* (1974)

The main drum groove here is a lightheartedly nasty two-bar phrase. Zig doesn't play the bass drum on beat 1 in the second measure, which adds a bit of suspense. The ghost notes and random snare accents add a lot of texture and funk.



### “Fire on the Bayou,” *Fire on the Bayou* (1975)

Like most of Zigaboo's patterns, this one is played between the cracks of straight and swung time. The bass drum locks with Porter's bass line, and the accented snare note on the “&” of beat 4 provides forward momentum.





“Out in the Country,” *Fire on the Bayou* (1975)

There’s no flash here—just pure groove. The bass drum pattern matches the bass guitar/keyboard, while the hi-hat and snare hold it all together. The relaxed backbeat gives the song a timeless feel and helps transmit its message.



“Love Slip Upon Ya,” *Fire on the Bayou* (1975)

The bass drum pattern in this song is reminiscent of a classic New Orleans second-line groove. Notice how the ghost notes fill in and blend with the hi-hat. The bass drum/hi-hat combos in beats 2 and 4 add a nice texture, and the open hi-hat notes on the “&” of 1 and 3 create a trancelike feel to the beat.



“Can You Do Without?” *Fire on the Bayou* (1975)

This is another great example of Modeliste’s use of ghost notes to fill in the cracks of the groove. The extra hi-hat notes on the “e” of beats 2 and 4 blend with the ghosted snare notes to create a steady stream of 16ths.



“He Bite Me,” *Good Old Funky Music* (compilation released in 1990)

Modeliste begins this song with a very interesting four-bar phrase. Notice how he plays the kick drum on the “a” of beat 4 in the first and third measures but not in the second or fourth. Also check out the broken hi-hat pattern. The fill at the end of the phrase sets up the lyrics perfectly.



“The Same Old Thing,” *Funkify Your Life* (compilation released in 1995)

This track starts out with a tight drum break and vocals. Notice the accented snare notes on the “a” of beat 2 and the “e” of beat 3 in each measure. Zig doesn’t play these once the main drum groove hits.



The fill at 0:29 is the very definition of tasteful. It’s not what Zig plays, but *how* he plays it. It has to be heard to be understood.



# Passion and Perseverance

## Profiles of four drummers keeping the fire alive

Reality sometimes gets in the way of our dreams of stardom. But life can be funny. Often the call of the drum returns at the time when we're once again able to answer it—and sometimes right when we need it most.

In this exclusive *Modern Drummer* report, four players who've welcomed drumming back into their lives in a big way tell us about the battles, and the triumphs, of returning to the throne.

Interviews by Bob Girouard

### GARY STEVENS

**Age:** 56

**Occupation:** VP of real estate for Life Time Fitness

**Birthplace:** West Springfield, MA

**Residence:** Hudson, OH



**MD:** What got you into the drums?

**Gary:** I always remember banging on things. In my hometown there was a music school, Ronnie Drumm's Music—Ronnie's son Rick is president of Evans and D'Addario—and I took my first lesson there. Whenever I saw a band on TV, I was transfixed by the drummer and by the beauty of the drumkit. After about a year, I formed my first band. I remember our first gig—we got three bucks apiece! But I knew then that drumming was going to

be an essential part of my life.

**MD:** What are some of your personal highlights as a drummer?

**Gary:** I grew up in the Springfield, Massachusetts/Hartford, Connecticut, area, which was a great place for drummers. People like Joe Morello, Hal Blaine, Jeff Porcaro, and Rick Shlosser came from there. I was lucky to have studied formally with people like the principal percussionist of the Springfield Symphony, Warren Myers. And I played with guys who were older

and more experienced, which I feel is imperative to musical growth. Plus there were plenty of venues to ply your trade: community centers, legion halls, VFWs, Elks and Moose clubs, church dances, and of course an abundance of nightclubs, all catering to young baby boomers.

If you got called on a "general business" gig, you might have to play a rumba, a bossa nova, or a teen beat. I also started to sing, which, relative to auditions, gave me an edge over other drummers. Following the Beatles' appearance on *Ed Sullivan*, bands started popping up everywhere, which led to opportunities to teach—at thirteen years old, mind you!

My first real band of note was Forest. Now that band was *it*. We had all the firepower: great players, catchy songs, a Hammond B3, a tour bus, and speakers the size of refrigerators. I played with them through college, up until the end of the '70s. Following that, I joined 8 to the Bar. That was like the Manhattan Transfer meets the Orlons meets Grand Funk, a jump-blues/swing/boogie-woogie powerhouse whose alumni include Jeff Pevar [Rickie Lee Jones], Paul Ossola [*SNL* band], and Bill Holloman [Danny Gattton, Paul Simon, Chic].

**MD:** You stopped playing in 1986. What was the reason?

**Gary:** I got married in 1984, and after some serious introspection I finally came to grips with the fact that I might not make it as a pro drummer. I had been doing a fair amount of session work in Hartford and New Haven, but my income continued to remain supplemental. The real kicker was when drum machines started replacing live drummers. I could see the future did not bode well. My wife was urging me to come off the road to start a family, and I didn't want to miss that aspect of life. So I relegated my playing to local casuals, weddings, and corporate gigs with a group called the Cartells. I then

### **Gary's Words of Wisdom**

"Any working musician who's successful will tell you the better your business acumen, the longer you'll stay competitive. There are some precepts that I live by even today: Know your audience, be prepared, respect your associates, be on time, and own your space. When you walk out to your drum riser, that is your part of the earth, and no one deserves to be there more than you."

began a career as a real estate broker, which has included stints with the retail giants Staples and Sears & Roebuck and now Life Time Fitness.

**MD:** What brought you back to drumming?

**Gary:** I pretty much hung up my rock 'n' roll shoes in 1992, when my son was about two, and I didn't pick up a pair of sticks until around fifteen years later. What got me back into it was actually randomly thumbing through *Modern Drummer* and seeing drummers who were favorites of mine. Frankly, I was suffering a bit of depression. On one specific occasion—I think it was around 2004—I heard the song "Sunday Morning" by Maroon 5. I thought, *God, it's a real band*. Then, by chance a few days later, my son said, "Dad, check out this guy named Jason Mraz." I realized that there was music out there again.

One evening, just a few blocks from my home, I was out socially, and I saw a band setting up. I chatted up the drummer, who mentioned that he was leaving and that the group was auditioning for a new drummer. I'm proud to say that as of May

## BOB GIROUARD

The *Modern Drummer* scribe, who interviewed the other drummers profiled here, knows a thing or two about the struggles of playing in middle age. Here Bob shares his own personal tale of dealing with tough times, and keeping the beat strong.

**Age:** 60

**Occupation:** drummer, writer

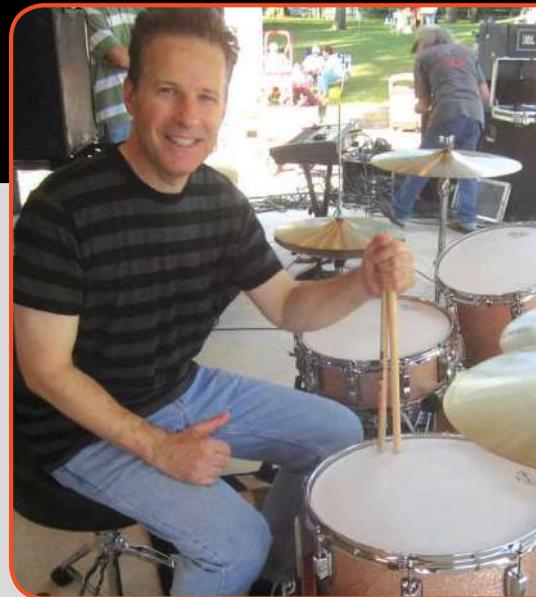
**Birthplace:** Hartford, CT

**Residence:** Albany, NY

Every now and then life serves up an unexpected punch in the face. Such was the case with me in 2003, when I began feeling the symptoms of what I would come to understand was Parkinson's disease.

As a baby-boom kid who grew up in the small town of Chicopee, Massachusetts, I, like many of my contemporaries, was brought up with strong traditions of faith, family, and, whenever possible, fun. As the '60s enveloped my world, I was faced with anxieties no different from those that the kids of today face, dealing with big questions like: What am I going to be when I grow up? For me, that question was answered when I saw Dino Danelli perform with the Rascals on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in March of 1966.

I was a shy kid, but I ultimately traveled a path of teenage self-discovery that led to an unbridled passion for drumming. At the time, just *being* in a rock band was something special. And that's not to mention the perks: notoriety, a little cash to go with it, and let's not forget the most important thing—chicks! Often blurring the lines between



### Pushing Through Adversity

The psychological effects of a disease or a personal or professional upheaval can be devastating. Many people have asked me how I continue to push through adversity. To me, adversity is a state of mind. With focus, dedication, and communal support, we can at least dilute some of its impact. Here are a few tips that have helped me immensely.

**Diversify.** If you're bogged down, try something else you've always been interested in, and divert your senses to the rewards it will bring.

**Learn from others.** Whether it's a video, book, or real-life situation, learn from those who have faced challenges similar to yours and have successfully overcome them, including the ways they pass along their experiences and knowledge.

**Focus.** It's self-explanatory. Those who make their mark in life are the most focused.

**Discard self-pity.** Leave it at the front door. Look around you—yes, you may have it tough, but there are others out there suffering much more and who make your situation look like a day at the beach.

**Reach out.** Give back and help others. This will make you feel more relevant in the world, and you'll reap the positive residual effects tenfold.

**Embrace spirituality.** A belief in a higher being can make a big difference in handling whatever negatives come your way. It can balance you and keep you humble, which to me is one of the biggest keys to life.

fantasy and reality, I was on a mission for fame, and nothing was going to stop me. All except for that word *life* again.

Suffice it to say, it quickly dawned on me that I was not alone in my quest. And although the industry was still growing, mass-market acceptance was reserved for those lucky few with either virtuosic talent or a great gimmick. I had neither. I figured that in order to stay in the game, I needed to subsidize my dream. So during the '70s and early '80s, I supplemented some wonderful musical experiences with a bevy of day jobs, everything from credit collections to group sales for a minor-league baseball team to playing the part of a singing telegram guy, complete with tuxedo and gorilla mask. I did it all, but my passion for playing the drums never died.

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## Bob Girouard continued

From the mid-'80s through the '90s, I had carved out a fairly stable career combining concert/event production, drumming, and artist management, all of which were still keeping me in the biz, so to speak.

Ten years ago, a life changer happened. Out on a gig one day, I noticed my right hand freeze up while playing my cymbal. My first thought: *Oh, it's just arthritis and age.* I wish I'd been that lucky. After several months of misdiagnoses, it was finally established that I had Parkinson's disease.

PD is a neurological disorder that attacks the nervous system due to the brain's inability to produce dopamine, which in turn blocks nerves and muscles from responding properly. The most visible celebrities with the disease are Michael J. Fox and Muhammad Ali, both eloquent spokesmen for trying to find a cure, for which there is currently none.

I was incredulous, because for the first time in my life there was an obstacle that I couldn't overcome. Parkinson's hits like a boa constrictor—slowly, steadily squeezing the life out of you. Things like tying your shoe, buttoning your shirt, and even typing become a monumental task. My initial shock was followed by indignant tolerance, which over time morphed into subservient acceptance, and finally depression.

Did it affect my drumming? Plenty. My first few years weren't too bad. After accepting that the disease wasn't going away, I had to come up with some new approaches. One of the keys was to simplify my style, meaning skip the fancy stuff and just concentrate on the groove. I got back to the basics: kick, snare, hi-hat, and crash to accentuate. (Ironically, most bands are grateful for a solid timekeeper with a fat sound.)

My medicinal timing became imperative to warding off fatigue, or, worse, the inability to execute. In the beginning, it was workable. In fact, I tricked myself into thinking, *Hey, I can*

of 2012, I've returned to the fold, playing for a top local band called the Graphics.

My wife, Melissa Kraut, who is one of the world's leading cellists, put it all into perspective one day when she said, "You might sell real estate, but to the core of your soul, you are a drummer."

**MD:** What would you suggest to drummers thinking about getting back in the game?

**Gary:** Use social media—Craigslist, Facebook...there's so much available nowadays. Keep your eyes and senses open, because there *are* like-minded people out there.

Here's what I did, and still do, to try to stage a comeback of sorts. I pulled out my copy of Stone's *Stick Control*, and after laughing at my teacher's peacock-blue-written assignment dates of 1971, I just started doing rudiments. I really focused on playing simply and in time, with as much of a relaxed approach as possible.

Mentally, it's a lot harder to memorize material at fifty-six than at twenty-six, so I wrote everything out on my iPad, little charts that I could follow for structure, so I could focus on feel without worrying about song form. I also downloaded all the original recordings, and it became my running playlist. I listened to the material in the car, on the plane, when I worked out.... That was especially needed, as the Graphics song list was completely different for me, straight rock as opposed to the blues and R&B of my wheelhouse.

But, as the saying goes, life begins at the

end of your comfort zone. I try to play more fluidly than I did in the past. I let the mics do their job and know that I am being heard. Drum equipment is *so* much better now, especially pedals, sticks, and heads, and modern sound systems are way better than they used to be.

I work at getting a great drum sound, and I love it when guys come up to me and rave about the sound we get, which happens at almost every gig. It's the Arbiter drums, the Ludwig hammered-brass snare, and the Sabian cymbals, but also great miking technique.

Other than that: Never eat close to showtime, two Advil before and after the gig, mostly just water during the gig, and focus on the music in the present, not the party in the future, if you follow me. I also stretch a lot and work with a personal trainer at Life Time for general fitness. And I'm looking into getting back into yoga, which I think will be excellent for flexibility, concentration, and balance. I try to run at least ten miles a week as well.

I'm also kind of a clothes and shoe nut—I always try to look my best on stage. That's not universal; a lot of musicians dress like I would to clean my garage.

The essence, though? I used to play to live—it was how I made my living. Now I live to play. I really look forward to the gigs, though they're only a few per month. But I'd much rather move cubic feet of air behind a drumset than square feet of real estate any day!

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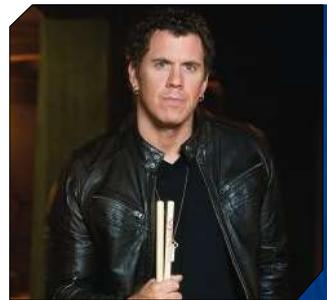


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## Bob Girouard continued

handle this—and I did, for a while. But as I headed into my ten-year anniversary with PD, I noticed my meds began wearing off sooner and I started to suffer more fatigue, tremors, and a sense of freezing cold. By nature I'm a fighter, but by this time depression had really set in, and the only thing keeping me going in a primary sense was my writing affiliation with *Modern Drummer*, which has been a tremendous boost.

By August of 2012 I was groping for a way—any way—to avoid becoming a train wreck. Thanks to my girlfriend's neurologist, I heard about a new physician near my home who was doing DBS (deep brain stimulation). After much consideration, three days after celebrating my sixtieth birthday I underwent two brain surgeries. Although not a cure, the procedure has given me more time and allowed me once again to embrace life. Just as important, I'm drumming again—though it hasn't been without setbacks. Although the procedure has helped in many ways, certain areas of my body remain affected. For instance, my right foot and leg froze up like a Popsicle during a recent New Year's Eve performance, which emotionally brought me back to square one. Physically I've attempted to adjust via the use of a double pedal, so that I can transfer the bottom end over to my left foot, which at this point is still working.

As much as I accept my disease, I don't ever want to completely acquiesce. What's kept me going is pure and simple: I love the drums. I love the way they look, the way they sound, and what a great drummer does to a band. Ever since I was fourteen, there's been nothing else in my life like that feeling, and there never will be.

Throughout the past decade, I never would have made it this far without the help of friends, family, dedicated medical professionals, and a personal belief in a God who's up there looking over me. Currently, my outlook for the future is optimistic, and my mission (I've happily chosen to accept it) is to give back to any and all drummers sharing the same enthusiasm for the instrument—or for that matter, anyone who'll listen while I talk about the importance of a dream, along with the passion and perseverance to pursue it.

## JIM AIELLO

**Age:** 41  
**Occupation:** tool and die maker  
**Birthplace:** Holyoke, MA  
**Residence:** Willimansett, MA



Bob Girouard

**MD:** What got you into the drums?

**Jim:** When I was about eight years old I saw Buddy Rich battle with Animal on *The Muppet Show*. Then I started listening to my brother's records and got into the Beatles and Led Zeppelin. It was the power of the instrument for me—the way it drove a band.

**MD:** What have been your personal highlights as a drummer?

**Jim:** I began taking formal lessons when I was eleven, at a place called Falcetti Music in West Springfield, Massachusetts. After a period of study, I was referred to Larry Levine, who, just by chance, was doing a

clinic for Yamaha nearby. At the time I was a big fan of Kiss's Peter Criss, with whom Larry, via Sabian, was developing a prototype cymbal. We began corresponding, and the next thing I knew I was trekking up to his LSL Studio in Saratoga Springs, New York, for lessons. All these years later, I still am. [Levine, who is present during this interview, says, "As a clinician I get to see a lot of aspiring players, and Jimmy had something special—passion and focus, to be exact. Moreover, he had conviction, which is indispensable in this business."]

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for me are my current group, an Elton John tribute band called Benny and the Jets, as well as a new project, Tres Hombres. Another highlight: I won the Bay State Drumming Competition in 1985; I was up against twenty-five other players.

**MD:** What led you away from drumming?

**Jim:** In 1999 my daughter was born. I curtailed my gigging, because I felt that to be a responsible dad I simply couldn't be parading here and there. Incidentally, her name is Rosanna. I named her after the song, which was on

### **Jim's Words of Wisdom**

"A lot of what worked for me was keeping my attitude straight. You have to remain positive and not get down on yourself. Also, working with a teacher/mentor helps tremendously. In the workplace, it helps to have positive vibes among your coworkers. Sometimes they even come out to my gigs! Educationally speaking, it's good to have a complete background; being musically diverse will give you an edge over the next guy. Most of all, never, ever stop learning."

the very first album I bought by Toto. But further complicating the playing issue was the fact that my own dad was diagnosed with lymphoma, and I needed to be accessible to him. He and

I were always close, and I knew that with that type of disease, every minute counted. And it did. We only had a year, but it was great. He died in 2006. And my immediate-family situation has always been good, but since my father's passing it's only gotten closer.

**MD:** What brought you back to drumming?

**Jim:** Believe it or not, it was my daughter. I had taken her to see a friend of mine's band on a Sunday afternoon. She saw how I reacted to the music, and she said, "Why don't you do that anymore?" It totally caught me by surprise, and I had no answer for her. Mind you, she was only seven, but she got it. She knew what it meant to me.



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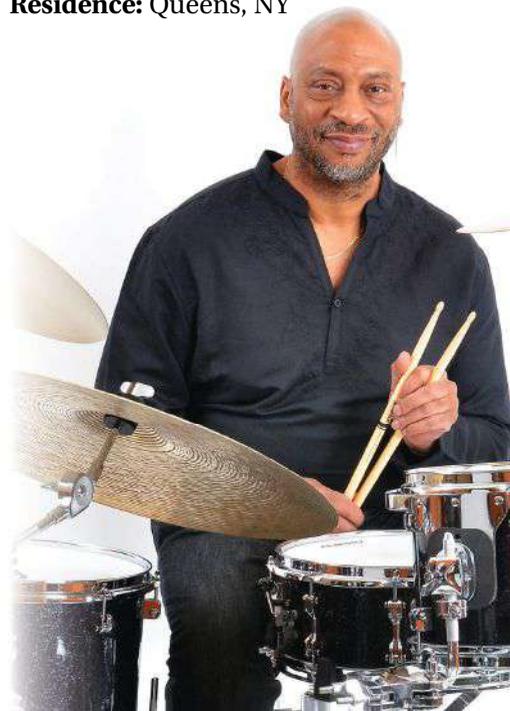
## **FREDDY DUGARD**

**Age:** 55

**Occupation:** musician,  
drum instructor at York College,  
Jamaica, Queens, NY

**Birthplace:** Queens, NY

**Residence:** Queens, NY



**MD:** Who first got you into the drums?

**Freddy:** I grew up in what they call Jamaica funk territory—cats like Lenny White, Marcus Miller, and Omar Hakim are from the neighborhood, so there were plenty of influences. Back then, in the '70s, everybody was playing music. One day when I was in seventh or eighth grade, I was visiting a friend at his house, and he had a set there. Between the way they looked and the color, I was immediately drawn to them.

**MD:** What are your personal highlights as a drummer?

**Freddy:** I was raised on disco—laying down a fat groove. There've been many things in my drumming career that have meant a lot: the Without a Trace jazz and funk ensemble, and being musical director for the Symphony Space production of *Dreamgirls* in 2006, as well as percussionist for York College presentations of *Fame* in 2010 and *Rent* in 2012. And talk about never knowing what's around the corner—I'm proud to also be working with legendary jazz flutist Bobbi Humphrey.

**MD:** You made the change from drummer to corrections officer. How did that happen, and how have you helped others deal with their own challenges?

**Freddy:** Like most musicians, out of necessity I've always worked a straight job. In 1986 I became a corrections officer and was stationed at Rikers Island. I worked on the "detail." That's when you take the inmates out every day to clean the grounds. A lot of the inmates were musicians, and music was the common denominator between us. In other words, with music there were no boundaries. After I retired in 2006, I went to Princeton, New Jersey, to attend



### **Freddy's Words of Wisdom**

"I have six words that I pass on to all of my drum students and friends: *belief, desire, faith, discipline, repetition, and focus*. If you apply those factors to anything, you'll find out what you're made of. In my teaching, especially with younger students, I use the movie *The Karate Kid* as an example. I tell them that the journey may not be easy, but if they combine those six elements, the rewards will be significant. Much like martial arts, drums are a spiritual thing, and every drummer beats a different drum."

a seminar in music therapy that was being given by the Remo company. I thought it was remarkable how I could use the drums as a motivational force. There's no escaping that the therapy

aspect of music is this: When you focus on something you enjoy for any length of time, you are propelled into a state of meditation. That's the key element.



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# THE ENDORSEMENT GAME

## Understanding Product Promotion

by Jim Riley

I've always tried to make myself accessible to my fellow musicians, and questions about endorsements invariably come up. This article is a collection of my thoughts on the topic, which developed as a result of those conversations.

### WHAT IS AN ENDORSEMENT?

A lot of people think having an endorsement means a company is endorsing you as a player, but it's actually the opposite. The idea is that the company is increasing its exposure and brand recognition by aligning itself with you.

So how do you get to a point where companies will want to work with you? First of all, you should just hone your craft and not worry about endorsements. If you're committed to being the best musician you can be and are working on the goal of having a successful career, then things like endorsements will fall into place as you progress.

The second thing I would suggest is to play gear that you love and that works for you. This is very important for a number of reasons. The most obvious is that you'll play better using gear that inspires you. And the better you play, the closer you'll get to reaching your goals.

Companies really appreciate brand loyalty. They like it when artists can trace their history with a product and explain how using it has made their career better. The worst reason to play gear is because someone gives it to you for free. Players who get a reputation for bouncing around from company to company will find that their endorsement loses its impact.

### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Once you settle on the gear you truly love, take a trip to a trade show or convention, like the NAMM Show or PASIC,

and stop by the booth of your favorite companies and introduce yourself. Do not make the rounds to every booth. Stick with just one cymbal company, one drum company, and so on. Be cool, and ask to speak with the artist relations manager. Don't give them your promo pack. Just let them know that you love their gear and that one day, when you're in a position to have something to offer the company, you would love to be able to get in touch. Then get their contact info, and call it a day.

### WHEN ARE YOU READY?

It's important to remember that endorsement dollars are advertising dollars. These companies are not in the business of rewarding a player strictly because he or she plays great (although that happens occasionally). Providing artists with discounted and sometimes free gear is an expensive endeavor, so it's the job of the artist relations manager to assess the reciprocal value of an artist to a company. The question is: What do you have to offer the company in return for the gear provided? Here are some attributes that artist relations managers are looking for.

**Exposure to the masses.** Companies want their products placed in front of as many potential customers as possible. Drummers who play with an act on a major concert tour are seen by hundreds of thousands of people a year. Acts that are frequently booked on national television shows have the potential to place product in front of millions. Think about this: How much does a Super Bowl commercial cost? Millions. If a company sponsors an artist that's playing halftime at the Super Bowl, its products are seen by viewers for a fraction of the cost of a commercial. My advice is to strike when the iron is hot. In other words, the moment you

band has a song on the charts or gets booked on a major tour, give a call to your contacts at the different companies.

**Influence over the target audience.** Some players may not play in front of big crowds, but the crowds they play for are exactly the people the company is trying to reach. This would apply to heavy metal bands that don't get a lot of airplay but have a fanatical fan base, or to an amazing drummer who can mesmerize crowds of fellow players with a solo performance in a clinic setting. It all goes back to my first point: practice!

**R&D.** One of the secondary roles of an artist program is product development. Who better to help a company stay relevant and move forward than the artists who use the product on the highest level? Touring musicians use gear in the most extreme environment, which really tests its durability. The products are being set up and broken down more than a hundred times a year and are often traveling in searing heat as well as sub-zero temperatures. This will reveal flaws that could take years to discover under more normal playing conditions. Having touring artists on board to test out new gear is invaluable for research and development.

**Personality.** One last point to remember is that artist relations managers prefer to work with people they like. If you play great but are a jerk, companies may shy away from you, because they have enough problems in their day without having to deal with a drummer who thinks the world revolves around him or her. As a product endorser, you're essentially a compensated spokesperson for the company. In many cases, endorsing artists are the face of the brand, and the company must feel that you represent it in a positive and professional manner.

If you're an up-and-coming artist and you're lucky enough to have a manager, congratulations! But never have your manager call a company to get you an endorsement deal. Remember that these companies are looking for a lasting relationship—not just a business partner. Any feelings you have about a brand will be much better received when they're expressed directly by you.

### WHAT TO EXPECT IN RETURN

What you get from an artist deal depends on the level of the endorsement. An entry-level artist could expect a heavy discount on gear, at about 50 to 75 percent off the retail price. A high-level endorser might be given gear at no cost, but this is not a license to order whatever you want. There is going to be a reasonable limit to the amount of gear you can get. I have a strict "order only what I need" policy that works well and keeps me in the good graces of my sponsors.

### THE EDUCATOR ROUTE

Success as a player is not the only avenue for getting in with your favorite drum companies. Successful educators are also very effective product endorsers. Why? Teachers on a local level can influence young students to favor a particular brand very early in their career, which can carry over to a lifetime of purchases. University drum line instructors have control of budgets to purchase enormous amounts of gear, which is

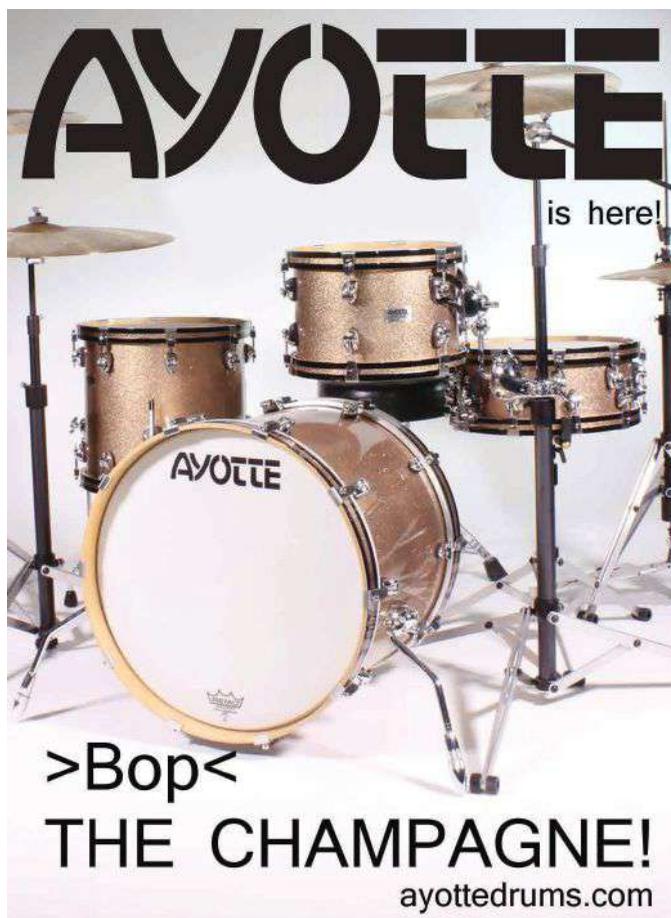
then placed on a football field in front of thousands of people on a weekly basis. Instructors of prominent drum corps are also sought after, as they usually have a say in what gear is used. These drum lines have influence over many high school band directors, who often buy the same gear.

### TIME IT RIGHT

Every company is looking to fill its artist roster with talented, friendly, and diverse players to represent the firm on stage, on TV, and in educational settings. This roster acts like a balanced financial portfolio, in that artist relations reps are often searching for the next big thing that might garner huge amounts of exposure over the short term, while also looking for artists whose peaks of visibility may not be as high but who will have a steady amount of exposure over the long term.

Timing is also an issue to consider. The reps may like you, but they might not be in the position to take on new artists at that time. Or they could like you as a person and enjoy your drumming, but they may feel you're not quite ready in your career for an endorsement deal. Don't be offended if you're turned down. Just keep working on your craft, and keep in touch. Your time will come.

**Jim Riley** is the drummer and bandleader for Rascal Flatts. He is an endorsing artist for Ludwig, Sabian, Remo, Shure, Gibraltar, Vater, and Latin Percussion.



# PLAYING THE SIXES

## Part 1: Volume and Accent Character

by Chris Prescott

MODERN DRUMMER  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

Most of us tackled basic rudimental patterns when we first learned to play the drums. For me, these endless combinations were fun to practice, but I soon wondered why I would choose to play a more complex sticking when I could play a basic single-stroke roll instead. As a young student, I found that the answer eluded me.

Even as I transcribed and learned some of my favorite songs, it seemed as if the fills were almost always based on a series of single strokes. This was not the encouragement I needed to stay on track with my rudimental training. Eventually, though, after my technique had developed a bit, I discovered distinct advantages to using the various sticking patterns.

Since I've been teaching for many years now, I've had the opportunity to ask my own students to learn these rudimental patterns, and I've explained the many benefits. The key to conveying information to students in a way that will ultimately encourage them to practice and assimilate is through demonstrating the usefulness of the material.

I break down the unique qualities and benefits of rudiments into four categories: volume, accent character, speed, and orchestration. In this article we'll examine the first two topics, volume and accent character.

### VOLUME

There's an inherent quality to the way a single-stroke roll falls on a drum, and it's different from the more relaxed attack of a rebounded double-stroke roll. If you're hammering away during the loudest point of a rock tune, playing a series of doubles might not afford the volume or forcefulness you're looking for, whereas single strokes might fit the bill perfectly. Conversely, if a song is extremely quiet, double strokes might be a perfect choice, because they can provide a great deal of speed without becoming too heavy handed.

The beauty of a rebounded double stroke is that the stick is doing much of the work. Getting the right sound becomes more about harnessing the natural movement of the stick rather than using your arms, hands, and fingers to produce the sound. Based on these natural mechanical differences between the production of single and double strokes, it makes sense to be able to choose to use a specific rudimental pattern based on the dynamic and mood of the song.

### ACCENT CHARACTER

Most musicians aim for control over the instrument, and for drummers that's often exercised and manifested in how evenly played our patterns are. Strokes can be evaluated for consistency of stick height and how accurately we strike the

drum at the intended spot on the head. By focusing on those two elements when practicing, we can actually suppress the natural sound of a specific sticking pattern. While this is great for developing control, I also counter it with the idea that sometimes playing in a less regimented way has its own value. For instance, if you let the single strokes in a rudimental pattern be more dominant, a natural dynamic contour emerges. I suggest you explore the complete spectrum of each pattern, from having all of the notes be completely even to fully accenting the single strokes while the remaining notes are played softly. Every variation has a musical purpose. Each sticking also has an inherent dynamic contour that should be explored and embraced.

### PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The following exercise is designed to quickly illustrate a useful application of rudiments in a musical context. It consists of a two-measure pattern in any feel (rock, jazz, samba, etc.), with a 16th-note-triplet fill on beats 3 and 4 of the second measure.



For the fill, cycle through each of the following stickings/rudiments. (Reverse the stickings if you play left-handed.)

Single-stroke roll: RLRLRL, RLRLRL

Double-stroke roll: RLLRR, LLRLL

Paradiddle-diddle: RLRLRL, RLRLRL

Double paradiddle: RLRLRR, LRLRL

Six-stroke roll: RLLRRL, RLLRRL

First, play all the notes as evenly as possible. Always be aware of your stick height and where you're striking the drumhead. Try to disguise which pattern you're playing. If someone can tell which rudiment you're using, then you're fluctuating too much. Focusing on consistency this way helps build control and dexterity.

To explore the natural dynamic range of each sticking, play through all of them at the same volume. Begin quietly (pianissimo), and increase the volume gradually as you repeat the cycle. Once you reach full volume, take note of where each pattern felt most confident and relaxed. Typically, louder sounds are most easily produced with single strokes, while patterns that employ mostly doubles sit comfortably at quieter dynamics. Each rudiment also has its own tempo sweet spot, so be sure to practice every sticking at a wide range of bpm.

Another approach is to allow one hand to be noticeably



# SAMBA COORDINATION BUILDER

12 Independence Exercises Based on Chick Corea's "Sicily"

by Daniel Bédard

**MUSIC KEY**

H.H.	x
S.D.	●
B.D.	●

I remember first hearing Chick Corea's 1978 recording *Friends* at my music teacher's house. This was when my ears got hooked on jazz. I was coming from a background in rock and punk, and I was amazed by the high energy and great technique displayed by the musicians on this album. It completely changed my thoughts about drumming and about music in general.

I listened to *Friends* a lot, mostly trying to figure out what Steve Gadd was doing on the drums. He plays a few fun sambas on the recording, and in this article I'll share some of the exercises I came up with while trying to master the beat to the tune "Sicily."

**THE BASIC GROOVE**

The "Sicily" drumbeat is based on an inverted paradiddle played over a samba foot ostinato. You'll execute the part open-handed, which means you'll play the hi-hat with the left hand and the snare with the right (or vice versa if you're left-handed).

Here's the main groove. It's important to play the accents as written so that the pattern has a nice flow to it.

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

After practicing Gadd's beat for a while, I came up with a routine of playing various rudiments in the open-handed position. This proved to be a great coordination challenge. Begin with singles leading with the right hand, and then try leading with the left hand. Make sure the hands and the bass drum are aligned.

1 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

2 L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Now play all four possible variations of double strokes.

3 R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L

4 R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R

5 L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R

6 L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

Gadd's original pattern consists of a displaced paradiddle in the hands. Here are the other three paradiddle variations over the samba bass drum pattern.

7 R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

8 R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L

9 R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R



# DOUBLE BASS WORKOUT

## Part 1: 16th-Note, Sextuplet, and 32nd-Note Fills

by Todd Vinciguerra

**MUSIC KEY**

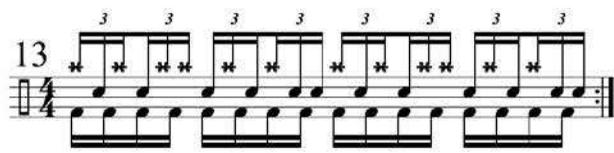
- C.C. ✱
- S.D. ●
- B.D. ●

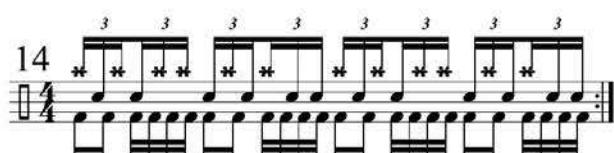
Welcome to the first installment in a series of articles focusing on double bass. In this lesson we'll explore fill ideas where we're mixing 16th notes, sextuplets, and 32nd notes over 8th-, 16th-, and 32nd-note foot patterns.

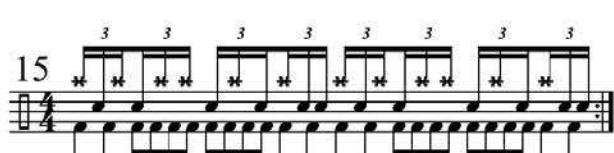
Always practice to a metronome or click track, and start off slowly so you can master each exercise before increasing the speed. Once you have the patterns down, insert them as fills in the last measure of a four-bar phrase.

The hand patterns in Examples 1–10 can be played several different ways. Begin doubling the first two 16th notes with your right hand, and then alternate the 32nd notes. After that, experiment with ways to play the 32nd notes as double strokes. The bass drum patterns can be played as written, or you can experiment by switching the lead foot or by playing the 32nd notes as double strokes.

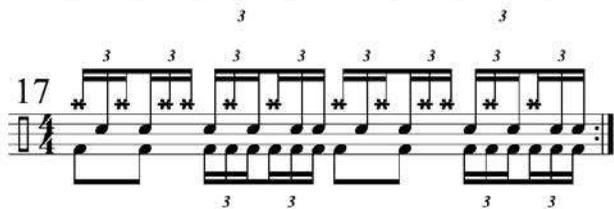
In this next group of exercises, we're playing sextuplet variations with the hands. Feel free to orchestrate the snare pattern around the toms. I stress to my students to learn the hand patterns inside and out before adding the bass drums, so that incorporating the foot parts will not seem as difficult. Begin by playing all of the crashes with your right hand and all of the snare hits with your left hand. Again, play these patterns as fills in the last measure of a four-bar group. The bass drum patterns should be played as written, as well as leading with the opposite foot. You can also try playing the 32nd notes as double strokes.

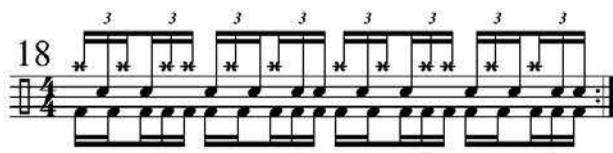
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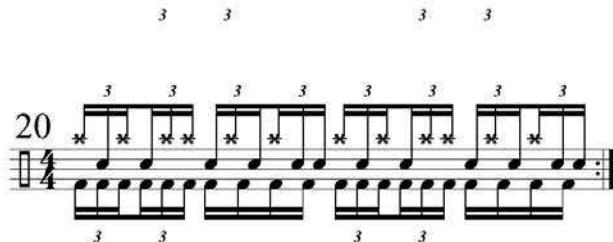
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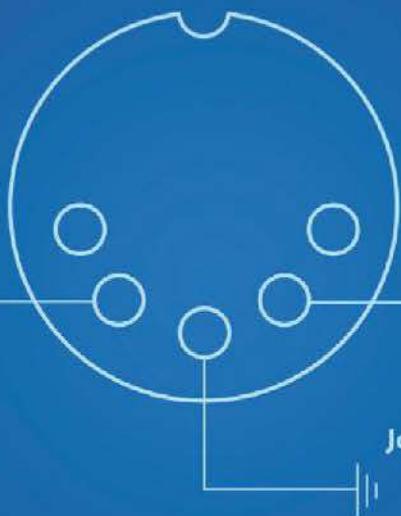
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**Todd "Vinny" Vinciguerra** is the author of several drum instructional books. His latest, *Double Basics: Complete Double Bass Drum Book*, is available through Mel Bay. For more info, visit [anotherstateofmind.com](http://anotherstateofmind.com).



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# STICK CONTROL REVISITED

## Drumset Applications

by Steve Fidyk

MODERNDRUMMER  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

**MUSIC KEY**

T.T. R.C.  
S.D.  
F.L.  
B.D.  
H.H.  
w/ foot

This month's Jazz Drummer's Workshop features some of my favorite applications of the classic George Lawrence Stone book *Stick Control*. The exercises utilize the "72 Single Beat Combinations" found on pages 5-7, and they could also be applied to the "missing" examples from the book that we covered in last month's Strictly Technique article.

I was privileged to work through *Stick Control* with Joe Morello. Joe was Stone's star pupil, having studied with him throughout the 1940s. At his lesson with Stone each week, Joe would bring in variations based on the original written exercises. (These would later become the impetus for Stone's follow-up book, *Accents and Rebounds*.) In my lessons, Joe encouraged and inspired me to be creative and come up with my own variations, especially on drumset.

The first exercise comes from a former student of mine, Scott Drewes. This example works great as a warm-up or as a concept for fills around the kit. Begin with Example 1 in *Stick Control*, and alternate between your hands and feet using quarter notes.

R L R L

Once you have that down, repeat the pattern using swung 8th notes, 8th-note triplets, and 16ths. Then move through the different examples on page 5 of *Stick Control*. Stone's Example 5, the paradiddle, is an alternating rudiment, meaning it starts with the opposite hand in the second measure. As you apply this first drumset approach with sticking patterns that alternate, your upper and lower appendages will also alternate.

Here's the paradiddle cycled through quarters, swung 8ths, triplets, and 16th notes using our first drumset application.

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

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

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

To use this pattern as a transitional fill, play two measures of time followed by combinations of Stone's stickings and various subdivision ideas voiced around the drumset. The exercise below uses Examples 13 and 15 from page 5 voiced as 8th-note triplets and 16th notes.

Ex. 13:

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

Ex. 15:

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

Another interesting application is to substitute an inverted five-stroke roll, phrased in triplet form, for every R sticking, and a regular five-stroke roll for every L sticking. Here's how to play Example 1 from page 5 utilizing this concept. Notice that when you combine the inverted five-stroke roll and the regular five-stroke roll, you end up with a ten-stroke roll.

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

Once you have control of that new pattern on the snare, try moving the accents to the toms, and add basic bass drum and hi-hat accompaniment.

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

Next, read down the column to create four-bar patterns using this application. Here is the first measure of Examples 45–48 from page 6.

For independence practice, try substituting one of the following seven triplet partials for each written sticking. The R will be played on the bass drum, and the L will be played on the snare. Your right hand plays a swing pattern on the ride cymbal, and the hi-hat plays on 2 and 4.

Here are the seven triplet partials.

Here's Example 49 from page 7, using the second triplet as the substituted rhythm.

Once you have control of all seven partials, try reversing the hands so that you're playing the swing pattern with your nondominant hand. The next exercise is Example 55 from page 7, substituting the second triplet partial for every R and the third triplet partial for every L.

To develop finger control and dexterity, substitute a right paradiddle for every R and a left paradiddle for every L. When you practice this, separate the hands on two surfaces, such as the ride cymbal and snare drum. Here's the first measure of Example 62 from page 7, played using this approach. The hi-hat is on 2 and 4 throughout.

It's also fun to interpret *Stick Control* in a samba style. Try the following ostinato for your right hand (without a stick) and feet.

Now play each L sticking in Stone's patterns with your hand on the snare drum with the snares off. Below is Example 67 from page 7.

Finally, try interpreting the written 8th notes in *Stick Control* with a swing feel using brushes. Play every R with an open tap sound with the right brush and every L with a circular sweep with the left brush.

As you work through the applications, concentrate on your pulse and pay attention to the sound across your four limbs. Work out each sticking variation with a metronome, or play along to your favorite recording. Practice at a wide variety of tempos, from very slow to very fast. Be creative and come up with your own unique variations.



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



# DRUM ATHLETES

## Part 5: Dynamic and Static Stretches

by Billy Cuthrell

**B**ecause we drummers sit a lot, we need to strengthen our hip flexors, TFL (tensor fasciae latae) muscles, and IT (iliotibial tract) band. The hip flexor is a group of muscles in the crease of the leg between the hip and upper thigh. These often get fatigued or sore when we play the bass drum, since they act to flex the femur and pull the knee forward. The TFL is a hip abductor muscle found in the upper region of the thigh. It acts to steady the knee and pelvis, and its basic function is to help us walk. The IT band allows us to rotate our hips and contributes to knee stabilization. All of these muscles can be exercised through a series of dynamic and static stretches.

Dynamic stretching prepares the body for physical exertion and high performance. It's usually done after a slight warm-up, like doing jumping jacks or running in place. A static stretch is done while the body is at rest, like when you bend over and touch your toes before going on a run. While in the last few years there has been some question of the effectiveness of static stretching, I feel that both static and dynamic stretching increase our range of movement and help promote blood and oxygen flow to soft tissues prior to exertion. I like to do dynamic stretches before static stretches.

In this article we'll cover dynamic and static stretches that are to be completed in circuits. (See the Health & Science piece in the March 2013 issue for other fundamental dynamic stretches.) A circuit is when you do the prescribed exercises in a row for the suggested amount of time and then repeat.

Work your way gradually into these stretches, and don't overdo it. If you feel any discomfort or pain, stop right away. The stretches can be done in your home, in a dressing room or gym, or outside on a mat on a nice day. Before doing any of the moves, I like to warm up the entire body using pre-stretches, as indicated.

### PRE-STRETCH

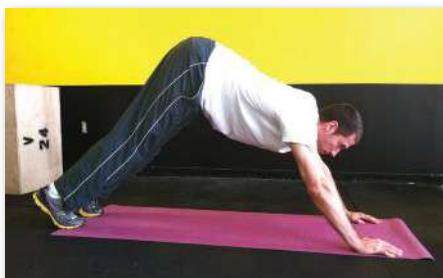
#### LIGHT JOG OR JUMP ROPE (2-5 MINUTES)

Warm up with a light jog or by jumping rope. Jog standing in place or up and down a driveway or street. This is a short, low-speed warm-up designed to get your blood flowing. You can jump rope using single skips or by running in place as you skip. If you can do double unders, where the rope goes around twice per jump, try those too. But conserve your energy.

### DYNAMIC STRETCH CIRCUIT

#### LEG SWINGS

Swing your right leg out in front of you and then back behind you, about 1' off the floor. Your leg will gradually get higher as you swing it. As you progress, swing the leg as high as you comfortably can. I sometimes touch my toes with the opposite hand. Do 15 to 20 reps per leg.

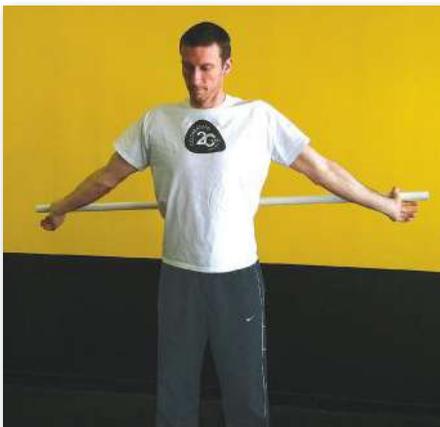


#### PIKE TO COBRA

The pike starts in a push-up position, but your midsection (butt) is up so that your body forms a V in the air. You then scoop your hips under and down. Your legs and midsection will now lie flat on the floor. Push your body up onto your hands so that your upper torso is in a cobra position, and then reverse back into the start position. This entire stretch is completed in a single motion. Do 8 to 10 reps.

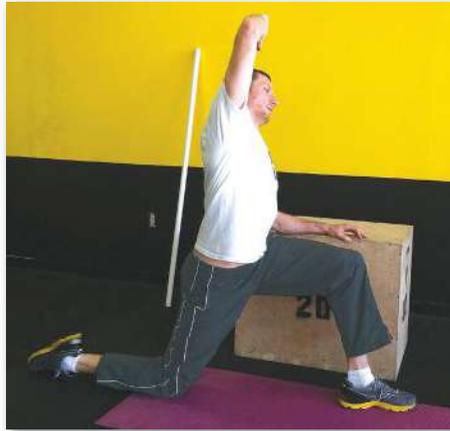
## SHOULDER PASS-THROUGH

I use a piece of 2" PVC pipe, cut about 5.5' long, for this move. Grab the pipe at each end with a wide overhand grip. The pipe will rest at your hips in front of you. Without bending your arms, bring the pipe up in front of you, over your head, and then behind you. If your shoulder mobility is not good, take the pipe back as far as you feel comfortable. Then bring the pipe back in front, where it started. Do 15 reps.



## STATIC STRETCHES

Once you do the three dynamic stretches, move on to the following static stretches.



## LUNGE STRETCH

Take a standard lunge position, with your left leg in front of your right. Your left knee should be over your toes (not in front) and parallel to the floor, while your right knee will be on the floor, with your right foot behind you. Your right arm should be above your head and bent to the left. You may want to have a bench to hold on to for stability. When you do this stretch correctly, you'll feel it in your hamstrings. Hold the position for 5 to 20 seconds or as long as you can. Do 8 reps per leg.

## TFL AND IT BAND STRETCH

While holding a post or wall, put your right leg across your left leg and lean to your left. Switch legs, placing your left leg across your right leg, and then lean right. Hold the positions for 10 seconds each.



## JUJITSU WRIST FLEX AND EXTENSIONS

Hold your right arm straight out in front of you, with your hand and wrist turned down. Grab your right hand with your left, with your thumbs interlocked and the palm of your left hand on the back of your right hand. Pull the left hand downward. You'll feel a stretch in the forearm. Repeat with the opposite arm/hand.

Now turn your right hand down (fingers facing the floor) and grab the fingers with your left hand. Pull the hand down toward you. Repeat with your other hand.

Special thanks to certified personal trainer and physical therapist Daniel Robertson for his contributions to this article.

**Billy Cuthrell** owns and operates the Progressive Music Center in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area. You can contact him directly at [billy@raleighmusiclessons.com](mailto:billy@raleighmusiclessons.com).



# COLLECTOR'S CORNER



## Camco

### 3.5x14 Jazz Series Snare

by Harry Cangany

In September of 1991, I got a note from a Camco enthusiast in England. The note was written on a copy of page nine of the earliest Camco catalog, which was printed in 1962 and illustrated the drum we're featuring this month: the 3.5x14 Jazz model.

I started looking for a Camco Jazz back when I got that letter, but I never found one. I turned up a lot of 5x14s and 5.5x14s, as well as two rare 4.5x14 Casino models. The first Camco catalog was actually the last catalog of the company's predecessor, George Way Drums, whose models were made in the old Leedy factory in Elkhart, Indiana. When Camco took control and moved the Way production one state west, to a machine shop in Oaklawn, Illinois, the company simply placed Camco stickers on the 1961 orange-colored Way catalog. (A decade later, Camco was sold to Kustom Electronics, which then sold it to Beckman Industries in the mid '70s. The Camco brand eventually ended in the late '70s, after Tama acquired the name, engineering rights,



and blueprints, and DW took over the remaining inventory and manufacturing equipment.)

The 3.5x14 Jazz model is illustrated—not pictured—in Camco's 1962 catalog. I had been looking for a drum with eight mini lugs and the less expensive Economy strainer. I recently checked eBay and found an Oaklawn-era 3.5x14 Camco Jazz with a Tuxedo strainer and eight of the company's distinctive, full-size, round Aristocrat lugs.

To put the value of this rare drum into perspective, a first-generation 4x14 Gretsch Max Roach model, which has a similar jasper shell but without reinforcing hoops, is worth about \$3,000. Gretsch went on making the Progressive Jazz, the successor to the Max Roach, for years.

Once I got the drum, I inspected the shell. The parts are original, including the chubby washers and intact

badge and key holder. There's no muffler, and the bearing edges are rounded. The reinforcement hoop on the top is narrower than the one on the bottom, but it seems as if that was done at the factory, as if a 4.5x14 shell

was cut down.

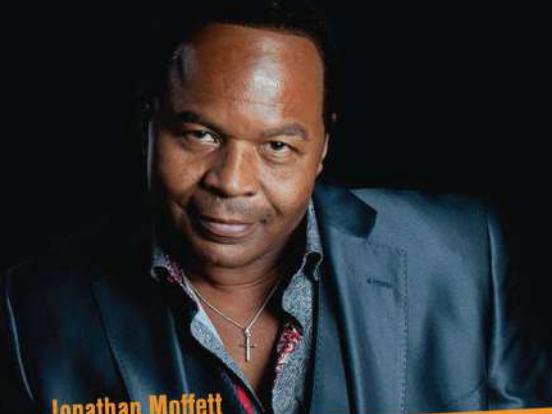
Camco used a very distinctive set of counterhoops, produced by George Way. These high hoops were flanged by bending over the top of the hoop into a roll. The ears of Way/Camco hoops are unique as well. Like Indianapolis- and Elkhart-era Leedy before it, Camco used a rounded ear. During the Oaklawn years, Camco also used a lower-profile hoop with the same ears but without the high collars and rounded top. The earliest snare gates were slightly raised at the bottom.

So to my friend Michael Kaskell, who I assume is still living somewhere in England, I can now definitely say, yes, Camco Jazz drums *do* exist. Or at least one exists, in black diamond finish.



Only Camco's specially designed drum key will fit in the built-in Key Holder on the side of the Jazz series shell.





Jonathan Moffett



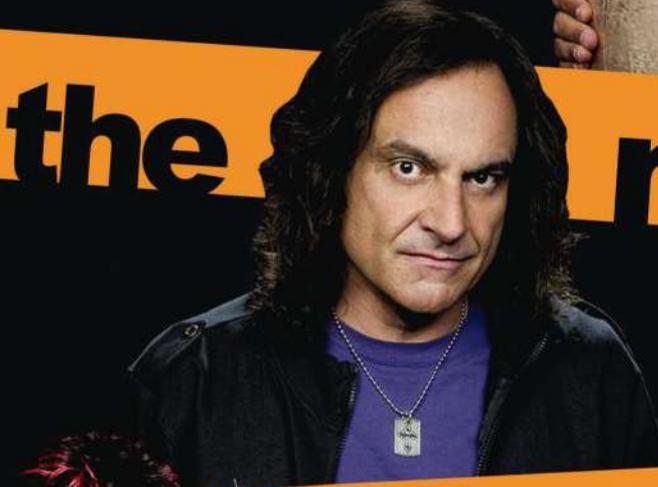
Rick Latham



Horacio El Negro Hernandez



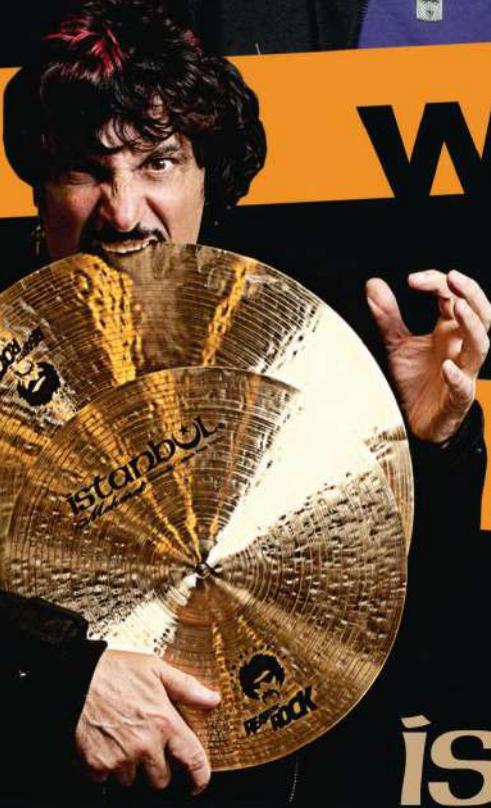
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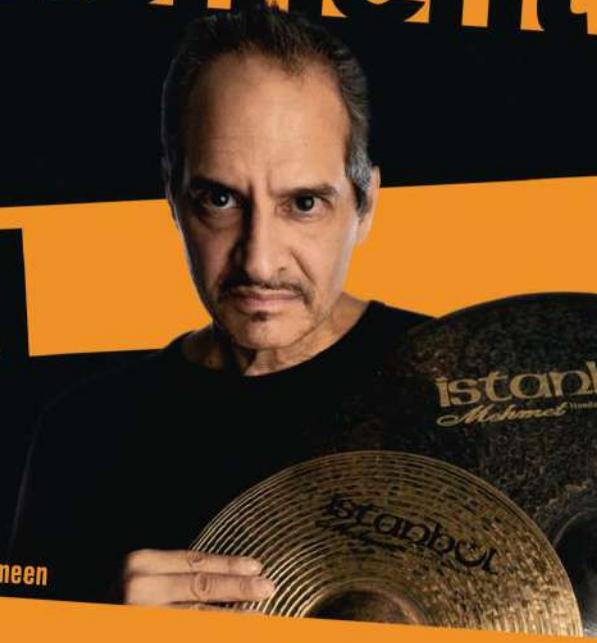
Vinny Appice

# the movement

# we did



Carmine Appice



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**NEW**  
*and*  
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### SPAUN Tamo Ash/Maple Kit

This limited edition drumkit sports a tamo ash outer veneer and a maple core, plus abalone-shell pinstripe inlays. Ten kits are available and include 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and an 18x22 bass drum. Among the other features are SBR solid-brass Resonator lugs, double-45-degree bearing edges, and SSS rack tom mounts. An optional matching 6x14 snare drum, with die-cast hoops, is also available. List price: \$8,595.

[spaundrums.com](http://spaundrums.com)

### VIC FIRTH Pete Lockett DrumJammer Signature Series Drumsticks

The Pete Lockett DrumJammer signature stick is crafted from hickory and features a small, round bead said to create a well-defined sound. The 16x.585 drumsticks are double-ended for multipurpose use.

[vicfirth.com](http://vicfirth.com)



### REMO White Suede Drumheads

White Suede drumheads are said to provide focused warmth and maximum midrange tones for snare and toms, and they have a soft feel and strong attack. The Ambassador version features a single ply of textured Smooth White 10 mil film, while the Emperor model features two plies of textured Smooth White 7.5 mil film. Both weights are available in 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", and 16" sizes.

### LP Cajon Castanets and Adjustable Snare Cajon

Cajon Castanets are available in low- and high-pitch versions. Constructed from ABS plastic, these instruments have an O-ring design for rope-free tension, and they attach to the side of any cajon with hook-and-loop fasteners. The low-pitch version lists for \$17.99, and the high-pitch is \$15.99.

Featuring a birch front plate that's said to provide a bright but voluminous tone, the Adjustable Snare cajon has an MDF shell with a textured seating surface to prevent slippage. Snare tension can be changed with a single knob located on the back of the cajon. List price: \$289.

[lpmusic.com](http://lpmusic.com)





## NATAL Spirit Series Drumkit and Hardware

The mid-price Spirit series is available in three configurations (Fusion, US Fusion, and Fusion X) as well as in a wide range of individual drums. The Custom Birch line is available in ochre, cerulean blue, and black cherry finishes, while the Spirit Kauri is available in scarlet sparkle and black or white wrap.

The NRM2 (Natal Resonance Mount 2) isolates toms using a high-grade rubber insulator. Its two-point fixing system and scooped shape are said to reduce resistance and increase resonance. The lower-mass Spirit lugs maintain the same shape as Natal's original lugs and are polished and finished by hand. Using nonslip aluminum-ball technology, the DTM (Double Tom Mount), which is part of the Pro series hardware range, has been adapted to serve as the Spirit tom mount.

Light, double-braced Spirit hardware is available in a pack containing a hi-hat stand, snare stand, bass drum pedal, and two-stage boom stand. The boom will also be sold separately.

[nataldrums.com](http://nataldrums.com)



## EXODUS B25 Bronze Cymbals

Handcrafted Exodus cymbals are made with B25 bronze and are said to have a natural sound. The company is family run and prides itself on customer service.

[exoduscymbals.com](http://exoduscymbals.com)



## SKB CONGA CASE

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[skbcases.com](http://skbcases.com)

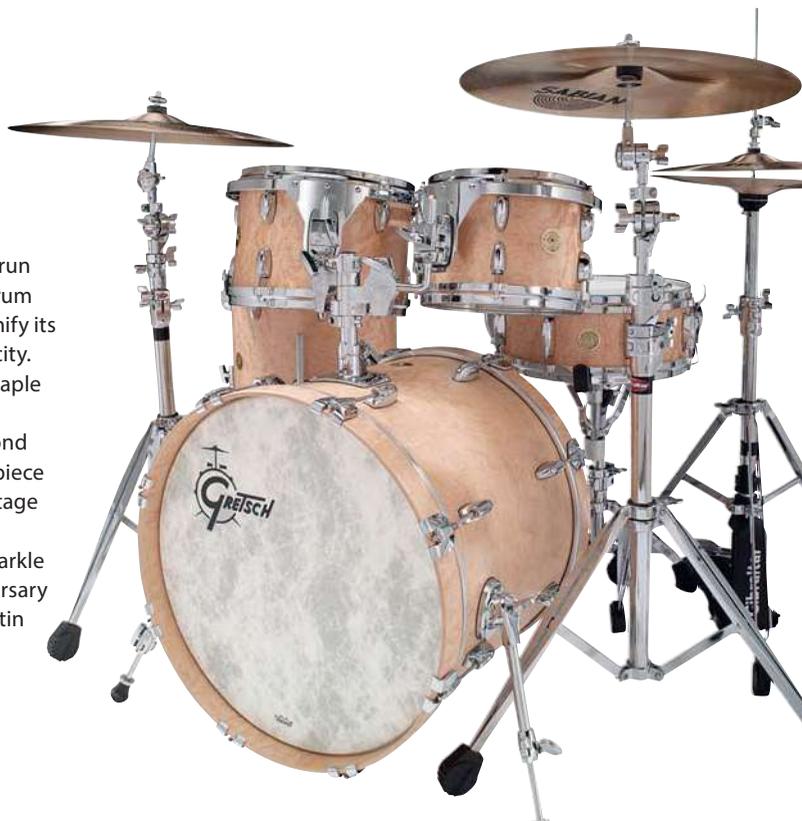
## GRETSCH Commemorative Drumkits and Snare Drums

Gretsch is celebrating its 130th anniversary in 2013 with a limited run of commemorative U.S.-made drumsets and snare drums. Each drum will have a 130th-anniversary interior shell label numbered to signify its production sequence and will come with a certificate of authenticity.

The initial offering includes thirty five-piece kits in bird's-eye maple with satin natural lacquer finish. Thirty-five sets of the four-piece bop kit, in silver satin flame nitron finish, are available for the second quarter of the year. Later in 2013 Gretsch will introduce thirty six-piece kits in vintage cherry burst and thirty-five four-piece kits with vintage appointments in satin gold flame nitron.

A Brooklyn series 130th-anniversary four-piece kit in pewter sparkle nitron finish will be available throughout 2013, while three anniversary snare drums are now offered: a 6.5x14 claro walnut in lightning satin natural finish, a 6.5x14 bird's-eye maple in lightning satin natural finish, and 5x14 and 7x14 black-finish solid-aluminum models.

[gretschdrums.com](http://gretschdrums.com)



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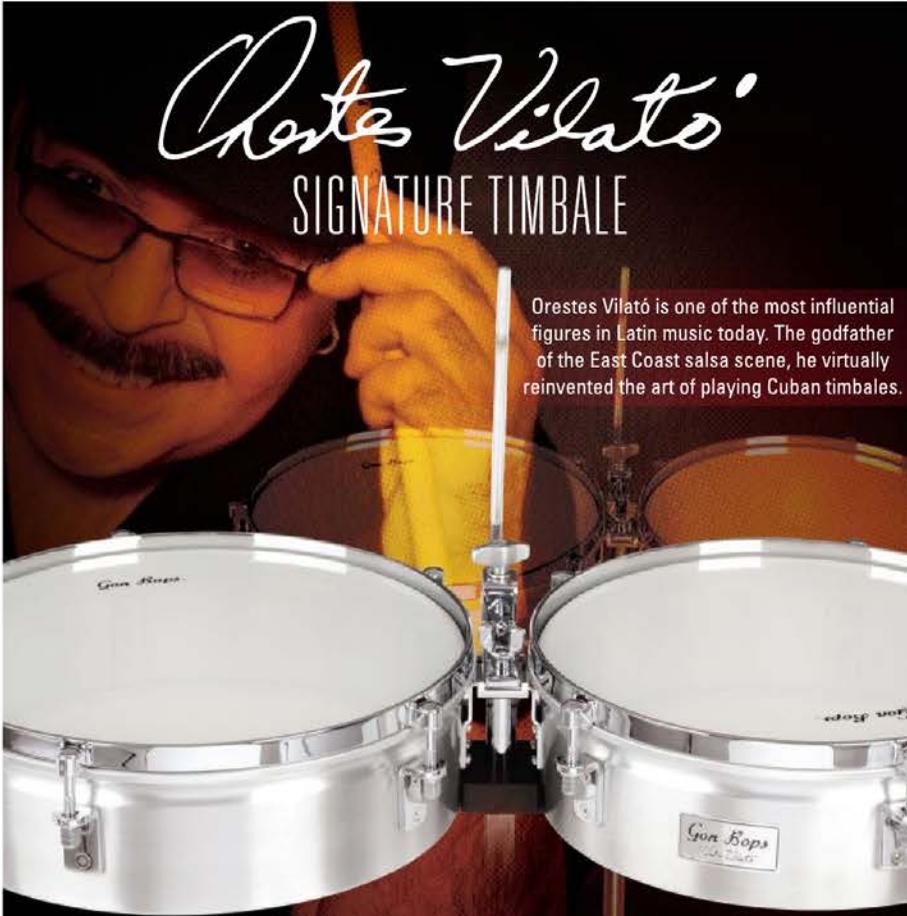

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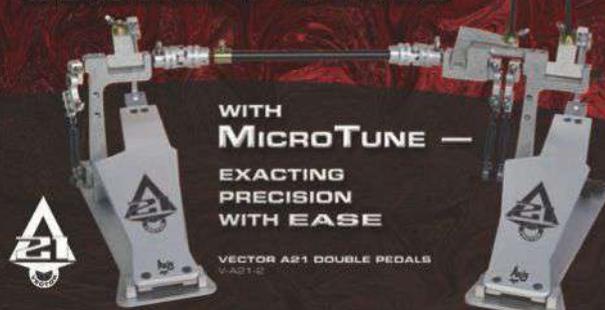
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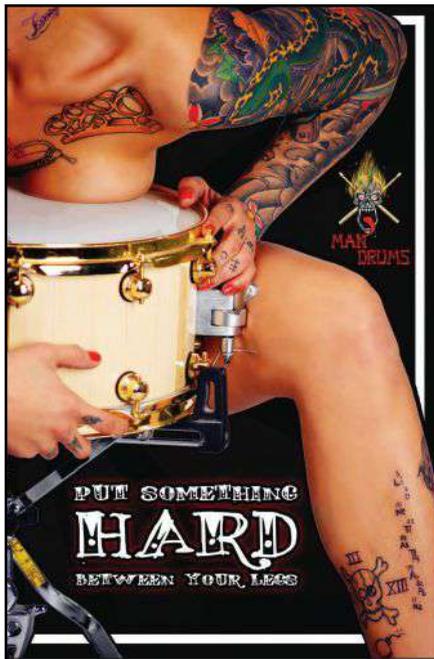
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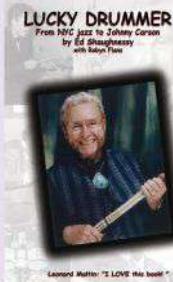


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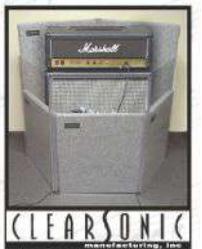


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# The Summer Set's Jess Bowen

by Ilya Stemkovsky

This power-pop rocker talks about bringing the hard stuff.

Jess Bowen is no stranger to the “boys’ club” mentality that female drummers have dealt with for decades. “I was playing a show at the Roxy a few years ago,” she says, “and the first thing the sound guy said to me was, ‘I’m going to soundcheck your drums for you, but don’t worry, I’ll hit like a girl.’ That fueled my fire, and I broke a few drumsticks that night. I’ve been a hard hitter ever since.”

In her band the Summer Set, hit hard Bowen certainly does, on an assortment of melodic rock material with big choruses and catchy riffs. And even though she sounds like a natural, drums weren’t part of the original plan, until her family stepped in.

“I originally wanted to play guitar,” Jess explains, “but my brother and dad played drums, so they encouraged me to play them. At twelve years old I joined the school jazz band. Chicago’s ‘25 or 6 to 4’ was the first song I learned. We did some Buddy Rich tunes too and a lot of sight-reading. I was listening to the classic rock bands my dad played for me as well—Journey, Boston, and the Eagles. But I was the angst-y teenager, so I was also into the Blink-182 and Green Day style. Playing in the jazz band helped me pick up on those fast types of fills.”

Over time, Bowen (who’s written a few informative blogs for [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com)) developed the skills to play it all, including the technical chops to pull off beats by some of her early favorites. “Travis Barker was a huge idol of mine,” she says. “I grew up playing in a Blink-182 cover band with two of the guys in the Summer Set. We played our eighth-grade talent show. Luckily I could play stuff like ‘All the Small Things’ right away. Travis was a big influence, and I looked up to him a lot.”

The Summer Set’s new album, *Legendary*, is filled with the types of hooks a drummer can really sink her teeth into, though a number of tracks feature programming. “The programming is the label’s attempt at hit radio,” Bowen says. “Live, I’m playing real drums. The live accent is different, and our instruments are

**“At twelve years old I joined the school jazz band. But I was the angst-y teenager, so I was also into the Blink-182 and Green Day style.”**

definitely heard. The musicianship comes out. In my in-ear monitors I’m playing along to a click, vocals, and samples mostly.”

Thankfully, the album does allow Bowen to showcase some unique kit patterns, on numbers like “Someday” and in the chorus of “Rescue.”

“Everyone puts their two cents in,” Jess explains of the band’s creative process. “But luckily we all have the

same sense of what we want the drums and rhythms sounding like. We all understand each other through playing instruments

with our mouths. Sometimes I would mouth my drumming ideas to the other guys and they would demo that with fake drums. For ‘Rescue,’ we definitely wanted an All-American Rejects ‘Move Along’-type drumbeat. And for ‘Someday’ we wanted something huge and awesome to play live.”

“Live” tends to be where it’s at for Bowen, though on the road it’s still difficult running into that old mindset separating the genders. “It’s frustrating having to be judged,” Jess says. “Even when someone says, ‘You’re a great female drummer,’ I kind of wish they would ixnay that ‘female’ part of it. I just want to be acknowledged as a drummer. On the first day of the last tour, a guy tried to kick me out of the venue. He asked who I was and I said I was in the Summer Set. He said, ‘Oh, yeah? What do you play?’ I told him I played drums. Then he said that I must really think he was stupid. I got so angry! I said to him, ‘Look on stage. Do you think one of my guys would be playing a purple drumset?’ At the end of nights, though, it’s a great liberating feeling to turn around those doubts and have them realize, ‘She wasn’t kidding—she really beats the shit out of those drums.’”



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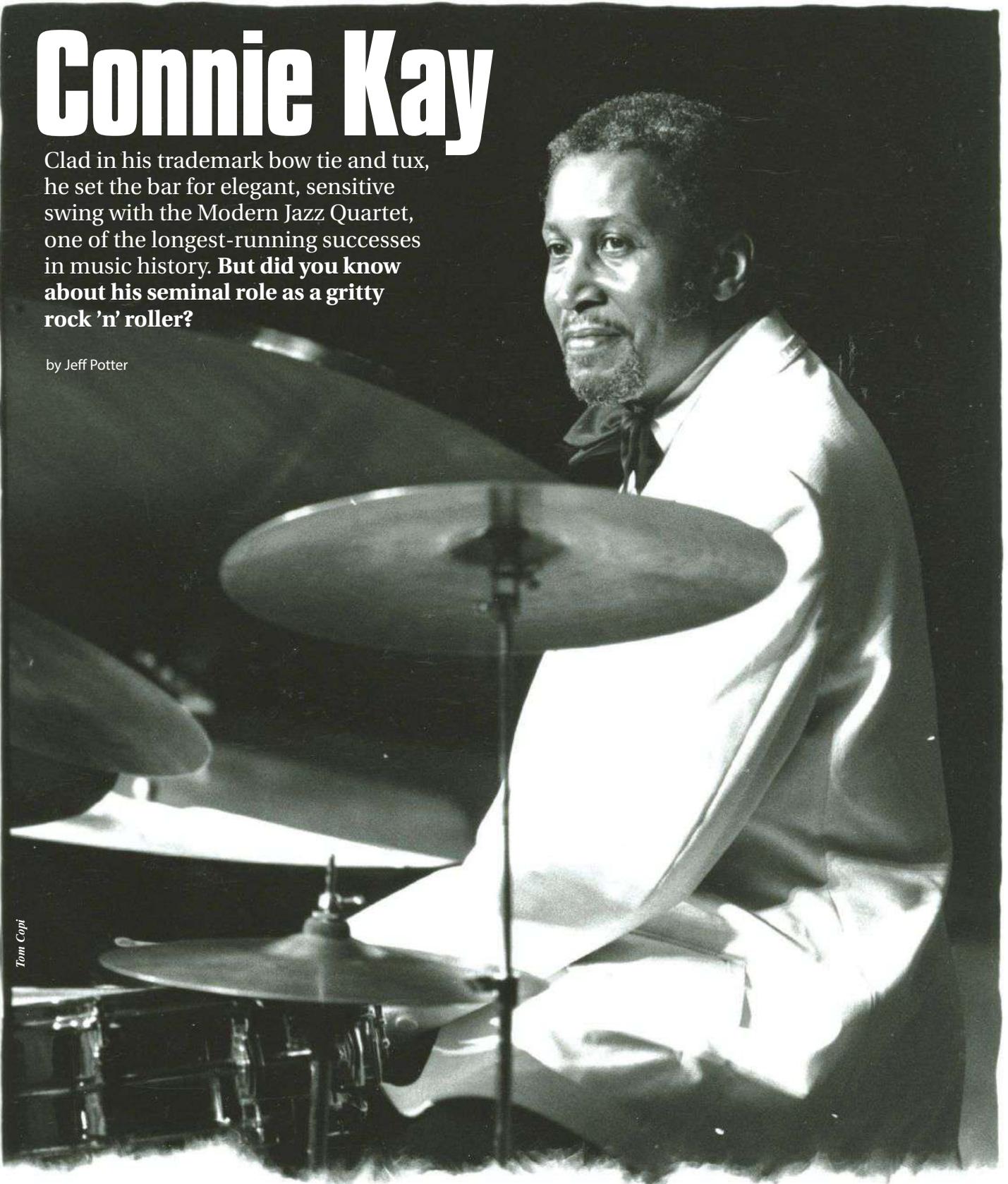
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# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?

## Connie Kay

Clad in his trademark bow tie and tux, he set the bar for elegant, sensitive swing with the Modern Jazz Quartet, one of the longest-running successes in music history. **But did you know about his seminal role as a gritty rock 'n' roller?**

by Jeff Potter



Tom Copi

**W**idely admired for his long tenure with the influential Modern Jazz Quartet, Connie Kay made equally important contributions as a house drummer for Atlantic Records in the early 1950s, when he laid down a long list of historic tracks that helped to bridge the transition from R&B to early rock 'n' roll. In fact, depending on where you fall in the debate regarding the true inception of rock, these recordings actually *were* the beginning of the style.

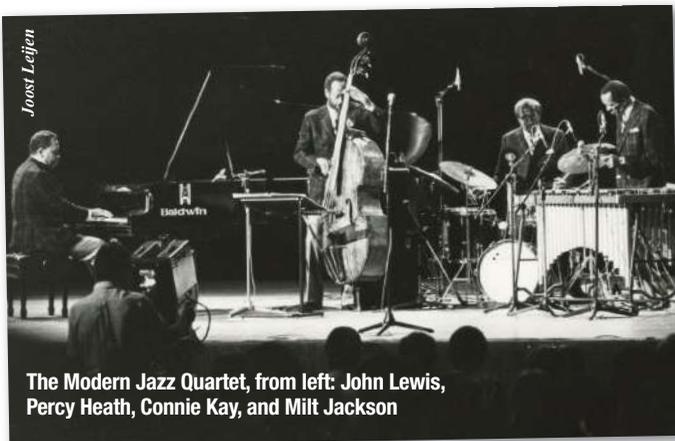
A choice group of record aficionados are aware of Kay's alter-ego accomplishments. In a 1987 *MD* interview at his home in New York City, the drummer laughed when recalling an encounter with such a fan. After watching a set by singer/pianist Dr. John, Kay approached the legendary New Orleans musician to express appreciation. "Hey, man, I know you!" Dr. John said. "I know about all those rock 'n' roll records you made on Atlantic. You were the first guy to do hip shit on rock 'n' roll records. You freed up the guys so they could *do* something!"

Conrad Kirnon was born on April 27, 1927, and later acquired the Kay moniker when the famous Birdland MC Pee Wee Marquette repeatedly announced his name incorrectly. "Just call me 'K'!" Connie insisted, and it stuck.

As a teen, the self-taught drummer played a myriad of nightclubs in the Bronx, accompanying comedians, vocalists, and so-called dancers. The circuit exposed him to a broad musical base and a broad base of humanity. Playing bars with parental permission, Kay was warned by his dad to be careful. "And sure enough," Connie told *MD* in 1987 (all of his quotes in this piece are from that interview), "one night while I was in there, a man got killed."

At seventeen, Kay chanced to meet his drumming hero Sid Catlett on the famous 52nd Street and offered him a lift. The two became longtime friends. The only advice Catlett passed on to the fledgling pro was, "You should do more with your left hand." "Other than that," Kay said, "it was all osmosis and knowing him as a man."

By the mid-'40s, Kay was drumming regularly at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem during the formative years of bop, backing featured artists including Miles Davis. A fortuitous opportunity came his way in 1955, when the Modern Jazz Quartet called. The group needed a quick cover for original drummer Kenny Clarke, who had departed abruptly. Kay jumped on the seat, thinking it was a "filler" gig. It turned into a lifelong journey.



The Modern Jazz Quartet, from left: John Lewis, Percy Heath, Connie Kay, and Milt Jackson

By the late '50s, the MJQ was playing large concert halls and festivals, enjoying a wide crossover appeal. The group's melodic, intricate mix of jazz and classical music became the archetype of the style known as chamber jazz. Kay remained with the band until its 1974 "farewell



concert." After a much-ballyhooed 1981 reunion, he continued traveling the globe with the MJQ on a part-time schedule, until his death at age sixty-seven on November 30, 1994.

On key albums such as *Fontessa* (1956), *European Concert* (1960), and *Live at the Lighthouse* (1967), Kay graces the band with his touch, swing, and restraint, while adding color to the intricate arrangements with an array of percussion instruments suspended from his kit and mounted nearby. Beyond the MJQ, Kay performed and/or recorded with an enormous roster of jazz icons, including Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Bill Evans, Cannonball Adderley, Chet Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman, Dexter Gordon, Zoot Sims, Sonny Stitt, John Coltrane, Tommy Flanagan, Roy Eldridge, Herbie Hancock, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, Randy Weston, Gerry Mulligan, and Red Norvo.

## Rocking, Around the Clock

In addition to cutting most of the Clovers' Atlantic hits, including signature tracks such as "One Mint Julep" (1952) and "Good Lovin'" (1953), Kay drove the rollicking Big Joe Turner classics "Sweet Sixteen" (1952), "Shake, Rattle and Roll" (1955), and "The Chicken and the Hawk" (1956), with the middle song considered a defining example of early rock 'n' roll.

Kay also backed the prolific hit machine of Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters, tracking such charters as "Such a Night" (1953), "Honey Love" (1954), and "What'cha Gonna Do" (1954). The fiery sound of one of Atlantic's greatest acts, Ruth Brown, was sparked by Kay as well; Connie is heard on "5-10-15 Hours" (1952), "Wild Wild Young Men" (1953), and the torrid classic "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean" (1952).

When the young Ray Charles jumped ship from Swing Time Records, Kay played on his first Atlantic session, which produced "The Midnight Hour" (1952). Other hits followed, including "Mess Around" (1953) and "It Should've Been Me" (1953). And the raucous, rocking LaVern Baker also hit pay dirt with Kay at the helm, with "Tweedle Dee." Many more tracks bear Kay's groove imprint, most of them callously uncredited.

Kay's great R&B/early rock 'n' roll tracks are available in a myriad of compilations, and also as individual downloads from services like iTunes. Perhaps the best source for these cuts is the remarkable eight-CD box set *Atlantic Rhythm & Blues 1947-1974*, which itself is a collection of seven previously released compilation LPs spanning the label's historic output.



While the MJQ represented the apex of Kay's refined side, the drummer's Atlantic recordings, made just prior to his MJQ career, brought out the raw. As a regular player for the label, he was constantly on call in a hands-on environment.

"Atlantic was on 56th Street at that time," Connie recalled. "The studio wasn't any bigger than this living room. In fact, in the daytime, it was their business office. The sessions all started around eight at night, after office hours. Then we would go in there and put one desk on top of another, stack the chairs together, and push the sofa in the corner. They made a lot of money in that room.

"They had just advanced from acetate to tape recorders," Kay went on. "Everything was mono. There wasn't any four-track or laying down of tracks for the singer. If a cat goofed or a singer forgot the words, we would have to do it again."

In the early '50s Kay toured the South with the hard-honking R&B tenor sax player Frank Culley, an Atlantic session man who had a hit in 1949 with "Cole Slaw." "He was kind of a wild dude," Kay said. "He was one of the forerunners of guys like [R&B sax player] Big Jay McNeely. He would run around with the sax and walk on the bar."

Upon Kay's return to New York, a serendipitous studio event caught Atlantic's attention: The beat that Dr. John had praised came to light. "You see," Connie explained, "instead of playing 2 and 4, I used to play on 2, leave the space, and play a bass drum pattern in the space. The 2 and 4 stayed in the hi-hat.

"I'll tell you how that beat evolved: When we got back,

Atlantic wanted Culley to do a demo record with a group from Washington called the Clovers. We went to the studio, and the bass player never showed up. So I tried to fill in the parts on the bass drum that the bass would have played, along with one beat on the snare. They liked it, and after that everybody wanted it. Every time I went in the studio, they would tell me, 'We want the Clover beat.' All the other record companies were asking, 'Who's the drummer on that record?' because nobody knew what the hell I was doing."

While working at the label, Kay also gigged regularly with tenor giant Lester Young's band, where he could ply his jazz chops. Switching hats at the Atlantic studio, Kay maintained the right temperament for a session musician. His understanding of a sideman's role was clear: "The leader has hired you for the way you play, but it is still the leader's band. If you don't dig it, you can either do it or quit."

When the MJQ came knocking, the commitment brought an end to Kay's prolific Atlantic years. As he explained with a chuckle, "You would be surprised how many session drummers were glad I got the gig with MJQ!"

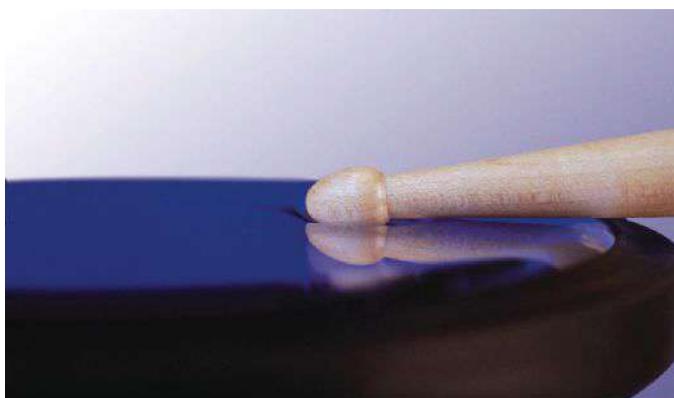
But Kay's career would intersect with rock history yet again in the late '60s. Bass great Richard Davis was slated to oversee the band for Van Morrison's second solo album. Davis took Kay on board. He'd often cited Connie as one of his favorite players, nicknaming him "the security officer" for his solid and supportive style.

Morrison communicated little with the band, simply telling Kay to play whatever he felt like playing. The result was *Astral Weeks* (1968), a quirky, personal, and spontaneous mix of folk rock, blues inflection, and jazz. *Rolling Stone* named it the best album of the year, and it's a frequent contender in critics' all-time-greatest lists.

Kay was recruited again for Morrison's *Tupelo Honey* (1971), drumming on four songs including the hit title track, which became one of the singer's signature tunes. Another song from those sessions, "Listen to the Lion," ended up on Morrison's following LP, *Saint Dominic's Preview* (1972).

A more surprising chapter in Kay's connection with rock royalty involved a revelation that rocked Beatles disciples. Shortly after George Harrison's 2001 death, MJQ bassist Percy Heath confirmed that he and Kay had recorded several hours of tape with Harrison for an intended album back in 1969. Surprisingly, it was an instrumental jazz session. Harrison initiated the project when the MJQ, which was signed to the Beatles' Apple label at the time, was in London recording an LP. The collaboration was never released, and the tapes' whereabouts remain unknown, leaving Fab Four archivists forever flustered.

Ultimately, Connie Kay's dual-world career shouldn't surprise. Whether he was playing jazz, blues, R&B, or various shades of rock, Connie valued the common thread of solid time, judicious restraint, color, and a supportive foundation. As he told *MD*, "You should be able to get some kind of groove no matter what you play."



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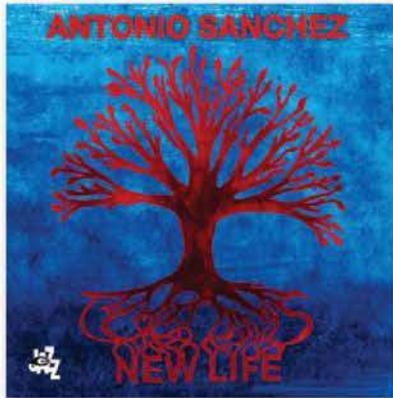
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**Sanchez's first album of his own original jazz tunes gives the drummer much more than "some."**

"There is a rhythmic fingerprint that Antonio has effectively translated from his skills at the kit to a personal compositional language," Pat Metheny says in the liner notes to *New Life*. Right he is, as Sanchez perfectly couples dramatic drum flourishes with compelling melodies, as on the Coltrane-esque "Uprisings and Revolutions" and the meticulously arranged title track. The drumming is intense, but fun too. Check out the breaks on "The Real McDaddy," where Sanchez throws in everything from funky ride-bell/rimclick licks to elongated 32nd-note rolls. Superb. (Look out for an interview with Sanchez in next month's *MD*, where he takes us through the drumming on *New Life* track by track.) (antoniosanchez.net) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



### RICH THOMPSON

#### *LESS IS MORE*

**A first-rate recording from a teacher and doer.**

Right out of the gate, this quartet is poppin' on Kenny Dorham's "Lotus Blossom." Drummer Thompson's

articulation is strikingly clean and precise. Even when he's stretching out on Ornette Coleman's "Invisible," his playing is a study in purposeful orchestration. But his pinpoint precision foremost serves a seamless, propulsive current; this band *swings*. Since 1996, the nimble, musical Thompson has served on the faculty of the Eastman School of Music, where he was first offered the job while touring with the Count Basie Orchestra. On this release, he brings to the table the virtues of the academic world and deep stage experience. And his title composition is a lovely jazz waltz. Trumpeter Terell Stafford offers warm, thoughtful soloing, pianist/organist Gary Versace keeps us guessing, and bassist Jeff Campbell commands a fat, urgent groove. Whether swinging or funky, this tight unit delivers chops, smarts, and a great feel. (originarts.com) **Jeff Potter**



### YONRICO SCOTT

#### *BE IN MY WORLD*

**The longtime Derek Trucks Band drummer brings earthy, soulful pocket playing to this set of head-bobbin' jams.**

The majority of the cuts here contain Yonrico Scott's Isaac Hayes-style vocals, but that doesn't detract from the good time and solid musicianship presented throughout. Derek Trucks guests on the 12/8 ballad "Hear Me Now," ripping an inventive slide solo, with the unique rapport he and Scott built over years of gigs together in full evidence. The 16th-note funk of "Open Spirit" is pure old-school R&B, and the tom-laden solo and syncopations on the brisk "When You Click You Clack" demonstrate that Scott can bring the chops if he so pleases. (yonricoscott.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



### WOLFGANG HAFFNER

#### *HEART OF THE MATTER*

**A chill, late-night come-down disc from the illustrious German drummer.**

Though not quite smooth jazz, Haffner's latest isn't exactly a showcase of over-the-top playing. Listen closely, though, and you'll hear the finest of craftsmen at work. Filled with subdued trumpet, various electronic keyboard elements, and lots of acoustic guitar courtesy of Sting's Dominic Miller, *Heart of the Matter* is all texture and vibe. The cymbal work on "Leo" is Haffner at his most active, while the tight brush groove on "Luna" and the linear pattern that moves from the hi-hats to the ride on "Dom" are just what the doctor ordered. (wolfganghaffner.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



### ALLISON MILLER'S

#### *BOOM TIC BOOM*

#### *NO MORPHINE, NO LILIES*

**On its sophomore outing, Miller's Boom Tic Boom band tops itself with a disc even more varied and daring than its first.**

Highlighting Allison Miller's own compositions, *Morphine* stresses ensemble interplay over soloing. Featuring the searching brilliance of pianist Myra Melford and the caressing, playful grooves of bassist Todd Sickafoose, the trio manages to make hip and complex yet tuneful excursions satisfyingly fun. Several cuts are augmented, variously, with violin, cello, and trumpet, producing beautiful and mysterious textures. Miller is crafty, swinging, and occasionally humorous, spanning the gritty to the tender. Her composer's mind devises unique drum parts hewn to each number. On the cooking "Six Nettes," she plays a delightful half-time/double-time cat-and-mouse game with the trio, morphing between—and *within*—the feels. And on the opening kicker, "Pork Belly," Miller elegantly maneuvers between tightly driving and suddenly "floating" time, creating mini solo statements. Restless and joyful progressive jazz. (royalpotatofamily.com) **Jeff Potter**



## JOHN DENSMORE

### *The Doors Unhinged: Jim Morrison's Legacy Goes On Trial*

Standing firm in his conviction that the Doors must not be misrepresented or commercialized, the band's drummer meets two of his former mates in court.

“Money is like fertilizer,” John Densmore writes in his second book, *The Doors Unhinged*. “If hoarded, it stinks...but if it gets spread around like compost, new ideas are jump-started.” Densmore is talking about his belief that those in the highest tax bracket, such as ultra-successful artists like the Doors, can serve society well by giving back a little.

Such concerns—how much do we need?—are at the heart of *Unhinged*, which follows Densmore's hit 1990 autobiography, *Riders on the Storm*. The new book focuses on the 2004 trial where Densmore sued Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek and guitarist Robby Krieger in order to stop them from billing themselves as “the Doors of the 21st Century,” using the band's classic, world-famous logo for the *Doors* part and thin, hard-to-read letters for the rest. Manzarek and Krieger in turn countersued Densmore for \$40 million, largely because the drummer invoked his veto power in 2000 to prevent the band's music from being used in a Cadillac commercial for a \$15 million payout.

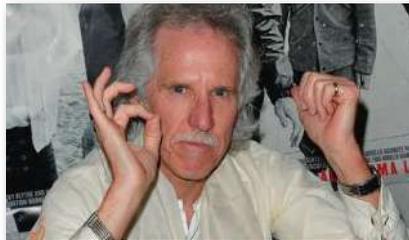
In what plays out as something of a courtroom drama, Densmore uses trial transcripts to present detailed blow-by-blow testimony. He also offers thoughtful reflections on the past, his unbending stance being that he's protecting the Doors' musical legacy and honoring the vehemently anticommmercial position of late singer Jim Morrison, who's no longer around to advocate for himself. (Morrison's parents, however, unite with Densmore in court.) John makes good use of his sense of humor, and he flashes some anger over the trial's attempted word twisting and character assassination. It's enough to pin Doors fans to their seats, but some businesspeople would have preferred more “drunk Jim” tales.

“I self-published the book,” Densmore tells *Modern Drummer*. “I had a big New York deal, but they started telling me they didn't like the title and they wanted more about Jim. I said, ‘Uh, I did that—it was a bestseller; this is not about excess. I didn't do heroin like Keith [Richards], I didn't have seven wives like Gregg [Allman]...this is the *opposite*.’ They went, ‘Well, there's still gotta be more stories

about Jim.’ Goodbye! So I ended up getting people and doing it myself—but I had ultimate control, so that's good.”

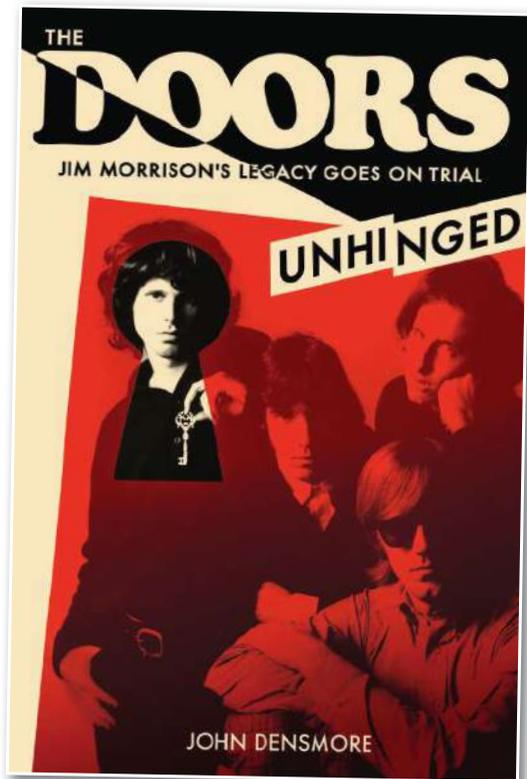
Although this is hardly a drum book, rhythm is never far from Densmore's mind. John touches on his post-Doors group TribalJazz and his latter-day hand drumming, describes how he and Manzarek's left hand were the Doors' rhythm section, and waxes poetic about his hero Elvin Jones. And Police drummer Stewart Copeland, who played in the Doors of the 21st Century during the group's inception, has a brief but key role in the trial and its outcome. “There's drummers all over the place!” Densmore says with a laugh in our interview.

In a sense, *Unhinged* could serve as a handbook for successful artists, as Densmore makes insightful points, like the aforementioned fertilizer metaphor, about the difficulty of properly handling the influx of lots of cash. Such windfalls come with a measure of responsibility, he suggests—or at least he says they *should*. Interestingly, some of the Doors' problems pop up because



of decisions the band made in the 1960s in order to ensure absolute democracy. An even four-way split of money and songwriting credits was arranged, along with contractual veto power, “if things ever get weird.” These ideas were suggested by Morrison.

“It really came from Jim not being able to play one chord on anything,” Densmore tells *MD*. “He'd never sung; he didn't know how to structure a song in the *least*. He was a genius, but not in a schooled sense in *any* way. So out of that insecurity came, ‘Let's just do it all



together, guys.’ It turned out to be brilliant; it made everybody give 200 percent. It made a band of brothers.”

The heart-breaking part of *The Doors Unhinged* is watching the erosion of that brotherhood as it takes place in a courtroom. Despite any nasty moments, though, Densmore the author keeps things in perspective and remains ever upbeat about the rare chemistry he had with Morrison, Manzarek, and Krieger. (Manzarek passed away, at age seventy-four, just before we went to press with this issue.) Now that the trial is long over—we won't give away the ending here—and Densmore has said his piece in *Unhinged*, including a final section addressed directly to Manzarek and Krieger, how is his relationship with the guys with whom he's forever linked in the annals of music history?

“I sent Ray and Robby the last chapter, to make *sure* they got there, because the beginning and middle is probably a hard pill,” John says, “although I tried to just quote their testimony rather than accuse them too much. I tell them how I cannot *not* love you guys, for creating such a big thing, beyond all of us, from a garage in Venice. I want to relish the magic, the goodness that came down between the four of us. So that's what I'm headed toward.”

“The clouds lifted. Robby and I are going to get together pretty soon. I didn't say this to them, but I've been floating it out in interviews: Hey, I'm not gonna go out on tour with them, with a ‘Jimitator,’ but how about one or two one-off benefits with some great singer, for charity? It makes sense to me.”

**Michael Parillo**



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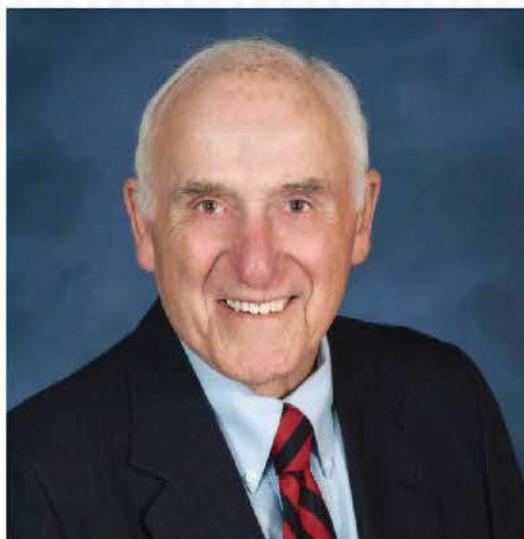
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# In Memoriam

## Robert Zildjian

July 14, 1923–March 28, 2013



**R**obert Zildjian, who died this past March 28 at the age of eighty-nine, was many things. He was an astute and aggressive businessman, a devoted and revered family patriarch, and a walking compendium of percussion-industry history.

But above all, Robert Zildjian was a genuinely unique character. Often the only thing about Bob that said “businessman” was the suit he wore at trade shows. His blunt way of speaking, thick Boston accent, and self-deprecating humor sounded more like they came from the factory floor than from the boardroom. And that’s not surprising, since Bob spent much of his youth working for his father, Avedis, at the Zildjian cymbal factory in the Boston suburb of Quincy, Massachusetts.

For three decades Bob worked alongside his older brother, Armand, learning and participating in every aspect of the cymbal-making business. When their father died in 1979, the

or even hint at a connection in any advertising or marketing efforts. In essence, he’d have to start all over again.

Not surprisingly, after a brief conference with his wife, Willi, and their children, Bob took the second option. Thus was born Sabian Cymbals. The brand was launched in Europe and Asia in 1982; the American market first saw its products in 1983.

I came to work at *Modern Drummer* in that same year, and soon I was assigned to write a feature on the then-brand-new company. I traveled to Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada, to view Sabian’s factory operation and interview Bob, the company president. I admit to being a little intimidated at the time. I was a journalist new to covering the percussion industry; Bob was a member of a family whose very name was synonymous with percussion. And I was tasked with asking him the details of how he’d had to leave that family

business and start his own—a topic he could understandably have been a bit sensitive about.

It was immediately clear that Bob was anything but sensitive about that topic...or about anything

else. He was eager to talk about his new company and his plans for its future. Characteristically, those plans involved making his then-upstart operation the leading cymbal company in the world. It might have seemed a little far-fetched at the time—to anyone but Bob.

From that day until the last time I saw Bob (at a breakfast meeting with

him, Willi, and Fred Gretsch at the 2011 NAMM Show), I always enjoyed our encounters. I visited the factory several more times, and I observed the energy with which Bob applied himself to the ongoing development of Sabian and its products. He took particular pride in the reputation that the company rightly earned for innovation when it came to the creation of new cymbal models. He took equal pride in the people on his staff who were responsible for those innovations.

I also visited Bob’s summer home in Meductic—a riverside cottage just steps from the factory—where I observed his fierce devotion to his family. That devotion was an old-world tradition graphically represented by Sabian’s very name, derived from the first two letters of each of his children’s names: Sally (“Sa”), Bill (“bi”), and Andy (“an”). And I remember the pride Bob displayed when, in 2006, he turned over the reins of the company to Andy. But although Andy oversaw the day-to-day operations from that point forward, Bob was never far away. The Chairman, as he came to be known, remained keenly interested and involved in every aspect of the business. Bob may have retired, but his presence was always felt, and his personal appearances at Sabian-sponsored events always drew heartfelt cheers of appreciation from drummers around the world.

The Chairman is now gone, but his legacy remains in the hearts of those who knew him, in the music performed by Sabian artists, and in the bronze of every cymbal used to create that music.

**Rick Van Horn**



Gene Krupa (center) surrounded by the Zildjian family: from left, Armand, Robert, Sally (Mrs. Avedis Zildjian), and Avedis

two brothers found themselves at odds over how the company should be run. Ultimately Bob was given a choice: He could take a cash buyout and leave the cymbal business, or he could take sole ownership of Zildjian’s Canadian factory—which he had established in 1968 to increase production capacity. But he couldn’t use the Zildjian name



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# CRY FREEDOM



“I decided to make a custom drumkit celebrating the independence day of my birth country, Portugal,” says Fernando Corvelo, who moved to Toronto as a child. “I approached a very close friend and fellow drummer, Bobby Lopes at BoLo Custom Drums, with my idea, and with his help I created my ‘April 25, 1974’ kit—my way of paying respect to my Portuguese brothers and sisters who fought for our freedom.” (Freedom Day has been celebrated in Portugal every April 25 since the Carnation Revolution in 1974.)

“It took approximately a year to finish the kit,” adds Corvelo, who plays the rig with Toronto’s Karma Banda T.O. “I did most of the work myself and had Bobby and Luis DeSousa do the finishing work. My friend

Rick Hicks gave me the final idea for the paint scheme and layout. Everything is custom, down to the hardware and even the tom mounts.”

The 6x8, 7x10, and 8x12 rack toms bear Azores flag graphics; the 13x13 and 15x16 floor toms and 19x22 bass drum represent the Portuguese flag; and the 12x6 and 10x8 single-headed toms depict the Brazilian flag. The 6x10 side snare shows Portuguese colony flags, and the 5.875x13 main snare, with custom gold-plated Yamaha lugs, bears images of the blue shields in the center of the Portuguese flag.

“The response has been overwhelming,” Corvelo says. “People stand and stare at the kit in awe, Portuguese and not. It’s been two thumbs up!”



**Photo Submission:** Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to [kitofthemonth@moderndrummer.com](mailto:kitofthemonth@moderndrummer.com). Show “Kit of the Month” in the subject line.



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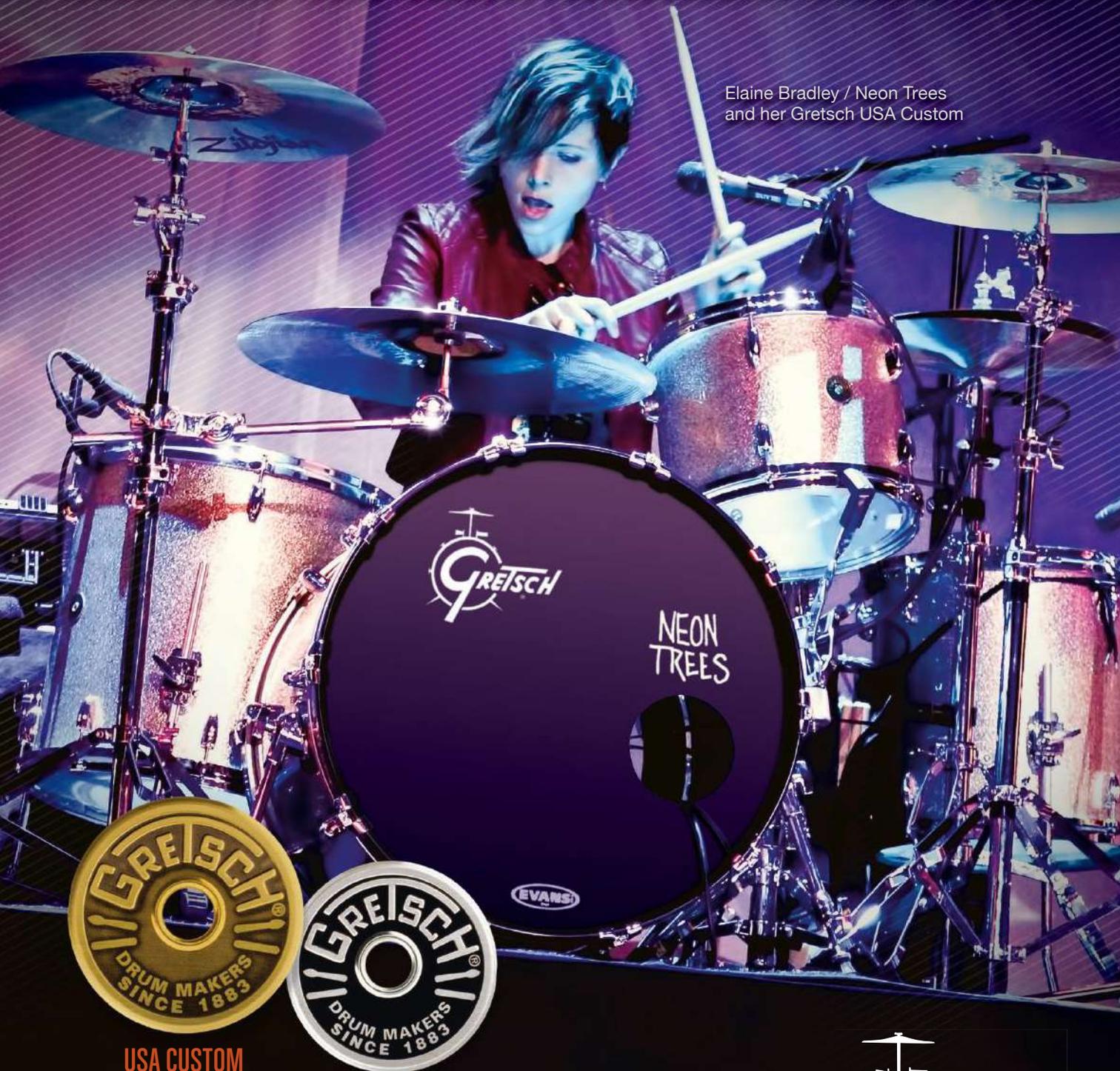
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