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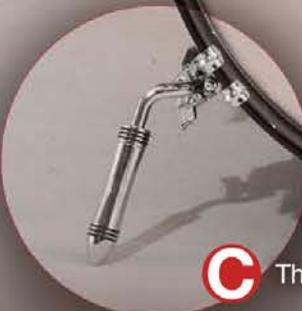
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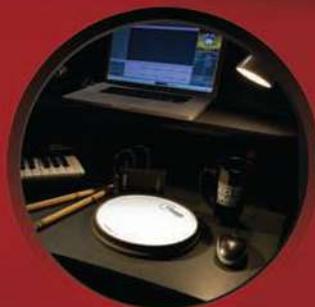
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On the Cover

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Paul McCartney's bold new album is but one topic we explore with the drummer, whose powerful desire for true interaction has made him one of the most magnetic musical personalities of the day.
by Cam Patterson and Billy Amendola

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Luke Holland
The Word Alive

HONEST, ABE

Last June, some friends invited my wife and me to see Paul McCartney at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Our seats were terrible—the last row of the arena, right against the wall, to the side of the stage and almost behind it. Didn't matter. Beatle Paul was ridiculously charming and energetic, in fine voice and never leaving the crowd's view over the nearly three-hour show, while his much younger band was able to take a break here and there during their leader's solo spots.

For anyone who's never caught McCartney live, hearing him sing and play "Blackbird" all by himself is alone enough to make the experience unforgettable. But Paul also has a wonderful band—and you know what its not-at-all-secret weapon is: Abe Laboriel Jr. Although I was an Abe admirer before the show, I admit I was slightly skeptical about how he might handle those many indelible songs of Paul's, from the Beatles, Wings, and beyond. As the group took the stage and the chiming opening chords of "Eight Days a Week" rang out, I thought, *Ooh, early Ringo—that's a tough one!*

Abe made it instantly clear that he could give you what you need of that Beatles spirit while remaining undeniably his own man. He didn't play the song exactly the way Ringo did—his feel wasn't the same; no one's is—yet he brought it to life in an arena just right. That set the tone for the show. Laboriel had a drum sound that worked for all of the material, and it was *his* sound. Plus the guy was singing on *everything*. His backing vocals were a very important part of the whole.

Those are the marks of an all-around professional. But let's forget that for a second and focus on another of Abe's finest qualities: He shows you how fun it is to play the drums. He radiates joy and playfulness with every sweeping crash, every enormous flam. At the Barclays Center, I found that my high-and-wide seats actually gave me a good bird's-eye view of Abe throwing himself fully into every stroke. He's such a physical drummer that I'm grateful he gets to venture forth from the studio to hit the road with Paul and show his stuff to big audiences. If our instrument ever needed an ambassador, he'd be the perfect choice. ("Hey parents, give your kids a drumset and they might turn out like *this!*") It was such a blast to see and hear him play McCartney's songs that by the time the show was over, I was dying to go home and jump on the kit. I was an admirer before, but now I'm a fan.



Margit Erb

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The *Modern Drummer* Pro Panel is an open-ended group of professional drummers who contribute regularly to the magazine's content. It represents an unparalleled amount of musical experience, which members share with readers across the spectrum of the magazine's editorial mix. The Pro Panel was established in 2011, with multiple players added to its ranks during each of its first three years. Beginning in 2014, players are being added one at a time.

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READERS' PLATFORM

DINO DANELLI

Just picked up the issue with Dino Danelli on the cover (September 2013). Very cool! When I saw the Young Rascals on TV for the first time I thought Dino was the epitome of cool. I saw a Rascals reunion concert in Anaheim and ended up with a torn-up set of Dino's sticks, courtesy of a friend of one of the security guys. That was way back in the '80s, and I still treasure them.

I'm glad the guys were able to get back together and let a whole new generation see what a great band they are. Us Rascals fans have been waiting a *long* time for it to happen. So thanks for putting Dino back in the spotlight!

Craig Held

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Well overdue, but very well deserved. Finally the man gets his due respect and recognition. A

true drumming legend never to be overlooked or forgotten. Dino was to rock, blue-eyed soul, and rhythm and blues what Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and Sonny Payne were to driving a big band, with fast chops, tasteful playing, and super showmanship. Nothing was ever superficial—it was all musical and entertaining to the audience.

I first saw Dino perform live with the Rascals in April of 1967 at a club called Bambi's in Newport, Rhode Island. He changed my life and influenced me, as well as many, many others, forever. *Once Upon a Dream* is a must-see for all Dino and Rascals fans. It should also be mentioned that he played with a double-butt-ended drumstick with the Rascals in the '60s.

Rick Vars

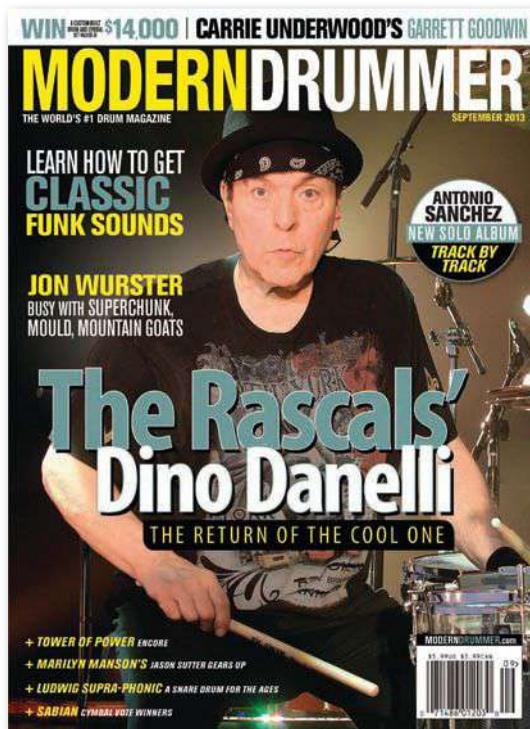
What a joy it was to see the Rascals back together again in Toronto (twice). Growing up in the '60s, there was not a technically more skilled drummer than Dino Danelli for us to study and imitate. His single-stroke speed and the cleanliness of his playing were unmatched by other rock drummers. Using the syncopated bass drum to fill the bottom was unique in rock. His showmanship, including his body movements in time with the music and his incredible stick twirling, was unique as well. What a thrill it was to see him performing again, reminding many of us why we chose to play the drumset.

Bill Barker

MARK BRZEZICKI

I want to say how happy I was to read the What Do You Know About...? column in the September 2013 issue of *MD*. Nick Lauro did a great job of describing one of my favorite drummers, Mark Brzezicki. I was familiar with Big Country from the couple songs FM radio played in the '80s. A few years ago I heard a live version of "In a Big Country" that had so much more energy than the studio version that I decided to take a chance and bought the live two-CD *Come Up Screaming*, hoping that the rest of the songs were equally good. They were, and that CD remains one of my favorite live recordings of any band. The drumming in that concert has all the things Nick Lauro mentions in the article—intricate hi-hat work, layered toms, and the ability to complement the vocals and melody. Thank you for giving Mark Brzezicki some well-deserved attention.

Gerry Bouchard



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Cameron Jordan

DANIEL PLATZMAN

All over the radio with Imagine Dragons, and all over the kit

Catch Imagine Dragons live, and it's impossible not to notice the impressive array of drums adorning the stage. During a percussion interlude in the megahit "Radioactive," everyone, including lead singer Dan Reynolds, can be found thrashing away on a concert bass drum, quads, floor toms, and a five-foot taiko drum, adding a striking visual element to the already high-energy, epic music. Keeping it all together on a "normal" kit is Daniel Platzman, whose journey to rocking out in a platinum-selling buzz band is not your usual tale.

"I studied at Berklee with Ian Froman and Jackie Santos," Platzman says, "and we'd do Alan Dawson's Ritual and study Roy Haynes and Tony Williams and Elvin Jones, and I'd digest that vocabulary. But I always had rock bands in high school. I love John Bonham, Dave Grohl, Stewart Copeland, and Bill Bruford. I was a prog-rock kid—it helped me get into jazz."

How about the transition from supporting a trumpet on standards to Imagine Dragons and the large rooms he's playing now? "In the rock setting," Platzman explains, "you're going through a

compressed and equalized front-of-house mix, which removes dynamics, so you don't really want to go for the quietest parts. Also, compositionally, my jazz background helps a lot. Imagine Dragons goes through a lot of different styles—it has world music, electronica, and a lot of classic-rock elements as well."

The band's 2012 album, *Night Visions*, is filled with simple but hooky beats and enough experimentation to keep things interesting. "For 'Nothing Left to Say,'" Platzman recalls, "we kept having more and more ideas and ended up pulling all the pots and pans from the kitchen into the studio, using forks and spoons as sticks, hitting bowls and plates, trying to

get as many different sounds as we could. That song has the most percussion of all the album tracks."

Soundtracks just might be the drummer's secret weapon when he's coming up with parts. "As a film scorer myself, I find that studying different styles of music is important for figuring out a vibe," Daniel says. "I love film composers like Bernard Herrmann, Thomas Newman, and Jon Brion. I also love Shostakovich's string quartets—how someone can write percussively with the use of pizzicato—or Bartók directing a musician to slap the sides of the cello. It's all influential on me."

Ilya Stemkovsky

BLOG INSIGHTS



Jason Gianni on juggling his teaching career at Drummers Collective, his gig in the house band of Telemundo's *La Voz*, and fill-in shows with Neal Morse and the Broadway show *Rock of Ages*

This year was perhaps the most challenging, yet incredibly gratifying, test to see how I could make various rewarding opportunities work in an already vigorous schedule. I've come to realize that longevity in the music business comes down to one thing—trust. I needed to trust great teachers to step in for me for classes and lessons at the Collective while I regularly checked in with them about the progress of all students. I needed to trust the new musical situations and hope that each opportunity would be a step in the right direction for my career. And I needed the people involved in all of these situations to trust me to not only perform well but to return with as much devotion, excitement, and loyalty as when I first took on the responsibilities.

To read more drummer blogs, go to moderndrummer.com.

JOEY JORDISON

Unmasked, but still out to rock with his new project, Scar the Martyr

Putting his masked mayhem on hold for a while doesn't mean Slipknot's resident kit pounder, Joey Jordison, can't bring some of his patented hard-and-heavy to eager fans in the form of Scar the Martyr. The band's self-titled debut is chock full of monster riffs, soaring vocals, pinpoint leads, and, for a change of pace, keyboards. "I wanted some different ethereal or more machine-type elements added to what I was already doing," Jordison says, describing former Nine Inch Nails keyboardist/drummer Chris Vrenna as an obvious choice for the gig. "I basically gave Chris creative control over his parts."

Beyond the keys and guitar solos, Jordison handled the rest of the instrumentation on the recording, including tracking his ripping drum performances to a click. "It's something I usually don't do," Joey says. "I think it takes away from the overall human feel of the song. In Slipknot I don't click anything—it's just a full-on rager. But as I demo'd these songs without a click, I noticed that the way a lot of the riffs are structured—they're so pummeling and hooky and trance-y—if it's fluctuating too much, it doesn't hypnotize you. So a lot of these really needed to be to a click. They sounded better spot on. There are



parts where I turned it off and raised the tempo, like my usual style, but about 75 percent of the record was done to a click."

And though metal drumming fans will have plenty to chew on with this latest offering of head-crushing beats, Scar the Martyr is a tad less focused on double bass than Jordison's followers are used to. Was it a conscious decision for Joey to downplay one of his trademarks? "Yes, it was," he says. "With some of the push-and-pull of these songs, they didn't need to have blazing double bass. But some of

the quickest double bass I've ever done in the studio is on this record, so when it hits, it makes for a massive impact. One thing I don't like about some metal bands today is that sometimes the drumming is so overbearing that some of the song gets lost. I like to play for what the song needs, not to show off."

Jordison is mum about Slipknot's future album plans, though a return of the masks seems likely by all accounts.

Ilya Stemkovsky

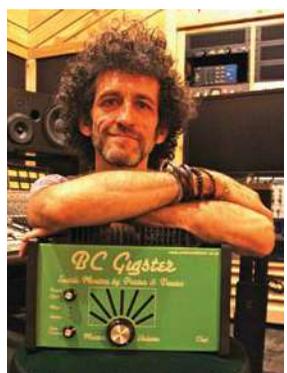


WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Aaron Gillespie (the Almost, Paramore) is playing Vater sticks.
Jojo Mayer is using Porter & Davies' BC Gigster drum monitoring system.
Jeremy Stacey (Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds), **Jack Mitchell** (Johnny Marr), **Julie Edwards** (Deap Vally), **Rory Loveless** (Dreng), **Lewis Whittington** (Rizzle Kicks), **Julia Thornton** (Rod Stewart), and **Simon Collins** (Sound of Contact) have joined the Protection Racket artist roster.

Ben Koller (Converge, All Pigs Must Die, Mutoid Man), **Enrique Gonzalez** (Los Lobos), **Jason Smay** (JD McPherson), **Michael Jeffery** (Atlas Genius), **Lou Vecchio** (New Politics), **Tyshawn Sorey** (independent), **Ronen Gordon** (Sound of Contact), **Rayford Griffin** (independent), **Wes Finley** (Rebellion), **Eric Gross** (Vanna), **Miguelito León** (Glee), and **Phil Gould** (Level 42) are playing Vic Firth.





NASHVILLE DRUMMERS JAM 3: TRIBUTE TO JEFF PORCARO

The Nashville Drummers Jam series, organized by Tom Hurst Presents Loud Jamz and Douglas Corner Café, brings top players together to perform their favorite songs from a selected theme while raising money for worthy causes. Nashville Drummers Jam 3, which took place this past September 9, paid tribute to legendary studio musician Jeff Porcaro.

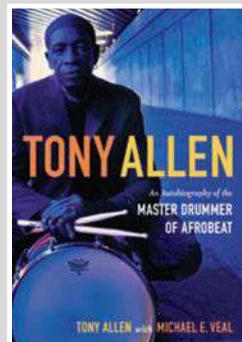


The show delved into Porcaro's broad discography, including the music of Toto, Michael McDonald, Steely Dan, Eric Clapton, Jude Cole, and Boz Scaggs. All proceeds from NDJ3 will be distributed to Paramore drummer Miles McPherson for his medical fund following a golf-cart accident, as well as to ALS research (in the name of Mike Porcaro) and the W.O. Smith Music School. The list of performers included Chuck Tilley, Rich Redmond, Danny Gottlieb, Jim Riley, Nick Buda, Ed Toth, Sean Paddock, and David Northrup, among others.

The first Nashville Drummers Jam, held in the summer of 2012, paid tribute to Jerry Gaskill of King's X. The money raised at the event helped to cover some of the substantial medical bills Gaskill incurred due to a heart attack he suffered earlier in the year. Gaskill was once again hit with tragedy when he lost his house in a hurricane. The money raised at the December 2012 NDJ event went to help the recovery and cleanup of Jerry's home.

Many top drum and percussion manufacturers, including Ludwig, Innovative Percussion, Pearl, Remo, Evans, Vic Firth, and Zildjian, donated items to each show. Items that weren't auctioned off were given to underprivileged children.

Cofounders and organizers Tom Hurst and David Parks plan to hold Nashville Drummers Jam 4 this January, with additional events planned biannually. Proceeds from future shows will be earmarked for a buildup fund for Nashville musicians in need, as well as for several other national charitable foundations, including St. Jude Children's hospital.



TONY ALLEN ISSUES AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Tony Allen, the legendary Nigerian drummer from Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti's band, has released a memoir. *Tony Allen: An Autobiography of the Master Drummer of Afrobeat* is based on hundreds of hours of interviews with the musician and scholar Michael E. Veal. It spans Allen's early years and career playing highlife music in Lagos, the fifteen years his spent with Fela between 1964 and 1979, his struggles to form his own bands in Nigeria, and his emigration to France. To learn more about Tony Allen, read Miles Arntzen's Around the World column on page 82 of this issue.

MD CONTRIBUTOR PENS MEMOIR

Modern Drummer writer Rick Long has written a book, *The Nurse Who Had Cancer and Became a Rock Star*, based on his experiences with throat cancer. Included are tips that Long developed to minimize the negative effects of radiation and chemotherapy.



SANDRA VU

Taking the lead with Sisu in between Dum Dum Girls projects

With a cryptic name like Sisu, it's no wonder that Dum Dum Girls drummer Sandra Vu's own project is about dark and distorted sounds. In the time leading up to the highly anticipated third DDG album, Vu, who has also played with the Danish indie darlings the Raveonettes and Canadian lo-fi minimalists Dirty Beaches, got to focus on the group she formed after the dissolution of the L.A. garage-pop band Midnight Movies. In April 2013, Sisu released the *Light Eyes* EP, with the debut full-length *Blood Tears* dropping in September on Mono Prism Records. "Antisocial and unapologetic" is how the drummer describes *Blood Tears'* ten sordidly sexy tracks.

Vu, who sings and plays guitar in Sisu—which also features Jules Medeiros of Dum Dum Girls on keys and Nathanael Keefer, formerly of the Adored, on skins—has always enjoyed singing backup while behind the drums with DDG. "It's extra challenging, and fun," she says. "Sound guys always have your mic off, but I think it can add to the expression of your playing." Still, Vu confesses that she was reluctant to sing in Sisu at first. "But I saw it as a personal challenge, a way to push myself out of my comfort zone."

Sandra apparently needed very little shoving to get behind the drums as a young teenager, and her dynamism behind the kit stems from the precision and confidence that come from years of obsessive practicing. Though she began on guitar and learned to read music by learning piano, once her father bought her a drumset, Vu explains, "It was love at first sight. When I think of it now, I'm surprised and so thankful that he did that. It's a tall order for a thirteen-year-old girl." **Armine Iknadossian**





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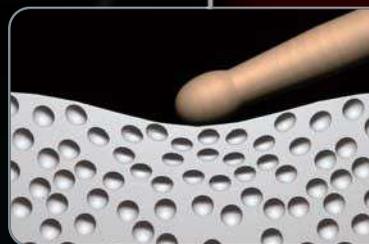
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Must-Have Gear

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This Month:

PAUL WERTICO

Whether I'm home or on the road, every day when I wake up in the morning and before I go to bed, I work with a metronome. I set it to 120 bpm. That's the tempo that I want to sound "normal" to me every day, to set my internal clock. However, when I practice, I just twist the metronome's dial for any tempo it lands on, because I never wanted to be a player who only feels comfortable at certain tempos. I've been doing this for decades. As a result, whenever I record, I never get off with the click, no matter how "out" I go musically, or what the time signatures may be, or how extreme the tempos are. That's why I enjoy using it when I record, for every style of music. I have it relatively low in my headphones, because I'm not using it as a crutch, but almost as another player. It's sort of like playing with a percussionist who has perfect time but doesn't listen.

I also use a device called the Beatnik Rhythmic Analyzer [made by the OnBoard Research Corporation]. It tests your accuracy, and I make sure to always hit at least the 90 percent range in the high setting (within three 512th notes) and 40 percent in the expert setting (perfect accuracy). It helps to set my internal clock and mind/body connection each day, because we're human, and on some days we're a little more hyper or more sluggish than on others. When I'm on the road I just use a regular metronome. But when I'm home I use the Beatnik and try to get my time as perfect as possible.

Also, on all my sessions I bring sound isolation headphones. I use Metrophones or GK UltraPhones. That way, I don't need to have my phones very loud to hear the click, and there's no click bleeding into the mics. It also allows me to hear the drums as



they're translating into the microphones, as opposed to hearing them bleeding into the phones.

Most important, I bring an open mind to a session. You can't expect anything to go the way you think it's going to go. There's going to be different acoustics, and people are probably going to play differently from what you expected. If you have an open mind and you accept what's going down, then you're able to more easily deal with things. This makes the music much more real, as opposed to trying to force things to happen. Life can get really boring if you always try to be you, because it's so easy to get tired of yourself. So if you're open to external input, that's when you grow. This also comes full circle back to playing with a click, because if you're good at playing around the click, then it's easier to work with players that might push or lay back the time.

Interview by Mike Haid

BACK *Through the* STACK

In June 1990, we asked **TERRY BOZZIO** what he would suggest to a drummer interested in exploring free-form soloing.

Listen to nature, number one, which is where it comes from, and people who are tapped into nature. Where I heard that was from jazz players like Rashied Ali and Jack DeJohnette, when they were playing free.

I was a rock drummer until I heard Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. Then somebody told me that that kind of playing wasn't just random. Maybe you'll count eight-bar phrases, and the tension mounts and mounts, and then the release is on 1. Or there will be four-bar things and they'll release on 1, or long ones that stretch for sixteen bars, where it just keeps on mounting, and you realize there's more and more tension happening, and suddenly—*bam!*—it's all on 1. So the eight-bar phrase is the unwritten law, the given. Whether they said that or not, those were the rules. I'm talking about the John Coltrane Quartet—Elvin Jones, Jimmy

Garrison, McCoy Tyner. Those guys would just go off, and that was their little structure. That was the thread that led

them into an astral project and then back into the body.

When I heard that, that's what I did. I listened to those records and I just counted all the way through, and I was amazed that it all added up. After a while you start to feel that, you absorb that. What happens is you go through the process of absorbing, then emulating, then kind of throwing those things away and replacing them with your own ideas. Or [you start to] understand conceptually what is going on and choose to utilize those concepts—but in your own way.



To read the entire Terry Bozzio feature—and all the other great material from the June 1990 issue, go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.



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Are Rhythm and Harmony Really the Same?

In the *Understanding Rhythm* article from the January 2013 issue, "Snare Drum Studies," Colin Woodford equates rhythmic subdivisions to different intervals used by melodic instruments. I've heard other people talk about how rhythm and harmony are interlocked. Could you explain this a bit further?

Sean

Here's Woodford's response. "The 'rhythm is harmony' thing is fascinating. Our basic rhythmic values are whole notes, half notes, quarters, 8ths, and 16ths. In the harmonic series (the series of pitches inside a pitch that make up its timbre), you'll find that those subdivisions are present, as well as more advanced polyrhythms. For instance, the frequency ratio of an octave is 2:1—the higher note vibrates twice as fast as the lower. In rhythmic terms, this is equal to two half notes played over a whole note. The rhythms are just sped up so much that we perceive them not as rhythms but as pitches.

Basic Rhythmic Values

"The next most basic interval is the perfect fifth, which has a harmonic ratio of 3:2. This is the most common polyrhythm found in music, from Ghanaian and Cuban folkloric dances to European classical compositions. Moving up the harmonic series, you'll see that a major third consists of a 5:4 polyrhythm, a minor third is 6:5, and a major second is 9:8.

"The point is that rhythm is harmony, just slowed way down. And conversely, harmony is rhythm sped way up. This only scratches the surface, but I hope it helps."

Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

Am I a Drum Machine?

I play in a cover band, and lately I've been sparring with the lead singer. The issue is that he wants me to play the songs exactly the way they were recorded on the original album, and he's copped a major attitude about my playing. Because of this, tension is running sky high to the point where I'm afraid the band will implode. I'm not supposed to be a drum machine, am I?

J.B.

Are you sure your lead singer doesn't moonlight as a DJ? The proliferation of DJs at clubs, wedding receptions, anniversary parties, and so on has changed what audiences want and expect for their music. And these days DJs can pull up any popular song ever recorded almost instantly.

What can we extrapolate from this? What listeners hear at a DJ event matches identically with what they've heard on the radio, on a CD, or online. They don't have to suffer through a live rendition of a song delivered by an off-key singer, an out-of-tune guitarist, or a sluggish drummer. The listener gets exactly the version that he or she wants.

We need to take a quick detour. Let's look at two types of live bands. A true "tribute" band attempts to emulate the look and sound of a famous act—past or present—as accurately as possible. For example, members of a Beatles tribute band will most likely wear the clothing and hairstyles of John, Paul, George, and Ringo, and perhaps even role-play each member by displaying idiosyncratic stage mannerisms. The music cannot stray from the original recordings. To succeed in allowing the audience to suspend disbelief and pretend they're really at a Beatles concert, the sound and look have to be as close to the original as possible.

A "cover" band usually plays songs by well-known, popular acts from the past or present. Here again, most cover bands attempt to replicate the original sound as closely as possible. As with a tribute band, a close rendition of the original tunes is important to the audience, but the dress and appearance of the band is less important.

To be the drummer in a cover band, you should be making an earnest attempt at getting the core sound/feel/vibe of what the drummer played on the original recording. I'm not saying you have to be a clone. Your personality and style should come through in places. But how *many* places might be the lead singer's problem with you.

It's time to reflect, with honesty, on your drumming. Are you playing in a more over-the-top style, like Mitch Mitchell or Keith Moon, on a song that begs for a simple, deep pocket? When I first started gigging, I was a ridiculously busy-sounding drummer. If I had recently learned a new fill, I was inclined to throw it into every song—whether it fit or not. That ended when a wise old country-rocker sat me down during a break one night, stared me dead in the eye, and told me, "Son, if you keep rollin' through my vocals, I'm gonna fire ya." I liked him and I liked the band, so I started to lay back a little. I noticed the music breathed a bit more.

Are you cluttering the songs with fills, rather than adding some tasty spice? If you determine that your playing is a bit too busy, lay back and see if your lead singer starts to lay off you.

Jim Gordon was the drummer on the first recorded version of Eric Clapton's "After Midnight." On it, he played an accented single-stroke roll, and it worked. In concert, I saw Steve Gadd back up Clapton on this tune. He played backbeats on the snare and straight 8ths on the hi-hat. It also worked. Along the same lines, I saw Vinnie Colaiuta play the Jimi Hendrix song "Foxy Lady" with Jeff Beck. Vinnie played it nothing like the original

drummer, Mitch Mitchell, did. But did it work? Yes, beautifully.

The difference that makes the difference here, however, is that the artists I've mentioned are playing in the major leagues. You identified yourself as a club drummer. Your bar/club audiences are probably going to be less tolerant of drumming that diverts too far away from that of the original.

To summarize: Do I think your bandleader's request is unreasonable? Not necessarily, especially if you're playing beats and fills that don't fit the song. But is it an unreasonable expectation for you to sound identical to all the drummers in every song you play? Yes! You're not an automaton, and no, you're not a programmable drum machine.

If you truly feel as though your creativity is being stifled, I'd suggest you join a band that writes and performs original music. In that situation, ideally, you'd be free to create your own unique drum parts.



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



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CRUSH

A2C428 ACRYLIC DRUMSET

by Rick Long

The look of a drumset is part of what draws an audience's attention—and, of course, the drummer's as well. Sometimes a kit's appearance is so distinctive that it becomes an icon of the artist. (I think of black oyster pearl for Ringo Starr and white marine pearl for Buddy Rich.)

Acrylic drums were first marketed in the 1970s and made a significant impact on the industry.

High performance at an affordable price is the name of the game with Crush's A2C428 acrylic kit.

Clear acrylic soon gave way to colorful hues ranging from amber and blue to rainbow-like combinations. Floyd Sneed of Three Dog Night was one of the first drummers to be associated with acrylic shells, and John Bonham's amber-tinted Ludwig Vistalite acrylic kit with Led Zeppelin was reissued in recent years. Many of today's drummers, including Scott Underwood of Train, enjoy the visual impact and sound of acrylic shells.

CRUSH'S APPROACH

The relative newcomer Crush is attempting to advance the use of acrylic through new manufacturing techniques and appointments. The company makes its acrylic shells using a cast-molding process, rather than cutting lengths of industrial piping, and employs high-quality acrylic polymers that have a greater density than what is normally used. This results in a seamless shell that has greater clarity and a tone that is said to be warmer than the typical acrylic sound.

Our review kit is model A2C428 and includes an 18x22 bass drum, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, and a 14x16 floor tom. Available separately is a 5.5x14 snare with die-cast hoops and a heavy-duty three-position throw-off.

The toms are supplied with clear single-ply Crush-labeled batter and resonant heads and 2 mm triple-flange hoops. The bass drum comes with clear single-ply Crush heads that have an underlay ring at the outer edge. The snare has a clear single-ply black-dot Crush batter head and an appropriate resonant snare head. All lugs are chrome and have a rubber gasket between the lug casing and shell.

BUILD AND SOUND

The first thing I noticed about these drums was that they have a very clear, glass-like appearance. The clear acrylic counterhoops on the bass drum and the uncoated drumheads enhance the overall look. As

for the sound of Crush's acrylic drums, the snare was full-bodied, with a mid to low-mid tone that would be very much at home in a rock or modern country setting, and there were no uncontrolled overtones or brittleness. The black-dot batter head may have contributed to this, along with the die-cast rims.

The toms had a round tone, and I got a nice three-second sustain from the stock heads. The long sustain is likely attributed to two factors: the thinner 2 mm rims and the bearing-edge configuration, which is neither too round nor too sharp. Direct inspection shows the

profile to be a dual 45-degree edge with a counter cut and quite a sharp peak. This combination worked well in that the head was not dampened by too round an edge, yet the vibration of the head was sufficiently transferred from the head to the shell. The drums tuned up easily, aided by the fact that the acrylic bearing edges were very true.

The bass drum also sported a round tone and a lot of sustain, especially at tighter tunings. Loosened to about a half turn above the point of wrinkles, the kick had a nice, low tone with two to three seconds of sustain. Evans EQ pads or a KickPort porthole enhancer could be used to control this sustain without interfering too much with the visual appeal of the clear acrylic.

A small detail I noted in changing drumheads is that two washers—metal and nylon—are used between each tension rod and rim. The metal washer is placed on the tension rod at the factory prior to cutting the threads, thus making it a permanent part of the rod. The advantage is that it can't slip off and become lost. The nylon washer helps absorb the stress of twisting the tension rod against the hoop.

The rack toms include the newly upgraded X-Suspension mount. This system is an improvement over the earlier top-rim-only version in that the mount contacts the drums on the tension rods of four lugs (two on top and two on the resonant side). This prevents the drum from swaying when played hard and allows you to place the toms in closer proximity to one another.

Overall, Crush's acrylic kit was not only visually stunning but also had tone and sustain characteristics that would make it appropriate for many situations. The lower-than-average price is attractive as well. The list price for the A2C428 shell pack is \$1,399, and the matching snare is \$319. (The minimum advertised price is \$999 for the kit and \$239 for the snare.)

crushdrum.com



TRX

CRX SERIES CYMBALS

by Michael Dawson

 DIGITALLY
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modern drummer.com

The California-based TRX offers a full range of Turkish-made cymbals for the contemporary drummer. In 2013 the

For many manufacturers, entry-level products are viewed as a gateway to higher-end purchases down the road. But TRX's new CRX series of pro-quality B20 bronze cymbals provides a bit more than just bargain prices.

company launched a new collection of lower-cost B20 cymbals, which are made in China. This line, called CRX, comprises three series, Classic, Rock, and Xtreme. As stated in a letter from company president David Levine, "CRX replicates the selection, sound, and look of TRX but is priced for younger drummers and is also a great choice for cost-conscious institutions and schools."

We were sent a cross-section of the entire CRX line to review, including an 8" Rock splash (\$59.99), a 10" Xtreme splash (\$79.99), 13" Classic hi-hats (\$274.99), 14" Xtreme hi-hats (\$324.99), a 16" Classic China (\$174.99), an 18" Xtreme China (\$224.99), 18" crashes from all three series (\$224.99 each), an 18" Rock Stacker (\$224.99), a 20" Rock crash/ride (\$299.99), a 21" Xtreme ride (\$349.99), and a 22" Classic ride (\$399.99).

CRASH COMPARISON

Having an 18" crash from each series provided a great opportunity to check

out the differences between the Classic, Rock, and Xtreme lines. The Classic cymbal has a cool unlathed, natural top finish, with lightly etched concentric circles that emanate from the bell to the edge and fairly deep hammer marks. The bottom side is lathed. This crash is fairly thin but not flimsy, and it had the most open, responsive, and clean sound of the three.

The Rock crash is medium weight and is conventionally lathed and hammered. It had the same fundamental pitch as the Classic crash, but its tone was a bit grittier and gongier. It also didn't open up quite as quickly, but it spoke with a full voice when struck firmly.

The Xtreme series is designed for more aggressive, high-volume styles. The medium-heavy 18" crash is brilliantly finished and heavily hammered but not lathed on top. It had a higher pitch than the other

two, along with a brighter yet trashier tonality, with a touch of splashiness to the sustain. It wasn't noticeably louder than the Classic or Rock, but the higher pitch and higher overtones would help it cut through in louder settings.

SPLASHES AND CHINAS

The 8" Rock splash had a nice, glassy attack and a hissing, humming sustain. It wasn't as bright or high pitched as I expected, yet it had plenty of presence to deliver quick, punchy accents. The 10" Xtreme splash was breathier, and it had a unique combination of glassy attack and Chinese gong-type sustain that I'd probably treat more as a special effect than a traditional splash sound.

The 16" Classic China had a smooth, moderate sustain, which complemented the trashy attack nicely when I used the cymbal for ride patterns. The 18" Xtreme had a deeper, gongier tonality that provided solid articulation, moderate sustain, and a meaner attack. Again, it wasn't as harsh sounding as I expected and worked well for Billy Cobham-type China ride grooves.

CLASSIC AND XTREME HI-HATS

Both sets of CRX hi-hats we checked out,

13" Classics and 14" Xtremes, had an over-riding trashy, gritty tone that could appeal to players looking for something a little different from a traditional crisp, clean hi-hat sound. Both sets were responsive to different dynamics and articulations, but I had a hard time getting a short, tight closed sound from either pair. They sort of reminded me of the white-noise effects-cymbal hi-hats used by contemporary jazz/fusion drummers like Chris Dave and Eric Harland and the ultra-dry tone of Jojo Mayer, only with more sustain. While these weren't my favorite cymbals in this review, they still provided a much more useful sound than did the bulky metal plates I owned back in grade school.

STACKER AND CRASH/RIDE

The 18" Rock Stacker has six 2" holes cut symmetrically around the bow. As a result,

it had a trashier attack, shorter sustain, and lower pitch than the 18" Rock crash. It's still more of a crash than a China, but it was best suited for use as an accent cymbal or for stacking with other cymbals for short, noisy bursts.

The 20" Rock crash/ride, on the other hand, had very smooth sustain (perfect for crash-riding), a sparkling "jazzy" ping, and a useful bell sound. Of all the cymbals in this review, this is the one that would most easily be incorporated into my working setup, which comprises mostly big, thin, and darker-sounding cymbals. It's a good all-purpose crash for players who prefer to use lighter but larger sizes.

CLASSIC AND XTREME RIDES

The big surprises in the CRX series were the rides, as they far exceeded my expectations of "entry level" cymbals. The 21"

Classic was the more musical and expressive of the two, and it had a low, dark wash and a nice, rich-sounding bell. The sustain wasn't as harmonically balanced as it is with my higher-end cymbals, but it certainly wasn't a deal breaker. The 22" Xtreme ride had a stronger ping, but its tone was still fairly dark. The bell sounded strong and clear, and the wash was a bit more controlled. When I played this model by itself, I noticed some dissonance in the overtones of the decay, but that wasn't nearly as detectable when I played along to some music. Thinking back to the lackluster sounds I got out of my first few low-cost ride cymbals...there's simply no comparison.

crxcymbals.com

VIC FIRTH

X55A, X8D, AND DRUMJAMMER DRUMSTICKS

by Michael Dawson



Remember when the only options for drumstick sizes were 2B, 5B, 5A, and 7A? These days there are countless variations, from short and stubby models

New X models provide an extra .5" of reach, while Pete Lockett's signature stick features a tiny bead for ultimate articulation.

for younger players with small hands to thin and light options for jazz drummers who require a lot of dynamic control. Vic Firth recently added two new models to its American Classic lineup that offer additional reach, while introducing a Signature series stick designed to produce precise, articulate tones from drums and cymbals.

VARIATIONS UPON VARIATIONS

Vic Firth released the .580"-thick 55A to provide a middle ground between a 5A, which is .565" in diameter, and a 5B, which is .595". All three of those sticks are 16" long. The X55A is .5" longer, measuring in at .580"x16.5".

I expected the X55A (\$15.25) to feel unwieldy, but had I not known that it was longer than the standard 5A and 5B sticks I normally use, I don't think I

would have noticed the difference. This model had excellent rebound and produced a big, full sound, thanks to the acorn tip. I wouldn't recommend these elongated sticks if you play a tight setup with everything positioned very close together, because they could trip you up when you're making quick shifts from one instrument to the next. But if you like to keep your kit spread out, save your shoulders and give these a try.

When playing jazz, I often go for a smaller, thinner stick, but most 7As are too short for me. Vic Firth solved that problem when it released the 8D model, which is .540"x16". (Firth 7As are 15.5" long.) If you want even more reach, the X8D (\$15.25) measures .540"x16.5". These sticks feature the same acorn tip as the X5A, so they elicited a similar full sound on drums and

cymbals, just with a bit more brightness and sharper articulation.

PETE LOCKETT'S DRUMJAMMER

Renowned percussionist Pete Lockett's .585"x16" DrumJammer Signature series stick (\$17.35) is a tad thicker than the 55A, which was almost unperceivable in my hands. The big difference, however, is the tip, which is a super-small round bead.

The result was a very articulate, high-pitched sound accompanied by a lot of dynamic control. These sticks were particularly effective on thin, dark ride cymbals, as they helped keep the wash under control and their higher pitch made the sound more precise. The DrumJammer is designed as a multipurpose implement for drumset, electronics, timbales, metallic percussion, and more, but it's also a great choice for jazz drummers and low-volume players who require extreme clarity and control but prefer a wider 5A- or 5B-type grip.

vicfirth.com

In addition to its vast and diverse catalog of stock models, Meinl also offers an array of rides designed in collaboration

Even though they were designed with particular artists in mind, Meinl's signature rides represent a range of useful and widely applicable sounds.

with key endorsing artists who represent a wide range of playing styles and who have particularly discerning tastes. These artists include fusion players Benny Greb, Rodney Holmes, and Trevor Lawrence Jr.; metal drummers Derek Roddy, Brann Dailor, and Chris Adler; jazz/studio drummer Wolfgang Haffner; and electronica expert Johnny Rabb. We've gathered all of these signature cymbals to check out.

SAND, SPECTRUM, AND STADIUM

All three of these unique rides are from the Byzance family. They are handcrafted from B20 bronze in Turkey and finalized in Meinl's main factory in Germany. Benny Greb's Sand ride, which is available in 20" (\$610) and 22" (\$740) versions, falls within the Vintage subseries, and it features a sand-blasted main playing surface, a partially lathed bottom, and a hammered bell.

The 22" Spectrum and Stadium rides,

designed for Rodney Holmes and Trevor Lawrence Jr., respectively, come from the Dark series and feature a raw surface

with more pronounced hammering. The Spectrum ride has a wide circular lathing

pattern that gives it a unique look. The Stadium model has a big, pronounced bell and is lathed on the bottom only. (Both list for \$740.)

Sonically, all three of these rides had a dark, warm, low-pitched tone. The Sand ride is the thinnest and had the most prominent and trashiest wash, which also gave it the best crash potential. The bell sound was deep and integrated yet clear and articulate. The stick sound was also very musical and clean. This is an expressive cymbal designed to offer vintage characteristics for more contemporary playing environments.

The Spectrum ride is slightly higher in pitch, with a dark overall tone but with more ping than Greb's cymbal, therefore making it applicable for more intense, higher-volume situations while retaining some classic, vintage-ride flavor. The bell was a bit brighter but remained pleasantly

earthy. The crash sound was a bit more controlled than that of the Sand ride, but there was still a fair amount of dark, warm wash to use for accents and builds. This is a very nice, all-around ride for players who prefer darker cymbals.

The Stadium ride had the highest pitch, shortest sustain, and most defined ping of these three signature rides, but it still fell within the "jazzy" category. The large bell is an easy target, and it had a strong and musical tone. There wasn't much of a full-on crash tone to pull out of this ride, but you could poke and prod the cymbal a bit to get a nice roar going without it fully washing out. To my ears, it echoed a bit of the dry, dark ride tones of Dennis Chambers and Jack DeJohnette.

SERPENT, GHOST, AND PURE METAL

Derek Roddy's medium-heavy 21" Serpent ride (\$670) is from the Byzance Brilliant series. It's made from B20 bronze and has a shiny finish. This cymbal was in the mid to high-mid range in terms of pitch, with a fairly bright timbre. The wash was smooth, shimmering, and prominent, and the bell sound was clear, cutting, and musical. I could coax some nice crash/ride sounds from this model, while the wash-to-stick



ratio was balanced so that I could get clean articulation when I needed it.

Brann Dailor's 21" Mb8 series Ghost ride (\$500) is made from B8 bronze. Like the Spectrum ride, the Ghost features wide lathing, but the bell is left raw. The cymbal was high pitched and had a prominent sustain that was very even and shimmering. The ping was clear and glassy, and the bell had plenty of cutting power. If you play high-energy rock or metal and want something more expressive than a typical extra-heavy "metal" ride, this could be one to give a go.

When designing his signature Pure Metal ride (\$920), Lamb of God drummer Chris Adler went all out with a giant 24" Mb20 model. This extra-large cymbal had a ton of volume potential, a long and warm sustain, and strong ping and bell sounds. The pitch was fairly low, and the overall tone was rich and warm, not bright or harsh. The ride sounded as appropriate articulating quick 32nd-note doubles as it did slugging out slow, prodding 8ths. And the gong-like tone it got from shoulder crashes was surprisingly musical.

JAZZ CLUB AND SAFARI

The Jazz Club model was developed with the top German jazz/studio drummer Wolfgang Haffner. This smooth-sounding and highly articulate flat ride is avail-

Jazz Club



Safari

able in 20" (\$610) and 22" (\$740) sizes. It features the traditional look of the Turkish-forged B20 Jazz series, plus large hammer markings and four rivets. The rivets are a really nice touch, as they added some subtle but much-needed presence and sustain to an otherwise super-dry-sounding ride. Although I felt myself wanting a bit more sustain from the Jazz Club, even with the rivets, I found that the cymbal had a pleasing, warm sound and would be well suited to low-volume jazz or studio sessions where you need to accentuate the stick click.

Electronica expert Johnny Rabb's signature Safari ride (\$268) is from the Generation X series and consists of an 18" flat cymbal and a smaller splash-type effects model designed to rest directly

on top of the 18". Both components are ridged so that they sit together securely.

The stacked sound of the Safari ride was short and trashy, with a low-mid pitch, controlled volume, and minimal sustain. You can vary the degree of sizzle and sustain by adjusting the tension of the wing nut on your stand, or you can remove the splash entirely and use the 18" as a funky, low-volume flat ride. I also found some fun and useful white-noise industrial sounds by placing the splash on the snare and hitting areas of the head not covered by the cymbal, or by striking the splash across the bow or on the bell. While not the most versatile ride of the group, the Safari was the one that inspired me to be the most creative.

meinlcymbals.com

SAVIOR 8.5x14 "EYEBALL" SNARE

by Anthony Riscica

Savior's "Eyeball" snare, as the company has dubbed it—although it has no official name—is a deep 8.5x14 drum that sports a 10-ply Keller maple shell decked out with a tattoo-like image of a multi-eyed creature that's burned into the wood by artist Joy Stone. The shell is finished with hand-rubbed oil, resulting in a truly custom but natural look. The drum features matching matte-gray mini tube lugs and 2.3 mm rims, plus a slick Trick throw-off that's notched to hold different degrees of tension.

This snare had a sound that was open and sometimes throaty, depending on the head tension. The depth of the shell, low-mass hardware, and double-45-degree bearing edges allowed the drum to breathe and produce an organic sound. I could almost feel the tone swirling around in

the shell before being released into the room.

I used this snare, tuned fairly low, on a mellow rock gig, and it had the exact deep punch I was looking for. When the drum was tuned up higher, its resonance really came through, with a warm "kang" from rimshots that was pleasing and not too abrasive. The only thing you might have to keep an ear out for is the sympathetic vibration of the snares caused by outside sounds. This drum just



loves to resonate, so in quieter sections of music you might need to disengage the throw-off. The list price for the "Eyeball" snare is \$694.

saviorcustomdrums.com





SIMMONS SD1000 DRUMKIT

by Ben Lauffer

With the recent release of a new flagship model, the SD1000, Simmons confirms its relevance in the electronic world. The SD1000 is a standard five-piece configuration (snare, kick, and three toms), along with a hi-hat, crash, and ride.

If you're familiar with the original Simmons line from the 1980s, you'll see the familiar hexagonal shape throughout many design elements of

Adaptability and function is the new Simmons way, even with the company's flagship SD1000 drumkit.

the SD1000, from the hi-hat footboard to the rubber feet of the rack to the buttons on the module. The frame is constructed from anodized blue aluminum, and once it was set up and adjusted it didn't require any further attention. All of the clamps on the kit are made of plastic, which was worrisome at first, but I was pleased that after some heavy hitting



there was little to no movement of the toms and cymbals.

One of the new features of the SD1000 is the multi-position hi-hat control, which accommodates open, closed, and half-open playing techniques. The pedal did allow for a greater variety of sounds, and the control was fairly sensitive. A slight shift in weight on the pedal, and I would get an unintentional open hi-hat sound. I've found this to be a common problem with isolated electronic hi-hat controller pedals, but after you spend some time behind the kit, you'll be able to adapt your playing.

PADS

The SD1000 comes with a single-zone 9" kick pad, a dual-zone 9" snare, three single-zone 9" toms, a single-zone 12" cymbal, a dual-zone 12" cymbal, and a hi-hat pad and foot controller. Simmons has introduced V.A.R. (Variable Attack Response) technology with the pads, triggering different samples for different velocities to create a more realistic and dynamic playback response. Both cymbal pads had a quick and realistic reaction time when choking, but achieving a smooth cymbal roll proved rather difficult. The snare pad had nice rebound and was able to blend varying dynamics. The tom pads, however, felt a bit softer. I'm not sure if this was an intentional design trait, but after some playing I found that the different feels of the snare and toms had a similar relationship to the drums on an acoustic kit. The SD1000 kick had good response and wasn't prone to mis-triggering. My only complaint was that the kick base was light, so it would slide around when I laid into the pad.

SOUND MODULE

The SD1000 was designed with a completely new sample library based on popular classic and modern sounds. It features ninety-nine drumkits (fifty-five preset and forty-four user-configured), 516 voices, 210 songs, and a large collection of tones. Other practical tools include a metronome, an auxiliary input, ten trigger inputs, MIDI and USB connectivity, an SD card slot for external storage, and a headphone output. The module is set up very logically, making it easy to start playing the kit right out of the box. Having a dedicated metronome button on the module was very useful; changing tempo didn't require searching through menus and settings.

My favorite feature was the Quick Record function, which allows for basic

recording with the touch of a button. The SD1000 also has standard processing and editing functions (such as reverb, delay, and four-band EQ), as well as advanced operations to allow for a more personalized setup. Modifying pad sensitivity, threshold, velocity curve, crosstalk, and even the hi-hat splash are just a few of the functions.

With preset kits including Classic Rock, Nashville, '80s Gated, Metal, and World

Percussion, the Simmons SD1000 is a nice, affordable option for drummers interested in exploring electronics. This kit will probably leave the professional and more experienced e-drummer wanting more, but for students, weekend warriors, or anyone on a budget, it's a great choice. Make sure to try out preset kit #52, the Simmons Original—that's my favorite! List price: \$699.99.

simmonsdrums.net



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GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview by John Martinez • Photos by Alex Solca

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' STEVE FERRONE

Drums: Gretsch Steve Ferrone signature

kit in 1955 Cadillac green

- A. 6.5x14 snare (1960s Radio King shell)
- B. 7x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x16 floor tom
- E. 14x24 bass drum
- F. 6.5x14 Ferrone signature aluminum snare

"The snare drum I'm using up there has a shell from the '60s," Ferrone says. "Gretsch used to make shells for the Radio King, and I found the shell in their warehouse. I had to beg for it, but then they made it up for me."

"My contribution to this kit was the color. I started looking through old catalogs and saw this Max Roach kit. It was Cadillac green with the gold-sparkle stripe around the rim. I love Max Roach, so we called the paint guy, who said he had just pulled out the formula for '55 Cadillac green, and it was sitting on his desk. So that became my signature."

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 15" Artisan hi-hats
- 2. 18" Artisan crash
- 3. 21" HHX Raw Bell Dry ride
- 4. 19" Artisan crash
- 5. 20" HH Leopard ride
- 6. 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash

"As far as cymbals go, these are the ones that work with this gig. The Leopard ride is my 'Good to Be King' cymbal. It gives a much drier sound. When we recorded that track, the ride cymbal I was using just didn't sound right. When I put up the Leopard ride, sure enough that was the sound; it made a

space that was right. When people would call me for a session, they'd say, 'Could you bring the "Good to Be King" cymbal?' I used to lug it around with me everywhere I went."

Hardware: Custom drum riser with various air-conditioner stations (A/C unit is backstage), Gibraltar hardware and throne, Pearl bass drum pedal

Heads: Remo Coated Emperor snare batters (muffled with Remo Active Snare dampening system), Coated Ambassador tom batters and bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter with Ebony front head and KickPort

"The tuning is justified by the house engineer. You try to get fourths between the drums and between the top and bottom heads, with the bottoms tuned higher so the sound is more staccato. The bottom head is tighter, because if it were lower, you would get more sustain. If it were the same pitch, the drum would sustain way too long. With tuning the bottom higher, the pitch goes up and disappears. Each drum is also gated to control the sustain."

"The Active Snare dampening system just sits on the head and bounces a little when you strike the drum. It lets you get your attack, then sits right back down without putting any pressure on the head."



Sticks: Pro-Mark 735 Steve Ferrone signature sticks and Thunder Rods, Vic Firth brushes

Monitors: JBL speakers with Vox covering (powered by Crown amps), Future Sonics in-ear monitors

Percussion: LP Americana cajon with Gibraltar foot pedal, Black Beauty cowbells, Cyclops tambourine, Micro Snare, hand-woven mini maracas, rawhide maracas, finger cymbals (used on "Learning to Fly"), and tambourine



ED SHAUGHNESSY

1929–2013

As the most visible drummer on network TV for three decades, he helped America understand what big band drumming was all about. But there was more to his story—much more.

by Rick Mattingly

When Shaughnessy and Buddy Rich were scheduled to trade fours on *The Tonight Show*, they struck a deal: Ed made Buddy promise not to do a lot of crossovers, and Buddy made Ed promise not to play “that Indian ticky-tocky-ticky stuff in 25/4 that I don’t understand.”

Roy Burns remembers sitting with longtime *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy at a Percussive Arts Society convention (PASIC) a few years ago, when a young man approached them and asked for autographs. As they were signing, the man asked, incredulously, “Are you two friends?” Shaughnessy replied, “Roy and I have been friends for over thirty years. We’re not competitors—we just happen to be in the same business. Just remember, the guys who are a pain in the neck are the guys who only play pretty good. The really good players are usually nice guys.”

“Ed was certainly a nice guy,” Burns says, a few days after Shaughnessy’s death from a heart attack on May 24, 2013. “I first met him in New York in the 1950s when we were both teaching in Henry Adler’s studios. One day I told him I was having trouble with a fast tempo, so he showed me how to play a fast beat on the ride cymbal without getting tense or tired. He didn’t ask me to pay him for the lesson; he just did it out of the goodness of his heart. That’s the kind of guy Ed was. If someone had a question, he was happy to answer it. He was very free with his information.”

Edwin Thomas Shaughnessy was born on January 29, 1929, in Jersey City, New Jersey. He began learning piano at age nine. “Everyone on my mother’s side of the family played piano,” he recalled in his 2012 autobiography, *Lucky Drummer*. “In those days there wasn’t television, so

listening to the radio and playing piano and singing songs with the family were big parts of the social interaction.”

When Shaughnessy was fourteen, his father was given a bass drum, snare drum, and cymbal as payment for a debt. “As soon as the drums came into the house,” Ed said in his book, “I got fired up. I started listening to late-night radio broadcasts of Count Basie, Woody Herman, and Duke Ellington. I really got the jazz bug. I would play my funny little drums along with the music.” During his teenage years Shaughnessy would take the subway to New York City, where he was able to see such legendary drummers as Gene Krupa, Dave Tough, Max Roach, Specs Powell, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, Buddy Rich, and “Big Sid” Catlett.

Shaughnessy’s first lessons came from his scoutmaster, whom he remembered as being a good marching drummer. Ed then joined the school orchestra, and the director let him have a key to the music room so he could practice whenever he wanted. The young timekeeper also began lessons with the famed Bill West in New York. “Studying with Bill West wasn’t just hooking up with a fine drum teacher,” Shaughnessy said in *Lucky Drummer*. “It was hooking up with the New York scene, because everybody knew Bill West, and Bill West knew everybody.”

Shaughnessy had skipped second and seventh grades, so he graduated from high school when he was sixteen. In order to get a union card in New York City, you had to live there, so Ed moved



to New York and got a job as a messenger for the phone company. By age seventeen he was working professionally as a drummer. But very soon he took a job with Bobby Byrne, who led a show band in New Orleans. "If you had a show band and there was a stack of music and no time to rehearse—you were going to do it with a talk-through—Ed would be the guy to have," Roy Burns says. "He was the best show drummer I ever heard. He could read anything, and he was very flexible. A lot of guys specialize, but he could cover the gamut."

After four months with Byrne, Shaughnessy returned to New York and landed gigs with trombonist Jack Teagarden and pianist George Shearing. He also played a lot of jam sessions with such greats as Bud Powell, Gerry Mulligan, and Phil Woods.

Shaughnessy's biggest break came in 1948, when he joined Charlie Ventura's band, the top small group in the country. That led to his first endorsement with Slingerland drums. Ed said his drumset was based on Louie Bellson's kit, but it included a set of bongos, and the two bass drums were of different sizes in order to get two different sounds.

After leaving Ventura in 1950, Shaughnessy was invited to do a European tour with Benny Goodman. Upon returning to New York, Ed worked with Lucky Millinder in a rhythm-and-blues band. He also worked with Charles Mingus and Tommy Dorsey. In 1952, when Louie Bellson needed to take some time off from Duke Ellington's group, he asked Shaughnessy to sub for him for two months. That same year, the drummer played with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, in a piece by Teo

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ED SHAUGHNESSY
JANUARY 29, 1929 – MAY 24, 2013

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Macero called “Fusion,” which blended jazz with symphonic music. He also played with George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet.

Shaughnessy then got a call to be the drummer for a daytime TV show hosted by Steve Allen. The show lasted only six months, but Ed became a staff musician at CBS, which led to some other shows, including *Your Hit Parade*, as well as recording opportunities. After about four years, however, he gave his notice, as many of the other staff musicians seemed to care more about golf than about music.

In the late 1950s and early '60s, Shaughnessy worked with a variety of artists, including Zoot Sims, Roy Eldridge, Billie Holiday, Mundell Lowe, Count Basie, Oliver Nelson, Etta Jones, Jimmy Smith, Clark Terry, and Jack Teagarden. “Ed could play great brushes at fast tempos,” Burns recalls. “Very few people knew that, because he didn’t get to play brushes much on *The Tonight Show*. But he made a number of jazz albums where brushes were a

big part of it.”

In 1963, Shaughnessy was asked to sub for Bobby Rosengarden on *The Tonight Show*, which had a big band led by Skitch Henderson. At first he turned the job down because he had not previously enjoyed being a staff musician, but he agreed to take the gig for two weeks while the contractor looked for another drummer. “I started playing with the band,” Shaughnessy recalled in *Lucky Drummer*. “There were all these wonderful players, and the band sounded so good that I went home and said to my wife, ‘This is really a fun job.’” Shaughnessy told the contractor that he would like to take the gig, providing the contractor hadn’t already called someone else. The contractor replied that he had not made a single call.

“When a job has a specific group of demands,” Shaughnessy explained in a 1986 *Modern Drummer* cover story, “they usually know the person they want. On *The Tonight Show*, they needed a drummer who could play all



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“WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER”

Jeff Hamilton remembers the big sound—and even bigger heart—of Ed Shaughnessy.

I first met Ed when I was a student at Indiana University in the early 1970s. He had come in to do a homecoming show with Doc Severinsen. He was a guest of our marching band, which I was in, so I took the opportunity to ask him questions about some things I was having trouble with on drumset—during the football game! He and I went under the bleachers, and he taught me how to play a fast cymbal beat. I immediately was a better drummer. I thought, *This guy is a genius!*

I moved to Los Angeles in 1978. I went to *The Tonight Show* a couple of times just so I could hear the band. Later on, Louie Bellson reintroduced me to Ed, and Louie had talked me up quite a bit. Ed asked me if I played tennis and I said yes, so we started playing two or three days a week, and then he would tape *The Tonight Show* in the afternoon. The next thing I knew, he asked me to sub for him on *The Tonight Show*. That was a dream come true!

In recent years we had drummer lunches that often involved Jake Hanna, Louie Bellson, Frank Capp, Joe La Barbera, Paul Kreibich, Stan Keyawa at Pro Drum Shop, and the gentleman that puts it together, Bill Selditz. We still meet and reminisce about Ed, Jake, and Louie.

One of the things that knocked me out about Ed was that he was so willing to share information. He’d talk about how nice guys like “Big Sid” Catlett and Dave Tough were to him. The fraternity of drummers from that period was really something, and guys like Ed, Shelly [Manne], and Louie were trying to keep that going with the younger generation, like, “We’re all in this together.”

The main thing I think of when I think of Ed Shaughnessy is that he was so versatile, from being featured with Charlie Ventura when he was a very young man to the later things with Oliver Nelson, Charles Mingus, and Jimmy Smith. He was very flexible in any situation, and that’s why he was so much in demand in the early days in New York. He played great small group with Teddy Charles and great big band with Count Basie.

He had a big sound, and I don’t mean in terms of volume, and he was identifiable, which is the best compliment you can give any jazz drummer. A lot of people just think of him as the *Tonight Show* drummer, but those who haven’t checked out what he did early on owe it to themselves to find out what kind of drummer he really was. He was a lot deeper than *The Tonight Show*.



From left: Bill Selditz, Joe La Barbera, Jeff Hamilton, Ed Shaughnessy, and Paul Kreibich

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Derek Lewis - VP Production for Centric TV - BET Network

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ED SHAUGHNESSY



styles well and convincingly, who was an excellent sight-reader and wouldn't waste time, and, like on all jobs, who had a good attitude. I'd already had ten years in New York of all kinds of recording, and I had already made a couple of hundred albums. I was playing a lot of different kinds of music, but basically I was known as a creative drummer."

In 1966 Shaughnessy began studying tabla with Alla Rakha. "Indian rhythms are a real trip for your head," he told *MD* in a 1978 cover story. "It isn't something a drummer would need in the workaday world, but it is immensely helpful." When he played with Don Ellis, whose big band featured many unusual time signatures, Shaughnessy credited his Indian music knowledge with giving him the ability to sight-read the charts. And several years later, when Shaughnessy and Buddy Rich were scheduled to trade fours on *The Tonight Show*, they struck a deal: Ed made Buddy promise not to do a lot of crossovers, and Buddy made Ed promise not to play "that Indian ticky-tocky-ticky stuff in 25/4 that I don't understand."



Shaughnessy with the Manhattan School of Music Jazz Ensemble at the 1990 MD Fest

In 1972, *The Tonight Show* relocated to Los Angeles. Shaughnessy was one of only four musicians in the show's band, led by Doc Severinsen since 1967, to be invited to make the move. He remained the drummer on the program until host Johnny Carson retired in 1992. "Johnny is a wonderful man," Ed told *MD* in 1992. "Many times he argued to keep that big band when NBC wanted to save hundreds of thousands of dollars a year by cutting it down to five pieces. He said, 'No way—I stay, they stay.' He was always so supportive."

Shaughnessy said he was very grateful to be able to play with a high-class big band for twenty-nine years without having to go on the road and be away from his family. He was also grateful that in addition to all the great music the band played—mostly during commercial breaks when the TV audience didn't hear it—he had the chance to accompany a wide variety of artists who appeared on the show. In his 1992 *MD* feature, he recalled playing with Louis Armstrong as a particular highlight, and also remembered the night he played with Jimi Hendrix. "His

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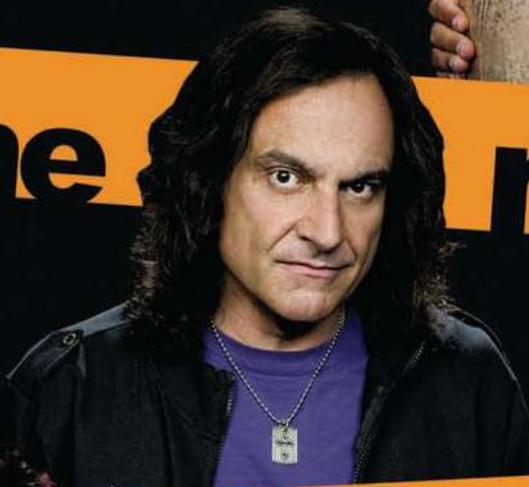
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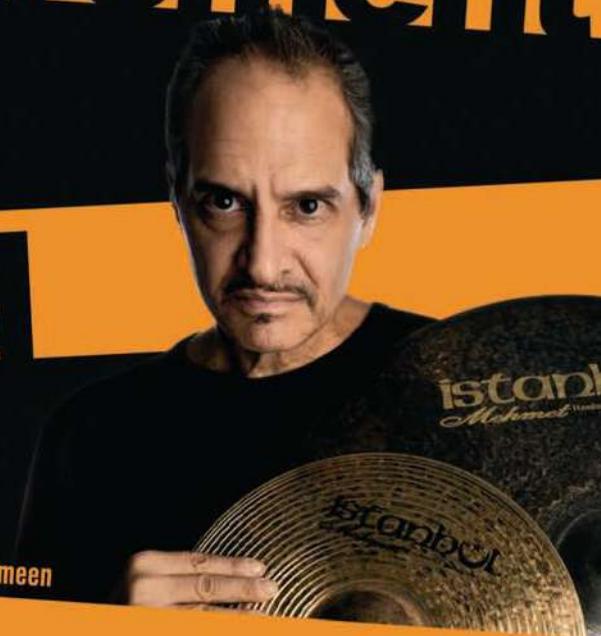


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ED SHAUGHNESSY



drummer, Mitch Mitchell, had gotten sick at the last minute,” Ed explained. “Instead of shopping around, Jimi asked if I would play with his trio.” Hendrix had two requests: “Play loud as hell, and give me a lot of cymbals.” Shaughnessy also cited B.B. King, Sammy Davis Jr., Mel Tormé, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, and Ella Fitzgerald as being enjoyable to play with.

When Shaughnessy needed time off from *The Tonight Show*, he would send in a sub, and in the early years in L.A. Colin Bailey and Louie Bellson often filled in. In later years Ed gave some younger drummers a chance to play, including Joe La Barbera, Jeff Hamilton, and Vinnie Colaiuta. “Ed had his ear to the ground,” La Barbera says. “He knew who was playing and kept track of the younger players.”

In addition to his *Tonight Show* gig, Shaughnessy led his own big band from 1974 to 1979. He also led a quintet and a medium-size band, Energy Force, and released the album *Jazz in the Pocket* in 1990.

Education was important to Shaughnessy, who first gave drum lessons in New York in 1952. For twenty consecutive summers Ed was artistic director at the Skidmore Jazz Institute in upstate New York, and he was a popular clinician. He wrote instructional articles for *The Ludwig Drummer*, *Percussive Notes*, *DownBeat*, and *Modern Drummer*; authored two instructional books; released an instructional video on big band drumming; and coauthored, with

Clem DeRosa, a book/CD package titled *Show Drumming: The Essential Guide to Playing Drumset for Live Shows and Musicals*.

Shaughnessy sponsored a variety of scholarships to help young musicians advance their careers, including ones at North Texas State (Steve Houghton was the first recipient), Kansas State University, and the Skidmore Jazz Institute. In 2004 he was elected to the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame. “Ed had such a big heart; he would go out of his way to help people—especially young people,” Joe La Barbera says. “The last couple of phone calls I had from Ed involved doing something for somebody else. Ed heard that a drummer friend of ours was suffering from multiple sclerosis and had also lost his favorite Ludwig snare drum. Ed called Ludwig and said he wanted to buy a snare drum for this guy. Ed was with Ludwig for years and got all his stuff free, but he told Ludwig that this wasn’t for him—he wanted to buy it for someone else.

“The last phone call we had, Ed was looking for a student he could give a scholarship award to so the student could go to PASIC, because Ed felt that PASIC was a good experience for a young drummer. So I gave him a couple of names, and one of those students will be at PASIC, thanks to Ed.

“Ed used to refer to people he really cared about as being a mile wide,” La Barbera adds. “In other words, they had a big heart and were very generous. Ed Shaughnessy was also a mile wide.”

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WISDOM AND TECHNIQUE

Lasting Lessons From Ed Shaughnessy by Steve Fidyk

I grew up watching Ed Shaughnessy drive Doc Severinsen's Tonight Show Band. For twenty-nine years, Shaughnessy held the throne of one of the most visible and respected groups in television history, and for many of us this was our first exposure to hearing great big band music. Thankfully, I got to know Ed years later, through our work for Ludwig and the Percussive Arts Society. As an educator, he was always very enthusiastic to share his experience, whether it was through private teaching, instructional articles, method books, or clinics. In addition to being a member of the *MD* Advisory Board, Ed was featured on the cover of this magazine three times (July '78, April '86, and September '92). Throughout the '80s and into the '90s, he expressed his views on different drumming topics in his Driver's Seat columns. Select quotes and highlights from his columns and interviews are at the heart of this article. I hope you enjoy it.

THE WHIPPED CREAM ROLL

The first offering comes from the February 1994 issue of *MD*, where Shaughnessy described his approach to, as he put it, "a fascinating and historic drum stroke—the whipped cream roll." Ed said, "I first heard the beautiful, seamless snare drum roll of Buddy Rich back in my early days of drumming. I finally got to ask him some ten years later about the flowing oval motion he made with his hands while rolling. His reply was: 'Oh, that's the whipped cream roll. I got it from the New Orleans cats.'"

To achieve this roll, each oval motion is made using a combination of wrist and finger action, from the outside of the drum (which creates a more legato sound) moving toward the center of the head. The right hand travels clockwise as the left moves counterclockwise. As you experiment with this, notice that the stick tips travel over and under each other. To achieve a smooth and connected buzz sound, Shaughnessy recommended practicing with each hand separately before combining them: "I have them come in at a shallow (approximately 30 degree) angle, to simulate what we'll be doing with the oval motions later. Then we put both hands to work in the two oval motions, and voilà...[we] get a fine, seamless roll."

READING CHARTS

In the March 1988 issue, Shaughnessy offered tips for reading big band charts. This piece was inspired by conversations he had with drummers in high school and college big bands while traveling and doing workshops and clinics. When I first read this, I was a college percussion major with very little big band chart-reading experience. It was the first time anyone, in person or in print, explained and presented this fundamental material in such a clear and practical way.

We'll begin with Ed's comments on listening. "As usual, your

ear can help you a lot. One thing to listen for is the bass. Many times the bass player will be playing rhythm with you and resting at the same time as you. If there are inconsistencies between your parts, check with the bass player."

Here's what Ed had to say about faulty drum notation. "[A] problem that can happen with a poorly written part is that there won't be enough information on it. Sparsely written parts that don't have the strong brass figures written out are trouble (and usually the result of a hastily copied arrangement). It pays to look at a lead trumpet part and copy the important figures above the staff, over the rhythm bars involved."

PRACTICING, LEADING, AND TAKING SUGGESTIONS

Shaughnessy offered the following wisdom in his final cover appearance, with Johnny Carson, in September 1992. We'll begin with a simple but effective woodshed tip.

"I practice things I can't do too well, and I practice the same things I teach people," Ed said. "I do three-to-one exercises all the time, so that the weaker hand has to do more than the stronger hand. If you keep practicing two hands all the time, you'll get better, but the weaker hand will always be weaker."

An effective bandleader in his own right, Shaughnessy had much to say about that topic: "I think it would be the best experience in the world for every sideman to be a leader once in a while, because you get to see it from the other guy's viewpoint. As a leader, it is so much more problematic and convoluted than just playing the role of 'Mr. Drummer' in the band."

To conclude, here are some parting words from Ed on how to handle suggestions. "I think you cooperate up to a certain point, where people don't really intrude on your dignity or your professional standing. You're supposed to know a lot about what you do. I don't mind if a person knows what they like to hear; I'll do my best to give it to them. When I'm giving it to them and they don't like it, there's not much more that I can do. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it was someone who didn't know what they wanted."

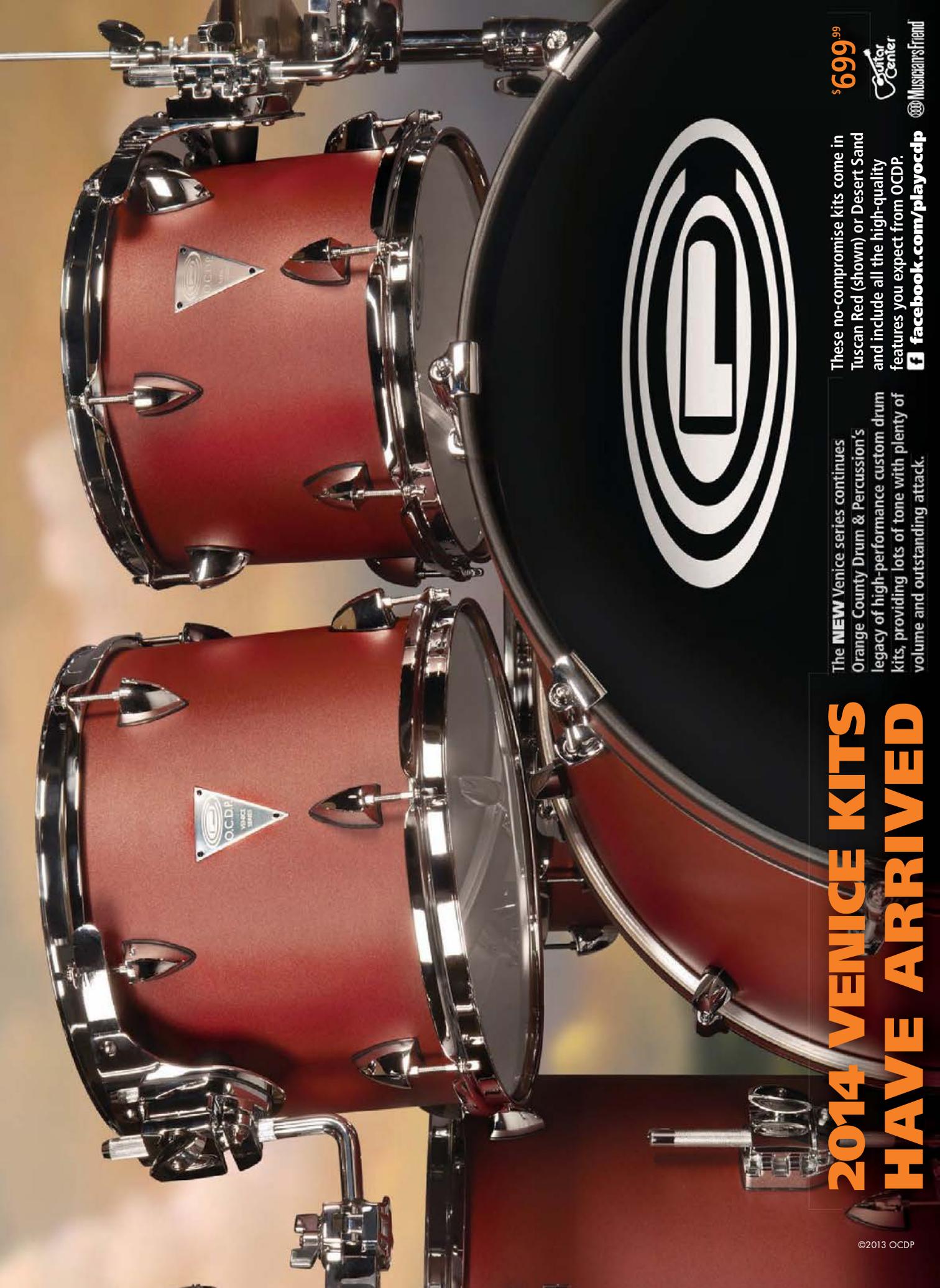


Rick Mathlin



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, including how to sign up for lessons via Skype, visit stevefidyk.com.





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Musician's Friend

Add Some

6 Ways to Customize Your Kit

Searching for new melodic tones to add to your kit? A trip to the local auto scrap yard can open up a world of sounds for any drummer. Here are some ways to introduce voices to your setup using old car parts and scrap metal.



Brake Drums

Brake drums are used on the rear wheels of many cars and trucks. They can be easily found at a used-car-parts lot. A set of three or four different sizes of brake drums will give a lot of melodic potential to your kit. You can mount them in snare stands, and they require no modifications to be played. Take a chromatic tuner with you when shopping for brake drums, if you want to get exact with the individual pitches of each one.



Air-Cleaner-Cover Gongs

On many older cars and trucks, the top of the engine is covered with a round metal shield that's held on by a wing nut. This metal disc covers the air filter, and it produces a sound much like a small gong, with each size of cover having a different pitch. Drill two small holes at the top, and suspend the cover from a cymbal stand or rack using insulated wire. Covers can be found at an auto salvage yard.



Metal!

by Jordan Hill

Using Scraps and Old Car Parts

Fly-Hats



These unique hi-hats are made from two car flywheels, which are metal discs that connect an engine to a transmission. They are usually 13" to 15" in diameter, so they're a perfect size for this application. Flywheels need some adjustments before they can be used as fly-hats.

The center holes of flywheels are larger than hi-hat cymbal holes, so flat washers need to be welded in place to allow the wheels to work with a hi-hat stand and clutch.

An adjustment to the lower cymbal seat must also be made. Most flywheels are flat, so the base that the lower wheel rests on needs a spacer, which can be made out of wood or several layers of cardboard.

Sign Gong

Here's an inexpensive way to add a gong to a drumkit. Find an old metal sign, and suspend it from a cymbal stand or rack. The sign can be hit with a gong mallet, or you can use one hand to shake it in order to produce a thunder-sheet effect. Be creative when looking for the sign, since it will be adding a visual component as well.



Pulley Bells

Pulley bells offer the most melodic possibilities of all these car-parts instruments. The pulleys are used on the front of engines for the drive belts. Every pulley is a different size, and each has its own pitch. The sound is similar to that of crotales or bells. Use a tuner to identify the pitch of each pulley. They can be placed individually on a cymbal stand or mounted as a set using a small piece of wood.



Mallets and Beaters

Most of these instruments sound best when played with mallets instead of drumsticks. In keeping with the salvage theme, here are some inexpensive and easy ways to make your own implements.

The first is a tennis ball gong mallet. Poke two holes in an old tennis ball and push the ball over the end of a drumstick. (The tip of the stick helps keep the ball from sliding off.) This mallet works well for the sign gong.

The second homemade mallet uses a rubber bouncy ball and a wooden dowel rod. Drill a .25" hole in the ball, and slide the ball over the end of the dowel. Apply some epoxy to ensure that the ball will stay on the end of the dowel. This mallet brings out great tones on brake drums and the air-cleaner-cover gongs.

This article focuses on metal parts from automobiles, but don't stop there. Try out an empty propane tank or an old metal suitcase. There are many ways of adding metal and melody to your drumset. Get creative!



Jordan Hill is a drummer, author, and auto mechanic. For more info, visit motorrythms.blogspot.com.



Seth Rausch

The Drummer Behind
Little Big Town's
Big Hit Record by Jim Riley

I've been a friend and fan of Seth Rausch for more than a decade. His deep pocket is undeniable to anyone who's ever heard him play, and he's the consummate professional and a devoted family man. I've been fortunate to have my gig with Rascal Flatts for the past thirteen years, and I've watched as Seth has played the role of the journeyman drummer in search of a gig he could truly call home—and finally find it.

I'm also a fan of Little Big Town. Although the four incredible vocalists in the group achieved widespread acclaim for albums like 2005's *The Road to Here* and 2010's *The Reason Why*, by 2012 they had reached a point where they were hungry for a hit that would take them to the next level. It came that very year, with *Tornado*, LBT's first album featuring its touring band. It was a winning combination for the singers and for Rausch, as the drummer's colorful part on *Tornado*'s second single, "Pontoon," helped give the group its first number-one hit on the Hot Country Songs chart and a Grammy win for Best Country Duo/Group Performance.

So how is it that this road dog with relatively little studio experience ended up playing on one of the biggest records of the year? Let's find out.

Jim: You come from a musical family. Tell us how you got started playing drums.

Seth: My grandparents on my dad's side had nine kids, six of whom became musicians and formed the Rausch Brothers Band. They would be rehearsing into the night, and I would just listen to them as long as I could before falling asleep on the floor. I learned so much from watching them, particularly my Uncle Joe, who played drums in the band.

Jim: How old were you when you got your first drumset?

Seth: Three.

Jim: I guess you weren't taking lessons at that point.

Seth: No, I was just trying to imitate what I saw my Uncle Joe do with the band. I've always been a "by ear" player. I didn't take my first lesson until much later. I did join band in the sixth grade and learned how to read music, and I studied some rudiments.

Toward the end of high school I started to take drumset lessons. By that time I had been sitting in with my uncles and was working on the weekends in a local bar band. Although I felt very comfortable behind the kit, the lessons helped me with some of the more technical aspects of drumming.

Jim: What were you listening to in high school?

Seth: With my dad being a musician, I listened to a wide variety of music growing up.

Jim: Any country?

Seth: Lots. I remember playing along to Ricky Skaggs and Ronnie Milsap records. But our family favorite was definitely James Taylor.

Jim: He used some amazing drummers over the years.

Seth: Rick Marotta, Russ Kunkel...

Jim: And of course your favorite, Carlos Vega.

Seth: Yes. The first time I heard Carlos, it just spoke to me. I'd always be scoping record jackets, trying to figure out who everyone was, and any time I heard Carlos on those records I knew that was what I wanted to sound like as a player. After he died in 1998, I wanted to find everything I could that he'd played on. It never mattered what he was playing—from Latin to country and everything in between, his feel was impeccable. I felt like every musical situation I heard him in was a lesson in itself.

Jim: Did you go to college after high school?

Seth: I didn't. I moved from New York to Nashville.

Jim: By yourself?

Seth: No, a couple years before I graduated, my dad had moved there, along with my stepmom and a few of my siblings, in order to have more opportunity as a songwriter. He was already meeting a lot of people in the music business, and as an aspiring musician it seemed like a great place to move to. So I came down in '96 to live full time.

Jim: Did you start playing immediately?

Seth: Not really. I was under twenty-one, so it was difficult to get into clubs. But I would catch some jam nights and sit in on Lower Broadway. Mostly I was practicing and working.

Jim: Where were you working?

Seth: I had a few jobs—waited tables, did factory work.

Jim: Factory work? Man, you have to be more specific.

Seth: I was working for a while at a bookbinding factory and also at this company that made screw strips for drills. Very monotonous, to say the least! At that time my main goal was to get a gig and get on the road.

Jim: And what was the turning point for that?

Seth: I would have to say when I met George Lawrence.

Jim: George is a great drummer and teacher. He was also quite influential in the life of another young player, my college buddy Keith Carlock.

"Seth has incredible instincts. He knows when to give more and when to simplify. I can't tell you what an integral part of the recording process he played. We all feel very lucky to share the stage with him every night." –Karen Fairchild, Little Big Town

Seth: That's right. A family friend took me to Fork's Drum Closet, where George taught regularly at the time. I began taking lessons with him when I was eighteen.

Jim: What did you work on?

Seth: Everything. The first thing he did was help me get better at reading. Then he would just play a bunch of cool stuff and write it down for me to practice. George really took me under his wing. He began referring me for some local gigs, mostly club gigs that he was too busy to do.

Jim: You must have been coming through for him, if he kept recommending you.

Seth: I guess so. This went on for the next few years, until about 2000. George was playing with a group called the



Wilkinsons and had gotten another gig, so he recommended me and they hired me sight unseen. He gave me the board tapes, and just like that I was out on the road.

Jim: The Wilkinsons did really well when they came out. You must have felt like this was your big break.

Seth: Absolutely. It eventually slowed down and just kind of went away. But it wasn't long until a friend of mine called me to go out with Brian McComas.

Jim: You and I first met when Brian opened up for Rascal Flatts. We played a

lot of hoops on that tour. You were a beast. Did you play basketball in high school?

Seth: Growing up in New York, it was kind of a necessity! I played varsity ball for my high school.

Jim: Well, that explains a lot. But as we both know, that gig didn't work for the long term either. How many different acts have you played with since 2000?

Seth: Twelve or so.

Jim: So that's like having to find a new gig almost every year. Was that frustrating?

Seth: At times, but I actually enjoyed the

variety of work. One gig would slow down, and another would come up.

Jim: You played drums for acts opening for Rascal Flatts three times in ten years. The third, of course, was Little Big Town. How did you land that gig?

Seth: I was playing for Phil Vassar at the time, when LBT's drummer, Steve Sinatra, decided to get off the road to focus on his session career, and he recommended me for the job. I still had to audition for the gig, but in the end they hired me.

Jim: Then came the big leap—how did

RECORDINGS



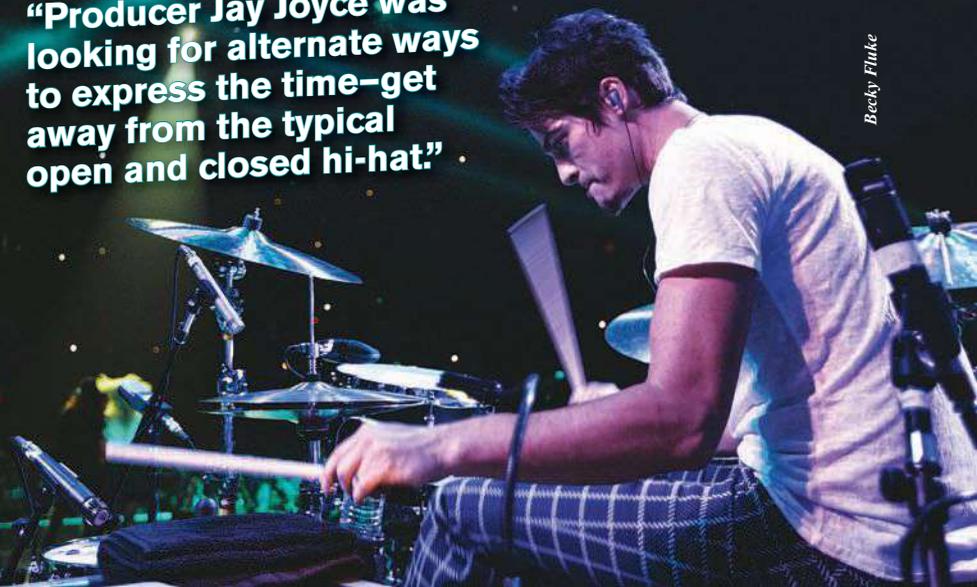
Little Big Town *Tornado* ///
Phil Vassar *Traveling Circus,*
The Hits Live on Broadway

FAVORITES



James Taylor *all between 1988 and 1998* (Carlos Vega) /// **Matt Rollings** *Balconies* (Carlos Vega) /// **Burning Water** *Burning Water, Mood Elevator, Live and Lit* (Carlos Vega) /// **Paul Simon** *Still Crazy After All These Years* (Steve Gadd) /// **Led Zeppelin** *all* (John Bonham) /// **Robben Ford** *Talk to Your Daughter* (Vinnie Colaiuta) /// **Dire Straits** *On Every Street* (Jeff Porcaro, Manu Katché)

“Producer Jay Joyce was looking for alternate ways to express the time—get away from the typical open and closed hi-hat.”



SETH'S SETUP



Drums: Gretsch Brooklyn series in satin ebony finish, including 9x13 tom, 16x16 floor tom, and 18x24 bass drum, plus 4x13 Gretsch USA Maple piccolo side snare and 8x14 Brady block snare

Cymbals: Paiste, including 11" Traditionals Thin splash (used to set on side snare for effects), 15" Twenty hi-hats, 20" Twenty Masters Collection Dark ride, 10" Twenty Mini China stacked on a 10" Twenty splash (on bass drum mount, used for effects), 22" Twenty ride, 22" Twenty Light ride with Pro-Mark sizzle beads, and 20" Traditionals Medium Light Swish

Sticks: Vater Power 5A sticks and Monster brushes

Hardware: Gibraltar

Heads: Remo, including coated Vintage Emperor main-snare batter and Hazy Emperor bottom, Coated Ambassador X side-snare batter and Hazy Ambassador bottom, Coated Ambassador X tom batters and Black Suede Ambassador bottoms, and Black Suede Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and front head; RemOs dampening rings used for deader sounds on certain songs

Accessories: QwikStix cup and stick holders

Electronics: 13" MacBook Pro running Ableton Live for click and auxiliary tracks fired by Akai MPD18 pads

As we went to press, Rausch joined the Zildjian artist roster.

you go from being on the road with LBT to recording? As sidemen, we know that doesn't happen very often.

Seth: At the time that I got hired, LBT were promoting their album *The Reason Why* and were looking to go in to record a new album sometime the following year. They were looking at producers for it, and I guess thankfully for me they hired Jay Joyce. Jay is an old-school producer and very much a fan of bands. After hearing us play, he suggested the idea of using LBT's

live band in the studio, and they were very receptive.

Jim: You guys didn't just show up on tracking day to record, which is very common on Nashville master sessions. You did some preproduction.

Seth: We did our preproduction rehearsals at Jay's home studio. We were there for three days, and the goal was to make the final choices of what songs we should cut the following week. We would sit in the control room and listen to demos, and each time we found a song that we wanted to consider, we would go downstairs to the tracking room, mess with different ideas of how to approach the song, and decide whether we wanted to record it. Then we would put it aside and move on to the next song.

Jim: How many songs did you run through?

Seth: By the end of the three days we had twelve songs that everyone felt good about.

Jim: Where did you guys cut the record?

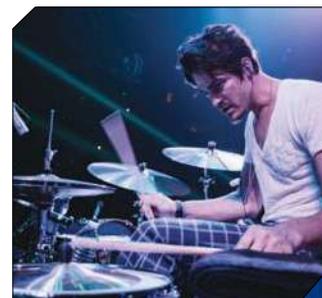
Seth: Sound Emporium in Nashville.

Jim: What time did you start tracking?

Seth: We'd get in there at about 10 A.M., set up, and start to get sounds.

Jim: How long did you take to get sounds?

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Studio 2

SETH RAUSCH
Little Big Town

L 15 7/8" 40.32cm • D .555" 1.41cm **VHS2W**



Mike Johnston 2451

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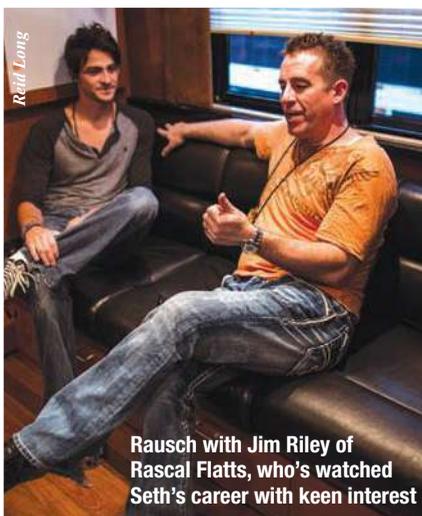
L 16" 40.64cm • D .580" 1.47cm **VHMJ2451**



West Side

GIL SHARONE
Stolen Babies

L 16 5/16" 41.43cm • D .590" 1.50cm **VHWS**



Rail Long

Rausch with Jim Riley of Rascal Flatts, who's watched Seth's career with keen interest



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SETH RAUSCH

Seth: Not too long. We just found the sounds we were looking for and started running through some tunes.

Jim: When you say you were running through tunes, I assume you mean you started recording.

Seth: No, we actually didn't start recording until much later in the day. Jay wanted to catch the energy of doing a live show, so he wanted us to be playing the songs at night, when we're used to making music together. So we'd go to dinner, have a drink or two, come back to the studio, and start tracking.

Jim: What drums did you record with?

Seth: Well, it was funny—when I showed up to the preproduction rehearsal I had my '70s Gretsch kit in the car, but Jay's partner, Giles Reaves, had a Gretsch kit from the same era in the same sizes—12" tom, 16" floor, and 22" kick—already miked up at his house. So I brought my

Seth: [laughs] Yeah, that didn't happen.

Jim: Did you guys use a click track on that song?

Seth: No, Jay didn't feel we needed it. He wanted the song to have a live, sort of raucous feel.

Jim: You definitely got that happening. You have some different sounds on this record.

Seth: From the beginning of the recording process, Jay was looking for alternate ways to express the time that I was playing in my right hand. You know, get away from the typical voicings of open and closed hi-hat and explore some different timbres. I think he felt that the frequency of the cymbals was right on top of where the female voices were, and that by avoiding playing an overabundance of cymbals we would create much more space in the mix. The first thing we tried on "Pavement Ends" was laying



snares and cymbals in and used that. We felt great about the sound at Jay's, so we brought the same setup to Sound Emporium.

Jim: What's the first song you cut?

Seth: "Pavement Ends."

Jim: And that ended up being the first song on the record as well. Hey, the first discernable voice on the record is you counting off the song—I think you deserve some credit as a vocalist!

an old banjo on the floor tom and playing that.

Jim: Are you serious?

Seth: Yeah, but that didn't create the sound we were looking for, so we found this roasting pan and put a few rattles and shakers in it. Just before we started tracking, I put my car keys in there and found that it provided just enough of a metallic bite. It's pretty far back in the mix, but it's definitely different.

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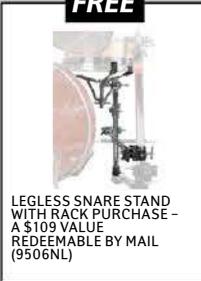
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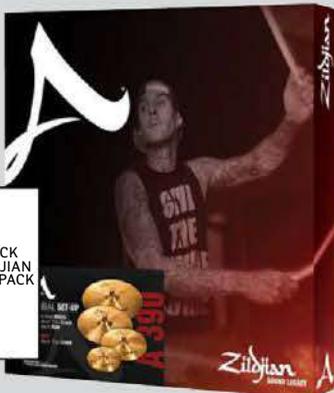
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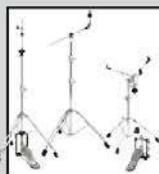
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SETH RAUSCH

Jim: I can hear it. It's very cool. Let's jump to the big hit song, "Pontoon." What's going on at the beginning? It sounds like a party before the song starts. Was that real, or was that sound effect flown in to make it sound like Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On"?

Seth: That was what was happening in the room. It was feeling like a party! We did the first take, finished it, and while everyone was talking we just stayed in "the red." Jay yelled, "Do it again," so I just counted it off amidst the chaos, and what you hear is the result. Jay's whole thing is having the vibe be right. If it feels good and has a good energy, then vocal bleed or whatever doesn't really matter.

Jim: As you said, Jay wanted you to find some new sounds and nontraditional voicings, and you certainly did that on "Pontoon." Tell us how that came about.

Seth: Jay had me play along with the loop from the original demo on the tracking session, and it had a very lo-fi "clap"-sounding snare. This gave me the idea to lay a splash on the snare and strike it with the stick, which I did on the verses. It's a great way to get an electronic-type sound in an acoustic environment. It works great live as well.

Jim: I remember seeing Johnny Rabb do

that years ago when he was living in Nashville. It's a great sound. Did you have that on a side snare or on your primary snare?

Seth: On my primary snare. I used a piccolo snare on that track, and it's the only snare on the song.

Jim: Did you overdub the verses with the cymbal on the snare?

Seth: Nope, I had to take the splash off the snare on the fly as I was playing the song, so the snare hit just before the chorus is played by my right hand as the left hand is moving the splash off the snare. The same going back into the verse.

Jim: It seems *crazy* that that's you way you did it, for a major recording like this.

Seth: Well, that's just the way Jay operates. The more that can be played down live, the better. After tracking Jay might add parts that he feels would enhance a song, but if major instrumental overdubs, including vocal overdubs, can be avoided, all the better. Most of us were all in one room, so you hear an energy on this record that you don't hear on more "produced" recordings. I never punched in on any of the tracks on this record. The tracks I played are the tracks you hear.

Jim: At times your playing on this record is sparse. That must have taken a lot

of discipline.

Seth: Somewhat. I've always aspired to be a player who tries not to give the song more than it needs. At the beginning of the project, though, Jay did mention that he wanted me to leave space for the singers, and the concept resonated with me.

I played very few crashes on the record. Instead I used a sizzle effect on my ride and hit that, which gave me someplace to go at the beginning of phrases. I played the right hand on the rim on some songs, and floor tom on others. Most of the songs have no tom fills at all.

In the absence of loud cymbals, Jay was able to bring the drums way up in the mix. You can hear every ghost note, and yet nothing about the drums gets in the way of the vocals. We had three or four mics on the snare at times to highlight different nuances of the performance, and yet there was minimal use of the hi-hat mic because the other mics were so hot that it was rarely needed. On "Pontoon" the hi-hat on the verse is all played with the foot on the upbeats, leaving the kick and snare room to be heard clearly without the hi-hat playing over the top.

Jim: You did that same thing on "Sober."

Seth: Exactly.

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- Modern Drummer, Electronic Review
November 2013

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Jim: Speaking of “Sober,” on that song you’re playing brushes. What brushes and what drum were you using?

Seth: I was using the big blue Monster Brush that Vater makes. The snare was Jay’s. He calls it the trash snare. It was basically some ratty old vintage drum with a half-busted head that just sounded right for the tune. It seems like on a lot of recordings nowadays, much of the nuance of the music can be buried—like everything below a “go for the ceiling” backbeat gets lost. So I tried to over-accentuate the notes other than the backbeats on this song.

Jim: I think with those big blue brushes you almost have to over-accentuate the inner beats.

Seth: Absolutely.

Jim: You mentioned that one of the songs on the record was actually taken from the rehearsal.

Seth: Yeah, “Front Porch Thing.” This was the second song on *Tornado* that we recorded without a click. We actually got great takes of that song at Sound Emporium, but ultimately they felt that the performance from the rehearsal at Jay’s studio was better. It just had that first-take magic, so we used it on

the record.

Jim: So rehearsal was multitracked?

Seth: Yeah, fortunately we multitracked everything we did at Jay’s.

Jim: Talk about the pressure being off! I mean, you had no idea at that moment you were cutting a record.

Seth: When they told me that they were using that take, my first thought was, *I hope I played something cool*. As I listened back at Jay’s, I remember thinking at certain points in the track, *That was a good idea—I should remember to play that on the session*. But as it turned out, I didn’t have to.

Jim: As I listen to *Tornado*, I hear another common thread in terms of the timbres you’re using. I’m in the middle of writing a drumset book now, and one of the concepts I write about is what I call groove progression—for instance, if in the first verse you play a specialty sound like the floor tom or the rim, when you go to the second verse you sometimes choose to play hi-hat instead.

Seth: Sure. Many times I felt like after going to the hi-hat on the chorus, it would be too far of a step back intensity-wise to go back to the original sound, so I would choose to play closed hi-hat on the

second verse to keep the intensity up.

Jim: When you finished recording, did you have any sense that *Tornado* would be as successful as it’s been?

Seth: We all felt great about what we’d done, but it was very different from anything LBT had put out before, and we hoped the fans would like it.

Jim: Well, everyone certainly did like it! You guys have been on a whirlwind of success. How does that feel?

Seth: It feels great. I’m very thankful. I really believe that we don’t accomplish anything on our own, though. We pull from all that we’ve learned or acquired from others along our journey. I’m happy for LBT, and I’m very grateful that they gave me the opportunity to share in the making of this record and the success that’s going along with it. Over the years, as one gig went away, God had a way of giving me another. But at this point I would say this has been one of my best experiences. To be able to make great music with even better people is very gratifying. I’ll always be content behind the kit, though, whether in the studio, on a big stage somewhere, or just sitting in my basement.



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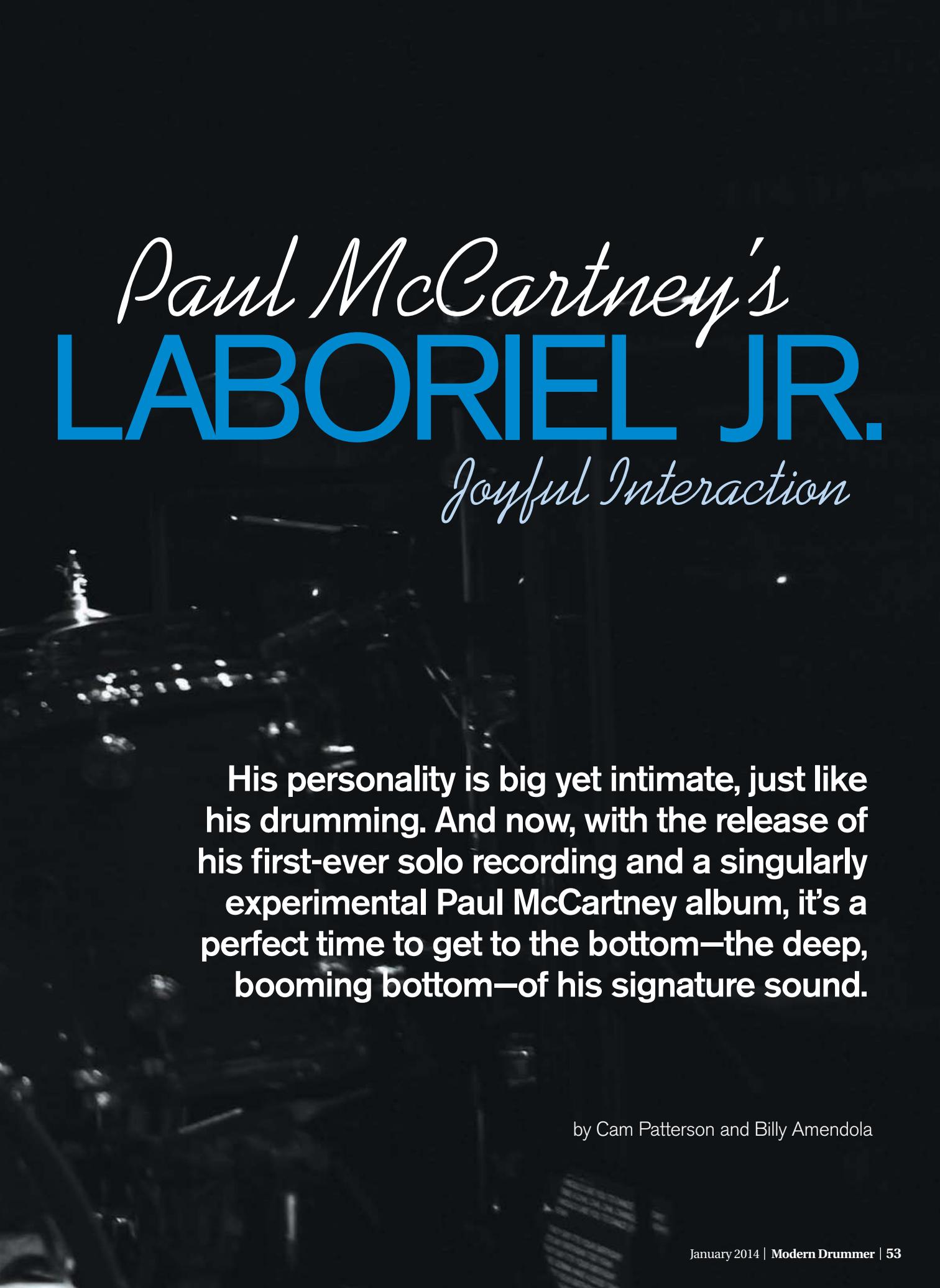
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by Cam Patterson and Billy Amendola

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Everything about it is oversize—the stage, the screens, the lights, the crew. But more than that, it's about the anticipation of what's to come, and even more so when it's a Paul McCartney show. In just a couple of hours, forty thousand people will fill the cavernous bowl that is Winnipeg's Investors Group Field, and they'll let the music transform

the privilege he's enjoyed of hanging with some of the giants in the drumming world. And there's no arrogance from having *played* with some of the hugest names in music—including Eric Clapton, Sting, Steve Vai, and McCartney—only the poise of a gentle soul and the quiet confidence of a man

who is simply glad that *Modern Drummer* came by to talk drums today.

SMART FROM THE START

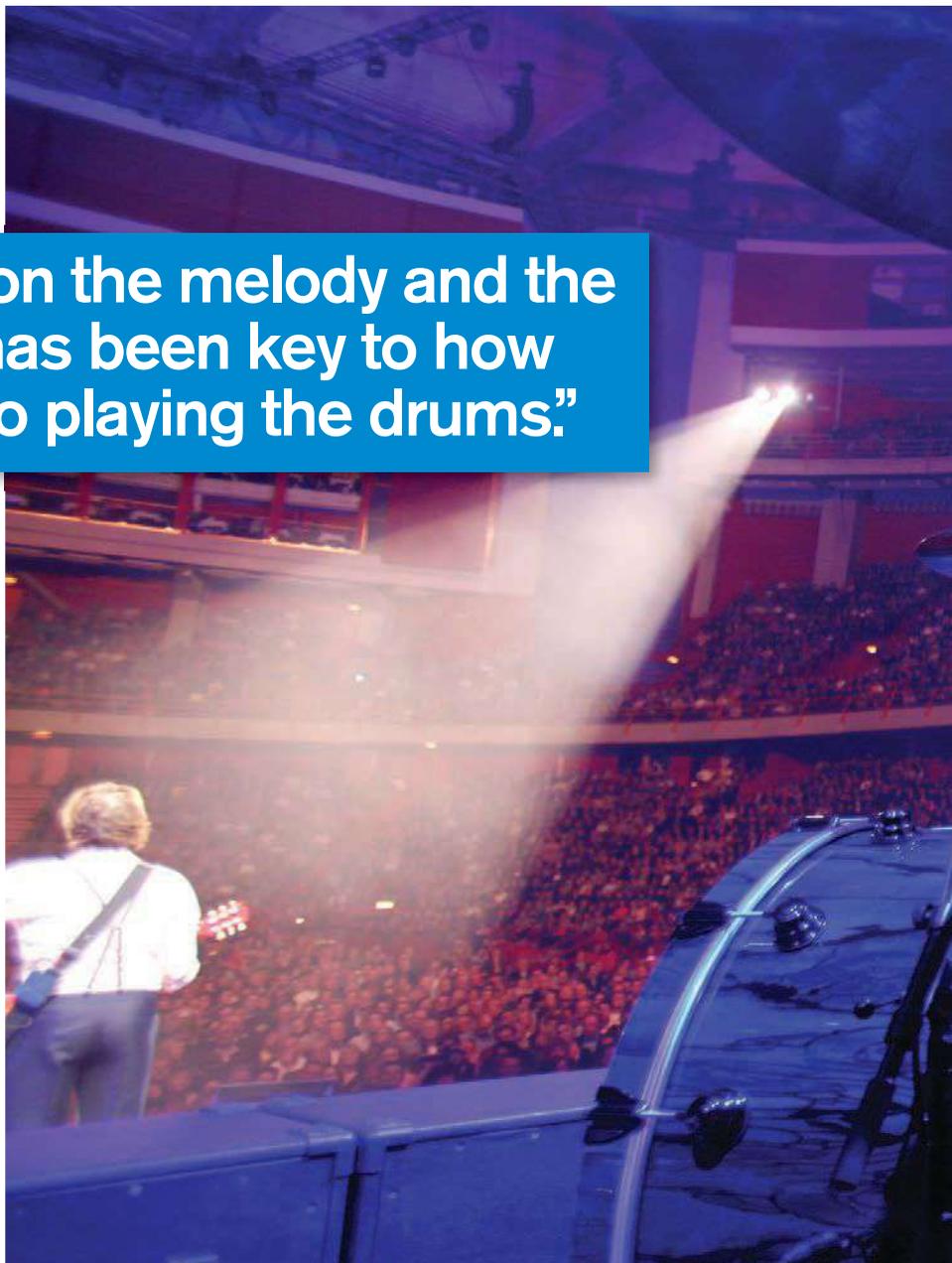
MD: Can we kick things off with a first-drumkit story? Growing up in such a musical family, I'll bet you have a good one.

“I mostly focus on the melody and the lyrics, and that has been key to how I've connected to playing the drums.”

them into a cheering, stomping mass dazzled by the sight and sounds of the former Beatle. And Abe Laboriel Jr. will groove them all.

MD meets up with Laboriel's drum tech, Paul Davies, who shows us the man's kit—a sprawling DW set that's clearly made to play big notes. The setup is unique, with the single kick drum placed where the second drum of a double bass kit normally goes. Davies points out Laboriel making his way backstage to us, greeting crew members like they're family, some getting a smile and a hug. It's immediately clear why Abe is respected in the industry as much as he is: He genuinely likes people, and the more you talk to him, the more you come to understand that the basis for his musical passion is the same as what pushes him through life—his desire for human interaction.

Laboriel grew up around some of the biggest names in music. His father, Abe Sr., is among the most influential bass players of our time, and one of the most loved in the business. If there's any truth to the adage “like father, like son,” you certainly see it in Abe Jr. You get no sense of entitlement from him, despite



Abe: I do, actually. I was four, already hanging out with my dad, going to rehearsals back in Cleveland. At that time Dad was working a lot with Jamey Haddad, a percussionist who teaches at Berklee and plays with Paul Simon. Back then Jamey was a kit player doing gigs with guys like Joe Lovano. While

they were working out songs, I'd be hanging out in the background, singing along to every tune. I was able to sing along to all those Keith Jarrett melodies and all this crazy stuff. So Jamey put together a kit for me out of bits and pieces—you know, flipping a floor tom for a kick, putting up a little snare—and

he made me this very simple little cool set. So that was my very first kit, in Cleveland when I was four.

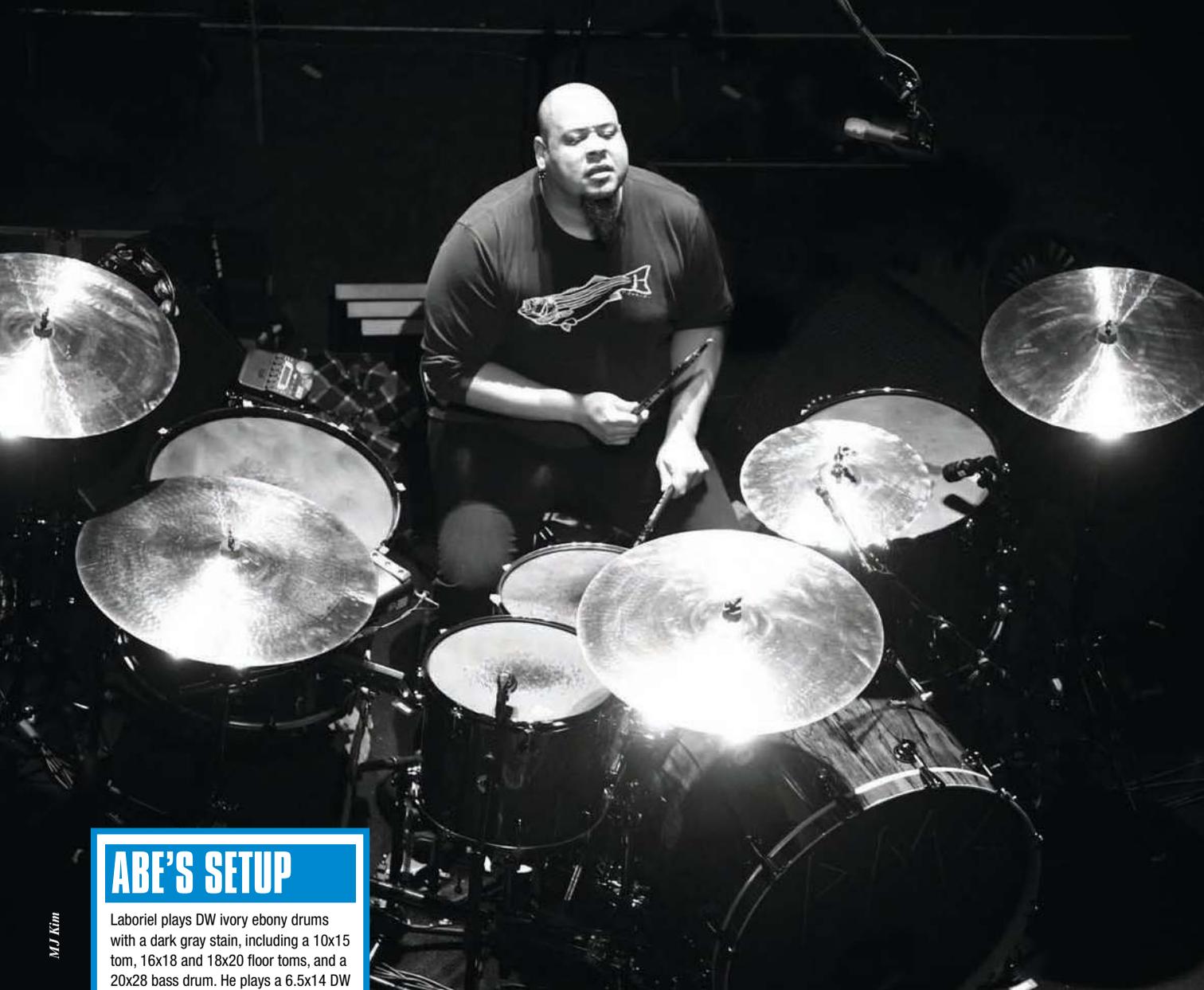
MD: When did you move out to California?

Abe: About two years later we moved to Santa Monica. My dad had already been gigging with Johnny Mathis and Henry



MJ Kim





MJ Kim

ABE'S SETUP

Laboriel plays DW ivory ebony drums with a dark gray stain, including a 10x15 tom, 16x18 and 18x20 floor toms, and a 20x28 bass drum. He plays a 6.5x14 DW Black Ti snare. His Paiste cymbals include 15" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats (bottoms only), a 20" 2002 crash, a 24" Giant Beat ride, a 24" 2002 ride, and a 22" 2002 crash. Abe's Remo heads include a Coated CS snare batter and Ambassador snare-side, Black Suede Emperor tom batters and Black Suede Ambassador bottoms, and Black Suede Ambassadors on both sides of his bass drum. He plays his Vic Firth signature sticks, LP percussion, a Roland SPD-SX, and Dautz pads, and he uses TunerFish lug locks and Protection Racket cases.

Mancini, and it was Henry who told my dad he should come out to L.A., because they were desperate for good bass players at the time. At the time when my dad made the move, so did three other amazing guys, so suddenly there was this influx of hot bass players in town. But my dad still managed to find his way into the scene, so I grew up hanging out in studios. The guys were

"I don't have drums in my monitors, and we don't do in-ears either. That would take the intimate feel out of the gig. We want that connection."

all good with it, because they loved my dad so much. The engineer would set me up with headphones next to Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, John Robinson, Steve Jordan, Chester Thompson... Jeff Porcaro! I remember Jeff walking into the studio. He just had that commanding presence. It was like, *he's the guy*, and he was so cool. Jeff had a huge impact on me, and I still play Paiste today because of him.

So I got to sit there and watch them work and record and interact and see the whole process. I'd see how the artist

dealt with the drummer, see the producer come in and shape it, learn how the arranger handled things and what the engineer did with mics, how they tuned.... I know it sounds silly, but by the time I turned ten I had a very serious conversation with my dad, telling him that this is what I wanted to do. "I love this. It's what I want my life to be. I'm in!"

MD: And what did he say?

Abe: He tried to talk me out of it! [laughs] Of course I was just seeing the positive side of it, and he wanted me to

see it realistically, to know about the negatives and hardships, that for each guy that makes it there are thousands who are equally good but who aren't making it. But I'm a bull-headed Aries and was determined, so he said, "If you're serious, then do it right—get lessons and learn more than just the drums." So I started taking lessons from Alex Acuña. He was my teacher from the time I was ten to about eighteen.

MD: And that came about because Alex was playing with your dad.

Abe: Right. Alex was a great teacher, because he wasn't rigid. He was more than, "Here's *Syncopation*, page 2—start there." It was much more about learning grooves and developing a drum language to be able to jump off and make it my own. It was still about learning the basics, like the rudiments, but also learning some funk, Latin, rock, jazz—whatever. Because Alex has that incredible arsenal, he definitely opened my mind to all that.

Then when I was fourteen or fifteen I went to the Dick Grove School of Music in L.A. So while I was in junior high and high school, I was going to night courses at the college two or three times a week. I studied with this really great jazz drummer there named Peter Donald, while also taking ear training, harmony, and all that stuff. Shortly after, during my last two years of high school, a music magnet program opened up in L.A., and I got in that.

MD: What was that about?

Abe: It was an advanced-placement program that specialized in the arts. They'd bus kids from all over L.A. County to this one school. It was a really cool program. I was there the first year it started—'87, I think. I was doing that while I was still at Dick Grove, playing in the jazz and marching bands. I was trying to build my arsenal of musical tools.

MD: Berklee, then, was a logical choice in terms of continuing your education.

Abe: It was, but there was another advantage to it. One of the things that my parents did that really helped me was protect me from being one of those childhood phenoms, the prodigy around town who everyone's saying to

check out, who can do amazing things at sixteen—but then burns out. I could've gotten gigs and done some things around town, but I think I really did need to go away for a while to build my thing. So they very smartly encouraged me to go to Berklee.

BOTH SIDES OF THE GLASS

MD: Earlier you mentioned getting to watch how not only drummers worked in the studio but engineers and producers as well. You're doing some producing now, right?

Abe: I started producing more when Paul's tour schedule slowed down three or four years ago. But we've been working a lot recently, and [some of the shows are arranged] kind of last minute, so it's not like I can know that I can produce this or that album two months from now. And this gig is such a gift that there is no way I'm walking away to pursue a career as a producer. That will happen more later on, I'm sure. But what I did during our downtime was work on my own record, which is streaming on SoundCloud and

The advertisement features a photograph of Abe Laboriel Jr. in the foreground, smiling and holding a large, dark, circular object with a logo. In the background, Paul McCartney is seen playing drums on a stage with a blue and white dot-matrix backdrop. The text "We are Family" is written in a stylized font at the top, with the tagline "proud to have been taking care of your drums since 1994" below it. The names "Abe Laboriel Jr" and "Paul McCartney" are printed in the lower right. A QR code and the "Protection Racket" logo are at the bottom left, and the website "www.protectionracket.com" is at the bottom center.

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Paul McCartney

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ABE LABORIEL JR.



Rob Shanahan

available digitally worldwide. I wrote all the songs, played all the tracks, and did it all myself in my home studio. It's a fun, up-tempo rock record—thirty-five minutes of joy. I'm proud of it. It's under my fake college ID name, Lance Sprinkle. [Search for "Sprinkle."]

MD: Why that name?

Abe: Well, I was kind of worried that there may be some preconception of what an Abe Laboriel Jr. record might be. You know, he's a drummer, plays some jazz and rock. So I decided to take away any of that thinking by putting it out under a persona. And it really does play more like a singer-songwriter/guitar-rock dude's album than a drum record.

I've always loved guitar, and I would write these mellow riffs while sitting on my couch. I'd record these vibe-y demos over the years, but one day I realized that I wanted to make a rock record. So I

reworked my music, simplifying chords and lyrics and bringing the tempos up, and I started tracking.

MD: What was your recording process?

Abe: I'd throw down a rough guitar and vocal, then set off on creating the drum part. It was a cyclical process—finding the right tempo and feel, and pushing myself out of my comfort zone on all instruments. My only rule was to not edit to death. Sometimes I'd cut and paste an entire section from one take to another master take, but never less than that. I wanted to capture the performance and give the record a live feel.

MD: What drums did you record it with?

Abe: I played a killer DW set with a 24x24 kick, a 9x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom. Simple and punchy, and I got a great variety of sounds by using different snares and cymbals.



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The grooves are all built around the guitar parts. It was all about supporting yet anchoring my riffs. Working on this record made me a better musician overall.

PLAYING WITH PAUL

MD: Tell us about the latest Paul McCartney album, *New*.

Abe: I'm really excited about it. It was recorded over the last year and a half in the U.K., New York City, and L.A. Paul worked with four different producers—Giles Martin, Paul Epworth, Mark Ronson, and Ethan Johns. [McCartney's touring band] was involved mostly on the Giles and Ronson sessions, although we added little touches on most of the tracks during the finishing stage.

MD: Are you playing drums on all the tracks?

Abe: I played some drums, as did McCartney and Epworth. There's some programming as well. Paul would bring in a song either on acoustic guitar or piano, and we'd all get the vibe and discuss the direction it could go in. Then we would start jamming and

come up with the groove and arrangement. It was a very liquid process. Even after the basic track was finished, we would continue to tweak the arrangement and sometimes add entire sections with a different drum sound. We had fun searching for real drum sounds.

MD: What kinds of things did you do?

Abe: We would put drums in stairwells or super-small, dead rooms. A couple times Paul and I had our kits facing each other and we tracked double drums together. We used everything from vintage Ludwig 20" and 22" kicks to new DW 24" and 28" kicks. The record is a sonic feast, with the mix handled by Spike Stent. It's a record that we're all proud of and one that I enjoy playing live.

MD: Speaking of live, you handle a lot of background vocals with McCartney.

Abe: As a kid I was always drawn to melody. My parents say I would sometimes sing familiar melodies but would often make up my own as well.

I mostly focus on the melody and the lyrics, which has been key to how I've



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connected to playing the drums. It's not necessarily about playing simpler but rather supporting the melody and the intention of the lyric. I took vocal lessons from a singer in L.A. named Ode Wannebo, who's a great Wagnerian basso profundo operatic singer from Norway. Ode taught me a lot about the technical and physical tricks of singing. Posture, support, and balance are very important, and I found myself experimenting with vocal-mic placement and arranging my kit ergonomically in order

to achieve that balance. I made a mic stand out of DW cymbal hardware parts. I have it so that it's right in front of my head but swings away easily.

MD: When did a singing drummer first grab your attention?

Abe: When I saw Genesis's Mama tour with Phil Collins. That show completely blew me away. I already was a fan [of his singing and drumming], but I had no idea that Phil could do both so fluidly and seemingly independently. Levon Helm is another who

amazed me with his ability to groove so intensely and deliberately and sing so comfortably behind the beat. And Paul is a self-taught musician/singer, but I see him naturally do things like planting himself to the ground, elongating and relaxing his neck in order to produce a pure tone. That's what fifty-plus years of performance can do for you!

MD: With Paul you get to re-create the classic parts of another singing drummer, Ringo Starr.

Abe: That's one of the great things about playing with Paul. Ringo is a great song player. His parts were always so interesting and integral to the hooks in all of the songs. He could play quiet and tender, then switch to thrashy garage-rock parts.

MD: How do you approach playing his parts?

Abe: I tend to stick to the original grooves, but luckily Paul doesn't treat the music like it belongs in a museum. We have the ability to treat it as a living entity, and there are times when each of us, with a twinkle in our eyes, adds little bits of our own personality. I grew up listening to and studying Beatles records. I don't go as far as to lead fills with my left hand, as Ringo does, but I tend to stick to the original grooves, which is essential on some of the songs.

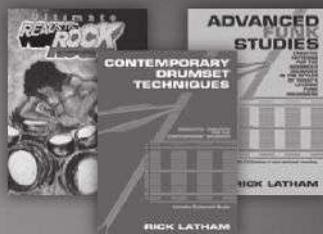
But there are some songs that were recorded very intimately, and the intensity comes from the mix, so I have to tweak the intensity for a stadium setting. For example, the Beatles song "Getting Better." The groove in the verse is kick on 1, snare on 2, and hat on the "&" of 3. It sounds huge on record, but when we play it live I play four on the floor, flam the snare backbeat, and add a floor tom to the hi-hat on the "&" of 3. Same groove, stadium intensity.

I do something similar with the Wings tune "Let Me Roll It." The original recording is Paul playing really small and vibe-y drums. When we play it live it becomes a hard-hitting rock tune that usually ends in a "Foxy Lady" jam.

A lot of the Wings tunes we play are the ones that Paul recorded drums on. We also do "Live and Let Die," which Denny Seiwell recorded brilliantly. I do

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ABE LABORIEL JR.

my best to keep the intent of how he breaks up the bars in the crazy instrumental sections. He hits those accents so perfectly!

“Junior’s Farm” is another fun one to play. Geoff Britton originally recorded that and gives the song such great forward motion. “Listen to What the Man Said” is another—Joe English originally recorded that one. A great groove. And he was another drummer who could sing and play brilliantly. Paul has played with such great musicians over the years. I am honored to be among them.

THE BIG RIG

MD: We began our conversation talking about your first little drumkit. Today things are *quite* different: Your rack tom is larger than what’s in vogue, and your floor toms are flipped-over bass drums. Is this because of all the years playing big stadium shows?

Abe: Yeah, absolutely. You can do some cool, intricate fills in a club, but you’re not going to hear any of that in a stadium. All you’re going to hear is *boom, bah, boom, bah*. You’re lucky if you get a 16th-note fill clean enough. I mean, I see why some guys think, *Why is he playing so simple, or so washy?* It’s because I’m playing in a stadium and I want those cymbals to wash, and I want ring on the snare, and I want the toms to be big and thuddy—because that’s what’s going to hit the very last row. Sonically you have to play to the room you’re in.

Another reason I play such ginormous drums with Paul is that I can tune them low and they don’t choke when I hit them hard. I rely heavily on Remo Black Suede heads and TunerFish lug locks to hold the tuning. And the reason I use such large cymbals has to do with not overpowering them when I hit them hard. And when I hit them lightly to medium hard, they have a natural compressed sound and sustain.

I’ve always enjoyed playing different drum sizes and setups. Every situation calls for a different approach. When I was with Sting I used smaller cymbals and some splashes. My tom sizes were 10", 13", and 16", with a 26" kick. The last time I was out with Eric Clapton and Stevie Winwood, I used a kit with 12", 13", and 14" rack toms, 15" and 16" floor toms, and a 24x24 kick—a little tip of the hat to Ginger Baker.

But one rack and one floor is enough to make a noise out of—though I’ll also admit that I liked that setup because I don’t like carrying my drums. But I love big drums. I love the feel, the sound. Smaller drums are great in the studio, but when I’m playing stadiums I want to dig in and have that drum respond. And with Paul I don’t have drums in the monitors, so I really want them to resonate for me.

MD: No drums in the monitors at all?

Abe: I only play to what’s acoustically in front of me. There isn’t even kick in the stage mix, because we don’t want that cycle of bleeding through vocal mics, which clouds the main mix. We don’t do in-ears either. They can be very insulating, and that would just take the intimate rock-band feel out of the gig. And that’s our vibe—we want to be able to play to each other and have that connection. So I just have a couple floor wedges with my and Paul’s vocals, maybe a

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touch of the guitar amps that are a little too far away. It's very civilized on stage. It's pretty rad.

MD: How did you come up with the idea to put the kick drum on the other side of your hi-hat?

Abe: It was practical. You know, we've all sort of fallen into that thing of, "This is how the drumset should be." I found that with the 28" kick and the 15" rack tom, I had to set the tom way out to the side to get it low enough to play. I was fine making that spread between the rack tom and the floor tom, but by reaching for the rack I was stressing my arm and getting tennis elbow. Also, I'm not only playing the rack; I'm stretching for the crash way over there. And that's over a

three-hour show. So I was sitting on the kit one day, and I looked at my double pedal and my kick and thought, *What if...* Problem solved! Then to even it out I put another floor tom on the left side. So now I can play more naturally for myself. My elbow is better now—and it looks weird! [laughs]

MD: Ideally, what would you want young drummers to get from your



Rob Shamahan

playing, and from your artistry?

Abe: I would hope that I inspire people to think more about what *music* is, as opposed to only what their musical instrument is. Music is about community—it's a communion of how we all interact. Of course, we all have to practice and hone, making ourselves better. But you get *so* much better when you're playing with other people—

that's the biggest thing. That's one reason why I don't do a lot of clinics, or the solo-drumming thing, because that feels clinical and technical for me. Music for me is all about interaction.

For more of Abe Laboriel Jr.'s interview, visit modern drummer.com.



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Pedrito Martinez

The Cuban-born percussionist has been slowly building his profile in the States since waving goodbye to his homeland eleven years ago and settling in New York City, where his local performances have become *the* gig to catch. Today, the buzz about his skills, and about his blazing group, is at a fever pitch.

Story by Jeff Potter • Photos by Paul La Raia



It might seem surprising to find a musician who's in constant demand with the world's top artists gigging several nights weekly in a narrow, no-cover-charge restaurant. But that's precisely the tack that burgeoning percussion star Pedro "Pedrito" Martinez wisely chose. Despite a date book filled with high-profile sideman sessions, the Cuban-born rhythm master/vocalist has held firm in his belief that creating and evolving his own great band is best done the old-fashioned way.

Guantanamera, an unassuming Cuban eatery on 8th Avenue in midtown Manhattan, became a live workshop, an incubator for Martinez's vision. While casual diners stroll in for the heaping platters of pollo asado, music icons flock over to see what the buzz is all about. The gig is ongoing, but perhaps not for long. One devoted repeat patron is Steve Gadd, who eventually produced the Pedrito Martinez Group's self-titled debut, released this past October on Motéma records.

It's all been worth the wait. The PMG delivers an uplifting, ecstatically grooving blend of Afro-Cuban elements both modern and folkloric, plus jazz, funk, R&B, blues, and pop. In its stripped-down format, the quartet manages a remarkable diversity of textures through the playful mastery of shifting and superimposed rhythms, all played with an uncanny knack for tight ESP-like improvisation.

Catalyzing the band is the charismatic, loose-limbed Martinez, taking flight with his soaring, passionate vocals while grooving on congas, multiple batá drums, cajon, and assorted percussion. Jhair Sala, a former student of Pedrito's, masterfully handles bongos, cowbell, and assorted



“So many percussionists, including me, have been checking out a lot of the greatest drumset players. Why can’t the drummers do that with us?”

percussion, at one with his mentor. Fiery double threat Ariacne Trujillo offers alternate lead vocals and keyboards, while bassist Alvaro Benavides lends a funky edge. All four musicians are strong singers, punching out syncopated three- and four-part harmonies. Above all, the group’s backbone is an ensemble percussive approach rooted in a deep understanding of rhythmic possibilities.

Martinez was born in Havana in 1973 and hungrily absorbed the traditions of Afro-Cuban music. He was also influenced by the sounds of American jazz, rock, and funk, which he heard on LPs carried back to Cuba by those lucky enough to travel abroad. At age eleven, he was already singing and playing percussion with the Cuban masters Tata Güines and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. While touring in 1998 with

saxophonist Jane Bunnett’s Spirits of Havana band in Canada, Martinez decided not to return home and made his way to New York.

The newcomer quickly picked up gigs, and a further breakthrough occurred when a friend tipped him off that the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition was initiating an Afro-Cuban hand-drumming category. Martinez applied



Tools of the Trade

Martinez plays LP percussion, including four Classic wood congas, two tumbas, two congas, an Americana string cajon, and a set of three batá drums.

and walked away with the top prize.

Since arriving stateside, the multi-talented has graced more than a hundred discs and has performed and/or recorded with top jazz, Latin, pop, and rock artists, including Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Paquito D’Rivera, Eddie Palmieri, Joe Lovano, Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, Cassandra Wilson, Steve Turre, Eliane Elias, and Meshell Ndegeocello. Pedrito has also served in the house band for Sting’s annual Rainforest Foundation benefit concerts, backing headliners such as Elton John, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, and Lady Gaga.

Drummer Daniel Freedman, who included Martinez on his CD *Bamako by Bus*, tells *Modern Drummer*, “I’ve never met anyone who combines modern elevated technique with incredibly deep roots like he does. He’s open-minded, and his attitude is incredibly positive.”

Saxophonist Yosvany Terry, a friend

and fellow Cuban expatriate, has featured Martinez on several of his own CDs, including *Today’s Opinion*. “He’s coming from the vast heritage of the Afro-Cuban legacy,” Terry says of Pedrito. “But at the same time he’s trying to deepen the knowledge of his own heritage. He’s never in a comfortable zone where he feels that he has ‘arrived.’ He has a humongous curiosity and a great interest in learning and growing as a musician. This is one of the qualities that separates him from the rest.”

Pedrito Martinez most certainly *has* arrived. So go experience him at a major festival or at Carnegie Hall. Or maybe just over a casual chicken dinner.

MD: The new PMG record includes guest artists on several tracks, but that doesn’t detract from the core sound that makes the group so special. And happily, the album wasn’t overproduced.

Pedrito: My initial idea for playing in the restaurant was: I’m going to get a great quartet that is going to fit in any

format; we’re going to be a rhythm section for *any* singer or any drummer or trumpet player. And then it became a *killin’* band—just with our four pieces.

Our manager came up with the idea of inviting people on the record that really loved our band, people who had come by many times to check out the band. The first person that came to mind was John Scofield, who was one of the first people who came to Guantanamo and loved it. And Wynton Marsalis, who is a great friend of mine, played on a cut. I’ve been involved in many projects with him at Lincoln Center and other places.

I don’t want to overdub many things that we don’t use on the stage. There are a few shakers and little added details, but nothing overpowering. We just wanted the record to be the way we are, the way we play, who we are. We want to be *real*, one hundred percent, in live performance *and* on records.

MD: Steve Gadd coproduced and also played on a couple tracks. How did it benefit the sessions to have a producer who was also a rhythm master?

Pedrito: He brought the record to

another level and opened it up to another audience too. First of all, because of the huge name he's got. Second, because of the big knowledge he has, the great person he is, and the amazing drummer he is.

I picked him as a producer because he was humble enough to get to Guantanamo, and he learned our music. I'm not just telling you he played it—he *learned* it perfectly, because he loved it so much. Then we played several gigs together. It was a dream come true, brother.

MD: Jane Bunnett observed that when she met you in Cuba, she was surprised that someone so young was so seriously immersed in the folkloric traditions.

Pedrito: Since I was little in Cuba, I was always curious about things, about changing things—in a good direction. A lot of old people that I learned batá from, they said that I learned very fast. It's an instrument that has so many rhythms and variations, so I learned them in two or three months—all of them. My mama's brother, he was one of the greatest congueros from Cuba. His name was Antonio Campos. My mama's a great singer, and my three brothers are musicians too.

But I was too hyper—too into music since I was little. I never went to school [for music]. I learned everything in the street. And people supported me right away, because they saw that I had talent. I'm a person who has always loved to learn.

MD: You were raised in the tradition of the rumbero, which involves simultaneous singing and dancing along with percussion playing. Is it essential that an artist master all three skills to truly understand the tradition?

Pedrito: Yeah, one thing transports you to the other thing. One thing *obligates* you to move to the other. There's no way that you can stay in the folklore world and not know the dancing or not know the music. One has to be right next to the other; they need each other. In the folkloric, music and dance have to be together to function perfectly.

Believe me, eighty percent of the folklore musicians in Cuba, they know

how to dance, sing, and play. Even in the modern popular music, they try to put the dancing and singing together. It's part of the show.

MD: When you won the Thelonious Monk competition, a couple of the judges were musicians you had worked with before, yet they didn't know you were an instrumentalist!

Pedrito: Yes, Yosvany was there, and "Patato" [Carlos Valdes], who I had worked with in the Conga Kings. With that band I was just doing background vocals, playing shekere, and dancing a little bit. It was a big surprise; they didn't even know I was a conguero. After the show, I spoke with Yosvany and he said, "Pedro, when I saw you walk out, I thought, *What is HE doing there? He's not a percussion player!*"

That opened so many doors for me. I was very happy about that contest. I was just two years in this country. I was very new and nobody knew me. I just wanted to get here and do my thing. And it *happened*.

MD: On your previous non-PMG record in a very different format, *Rumba de la Isla*, you address the long history of interconnections between Spanish flamenco and Afro-Cuban rumba.

Pedrito: There's a giant connection. The influence for rumba came from flamenco. They call it rumba flamenca. We call it rumba Cubana or just rumba. I came from that.

All the Cuban melodies are very similar to the rumba flamenca we were used to hearing when we lived in Cuba. This record was a tribute to the great singer Camarón de la Isla. When the record company, Calle 54, came to me to offer the project, I already knew that music.

MD: But it wasn't literal. It seemed to be a hybrid; you made it your own.

Pedrito: We were trying to keep the melodies as close as we could to the original ones, because Camarón was a big idol in Spain and I wanted to make sure people were going to recognize the melodies right away. What we added to that was the rumba patterns and the chorus.

MD: A formative part of your musical

upbringing was playing percussion for religious ceremonies.

Pedrito: That's very common in Cuba, especially in the area where I grew up. It's a very poor neighborhood called Cayo Hueso. There was a lot of Santería, a lot of Afro-Cuban culture involved—a lot of rumba, and private ceremonies. So I grew up seeing that.

MD: And you continue doing ceremonies even today.

Pedrito: Yes! That's part of who I am, brother. And in all the records I've been doing since I got to the United States, I've been putting in Yoruba chants, batá rhythms—pieces of Afro-Cuban culture. It's *honest*, so it's powerful; it's who I am.

I play most every weekend in private houses, in ceremonies called *tambor de fundamento*. Those are the real ceremonies we play for the orishas [deities] in the Santería culture. All the people are initiated in the religion. They salute their orishas; they say hi to their orishas by putting their head on top of each batá drum, and they put some money in the plate in front of the biggest one. In the ceremony there are deities with different colors and attributes. There are three batá players and one singer.

MD: And it's a long nonstop drumming workout?

Pedrito: Yes, they start at four o'clock and finish at around nine o'clock. The vibe and the ideas you get from there are giant, beautiful. Every time I get out from one of those, I come out with a new melody or something else to write for the group. All the religions I've been practicing since I was little, it's all about the music.

MD: The way the PMG interacts is astonishing. When you're grooving as a rhythm section, it's often hard to discern the line between the improvisatory flow and preplanned hits and figures. And there are sudden surprising groove dropout spaces with tricky reentries. Is much of that predetermined?

Pedrito: No, not at all. That's the result of playing many years together. The other percussion player, Jhair, is the

PEDRITO MARTINEZ

youngest member of the band. I got together with him when he was nine years old. He watched my whole career, since I got to the United States. He was with me all the time at all of the venues, checking out all the recordings, all the bands I was playing with. So he knows exactly what to play. Even without me looking at him, he knows what I'm going to do. We never get together to plan the breaks. All the breaks and things that happen on stage with this band come natural.

It also comes from having a steady gig in the city three nights a week, three sets a night. That's a *lot*. That's what makes the band tight. And everybody comes here to check out the band.

MD: You're also an accomplished drumset player. What do drummers need to realize about successfully playing with hand percussionists, especially regarding this evolving language of Afro-Cuban grooves?

Pedrito: When a drummer plays all the time with a percussion player, or knows how to play percussion, that makes the key difference. So many percussionists,

including me, have been checking out a *lot* of the greatest drummers—learning from them and putting it into congas. Why can't the drummers do that with *us*? There are great things they can learn from percussion to put in their own repertory. When drummers don't check percussion players, there's something missing.

MD: Do you believe drummers can play that music authentically only if they know both sides of the coin?

Pedrito: Definitely. They are just afraid to jump on it—a new world. Drummers from here and outside of Cuba in general are afraid to get involved in the Latin world. They don't know that it's going to open up a lot of things for them.

When I play with drummers that love percussion and have an idea of what hand percussion is, they *lock* with me, they lock with the rhythm section. When a drummer has no idea, we cannot lock; he's playing in his world and I'm in my world. It's the same music, but it doesn't sound the same as if they know the percussion.

MD: What should drummers better understand technically?

Pedrito: Most of them are more into the technique than taste. The way to play is with your heart. Unfortunately, so many people get interested in a drummer doing so many fast things rather than trying to play melody on the drums. For me, it's all about melody. And groove. And *space*. Taste! Let your heart tell you where to go. Technique is going to destroy the world of the drum.

MD: That's what's great about the PMG. It's very complex, but that's not the point. Even when the music is rhythmically disorienting, the groove is still foremost.

Pedrito: The batá has much rhythmic displacement. And I put that into my music, so people sometimes get confused with the time—they don't know where the 1 is. We're always playing around with the time.

MD: But it's such a seamless, danceable flow; it never feels mathematical.

Pedrito: It's *natural*. That's what we've wanted to do.



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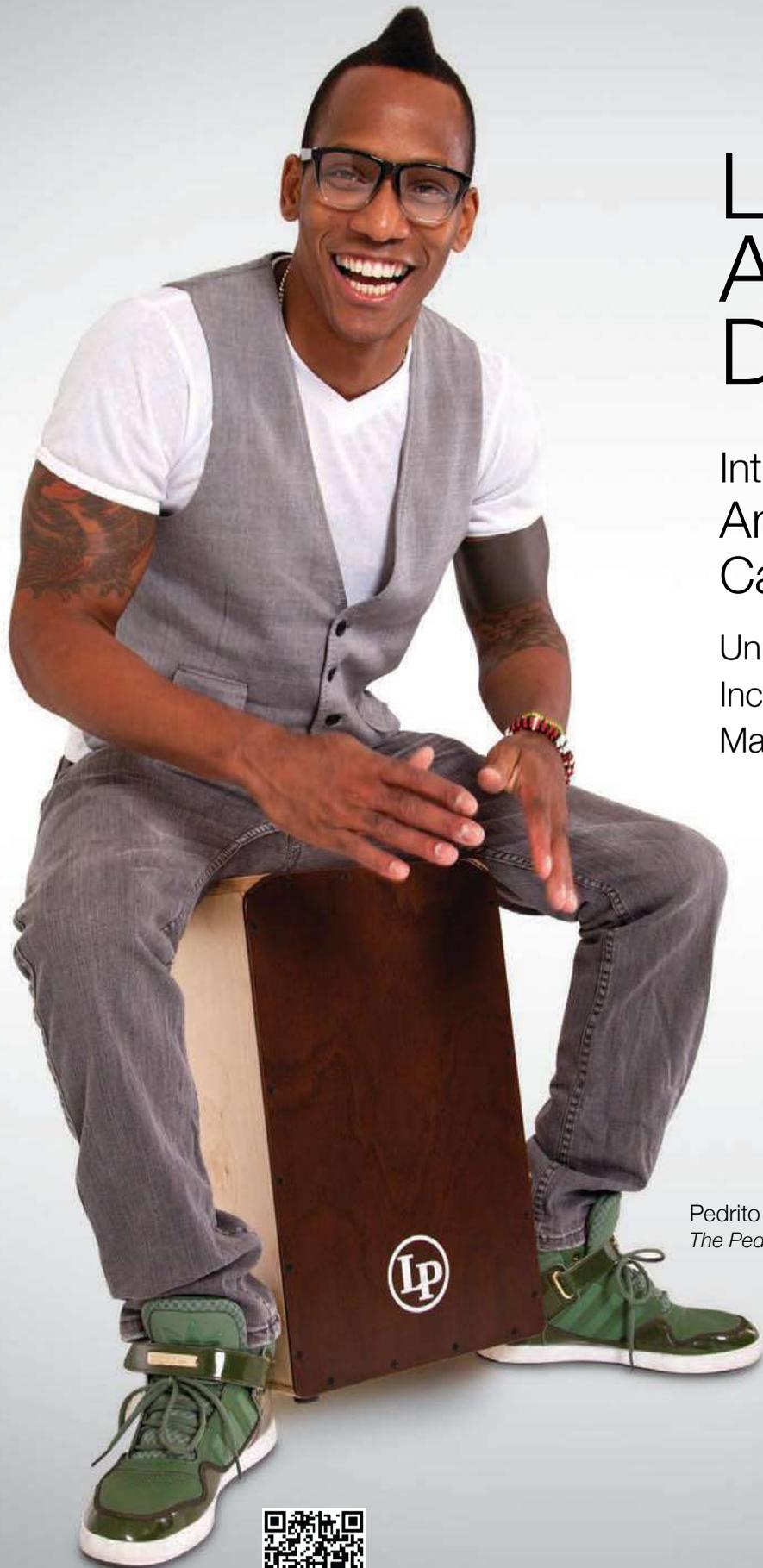


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THE 45-MINUTE PRACTICE ROUTINE

Get Organized to Optimize Your Time Behind the Kit

by Mike Johnston

When I sit back and think about the thousands of questions I've been asked by students in my eighteen-year career as a drum teacher and clinician, I would have to say that at least 80 percent of them have to do with practicing. It's a scary thing to think about sitting down at the kit and dedicating yourself to improving, just to find out that you were practicing incorrectly or focusing on the wrong subject. Having a road map like the one we have here, the 45-Minute Practice Routine, will help you feel more confident on your journey.

Before we get into the specifics of the practice routine, it's important that we define the difference between playing and practicing. Playing is when you jam on the drums without any direct focus. This would include grooving to your favorite songs or self-medicating with chops that make you feel better about your abilities. Don't get me wrong, spending some time to just play the drums is extremely important, and I even carve out time for it in the routine. It reminds us why we fell in love with this instrument in the first place.

Practicing, on the other hand, is when you work on something that you desire to improve, with precise focus and attention paid to every detail, including touch, groove, feel, technique, and timing. The great jazz drummer Ralph Peterson once told me, "If you get up from your kit hoping that a bunch of people heard what you just did, you were just playing. But if you get up from your kit hoping that no one in the world heard what you just did, you were practicing."

The 45-Minute Practice Routine is something that should be filled out before you even get to the kit. I fill mine out every

night before I go to bed. Imagine walking into a grocery store without a list or a budget. What happens? You end up buying a ton of stuff that you don't need, and you spend way too much money in the process. What happens when you go into that same store with a detailed list and an exact budget? You get exactly what you need, and you generally have a little money left over. Sitting down at the kit without a plan is like going to the store without a list. When it comes to filling out your practice routine, you should spend some time thinking about your "grocery list." What do you want to improve? What is it that you see in other drummers that you wish you were better at? What weakness of yours do you wish was a strength? Answering these questions will help you fill out your practice routine.

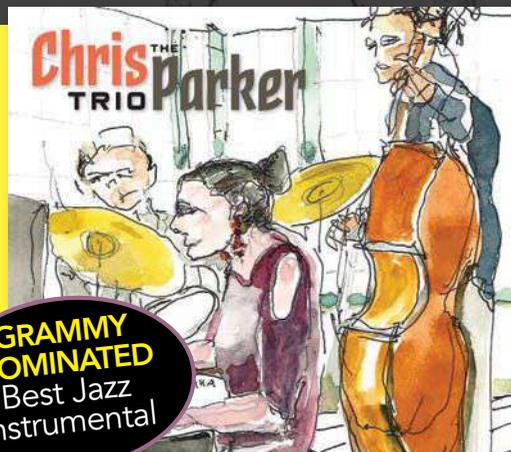
You can always extend the time of each section to fit your schedule. On days where I have multiple hours set aside to practice, I'll do my routine several times. I find that forty-five minutes is about the extent of my attention span. After I've completed one cycle, I get up from the kit, get a bite to eat, watch some highlights on *SportsCenter*, and then do it all over again.

A 45-Minute Practice Routine PDF will be available at moderndrummer.com, so that you can download it and print as many copies as you need. Here's what it looks like, if you'd rather create a copy of your own.



Mike Johnston runs the educational website mikeslessons.com, where he offers prerecorded videos as well as real-time online lessons. He also hosts weeklong drum camps at the mikeslessons.com facility each year.

New Album From the **Chris Parker Trio**



"Drummer Chris Parker has a to-die-for résumé. Over the past four decades, he's worked with everybody from the Brecker Brothers to Miles Davis and Laura Nyro to Lou Rawls, taking a genre-blind approach to drumming that continues to serve him well. As a sideman, he's made his mark time and again with a who's who of music giants, but he also knows a thing or two about leading a band.

"Parker's trio, with bassist Ameen Saleem and pianist Kyoko Oyobe, is one of the most dynamically tuned-in threesomes to put out a record in 2013. While it's true that this is a piano trio, the piano doesn't own the music; this is an evenhanded outing where Saleem's bass plays second fiddle to no one and Parker's drums do plenty of talking.

"Parker's made a career out of playing the right thing for the right situation, and that skill carries over into his own work; he never misses a beat here."
 —Dan Bilawsky, aboutjazz.com



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The 45-Minute Practice Routine

date _____

Warm-Up: 5 minutes

Take five minutes to get your hands, feet, body, and mind warmed up. This is your time to reacquaint yourself with your drumset. Don't waste this time. This is a great opportunity to find weaknesses in your drumming.

Notes

Subdivision Improv: 10 minutes (metronome and timer required)

This subdivision improv exercise will help you in two ways. First, it will improve your sense of time. By improvising in a specific subdivision against a pulse, you will become acutely aware of your timing in relation to that pulse. Second, your ability to be creative on the fly (in other words, to improvise) for long periods of time will grow dramatically.

Directions: Pick two subdivisions from the list on the right. Improvise in each one at a specific tempo for five minutes. Use two timers, one to track the overall time and one to track the length of time that you can improvise within the subdivision without messing up.

- Quarter notes bpm
- 8th notes bpm
- 8th-note triplets bpm
- 16th notes bpm
- 16th-note triplets bpm
- 32nd notes bpm

Main Focus: 20 minutes (metronome and timer required)

Pick one category from the list on the right and then write a detailed description of exactly what you're going to work on and how you're going to work on it.

Notes

- Grooves
- Independence
- Fills
- Rudiments
- World rhythms
- Hand speed
- Foot speed
- Soloing
- Learning songs
- Chart reading
- Jazz comping
- Ostinatos
- Dynamic control
- Accent control

Play to Music: 10 minutes

This is the chance for you to unwind after your hard work. Use this time to remember why you fell in love with the drums in the first place. Play along to your favorite band, close your eyes, and imagine that you're in the band for one magical night. Ignore technique, patterns, and cognitive thought. You know the vocabulary—now just speak the language!

Artist

Song

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

BALANCED HANDS

Two Exercises to Eliminate One-Hand Dominance by Tony Noterfonzo

This article consists of exercises designed to develop strength and endurance in both hands. The first one begins with a balance of four right-hand and four left-hand strokes. As you repeat, the balance is shifted to gradually overload the right hand, and then the left, before you return to four strokes each.

When practicing this exercise, use a metronome and work at a comfortable tempo. Play each line four times before moving on, and play the entire exercise without stopping between lines. Increase the tempo only if you can make it all the way through without tensing up.



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

The second exercise is designed to develop the ability to lead with either hand. It's based on a two-bar phrase with three-, five-, seven-, and nine-note accent patterns. The first measure of each two-bar phrase works the right hand, and the second bar works the left. Each line features a different accent pattern.

As before, use a metronome and play each line four times before moving on. Increase the tempo only if you can make it all the way through without tensing up.



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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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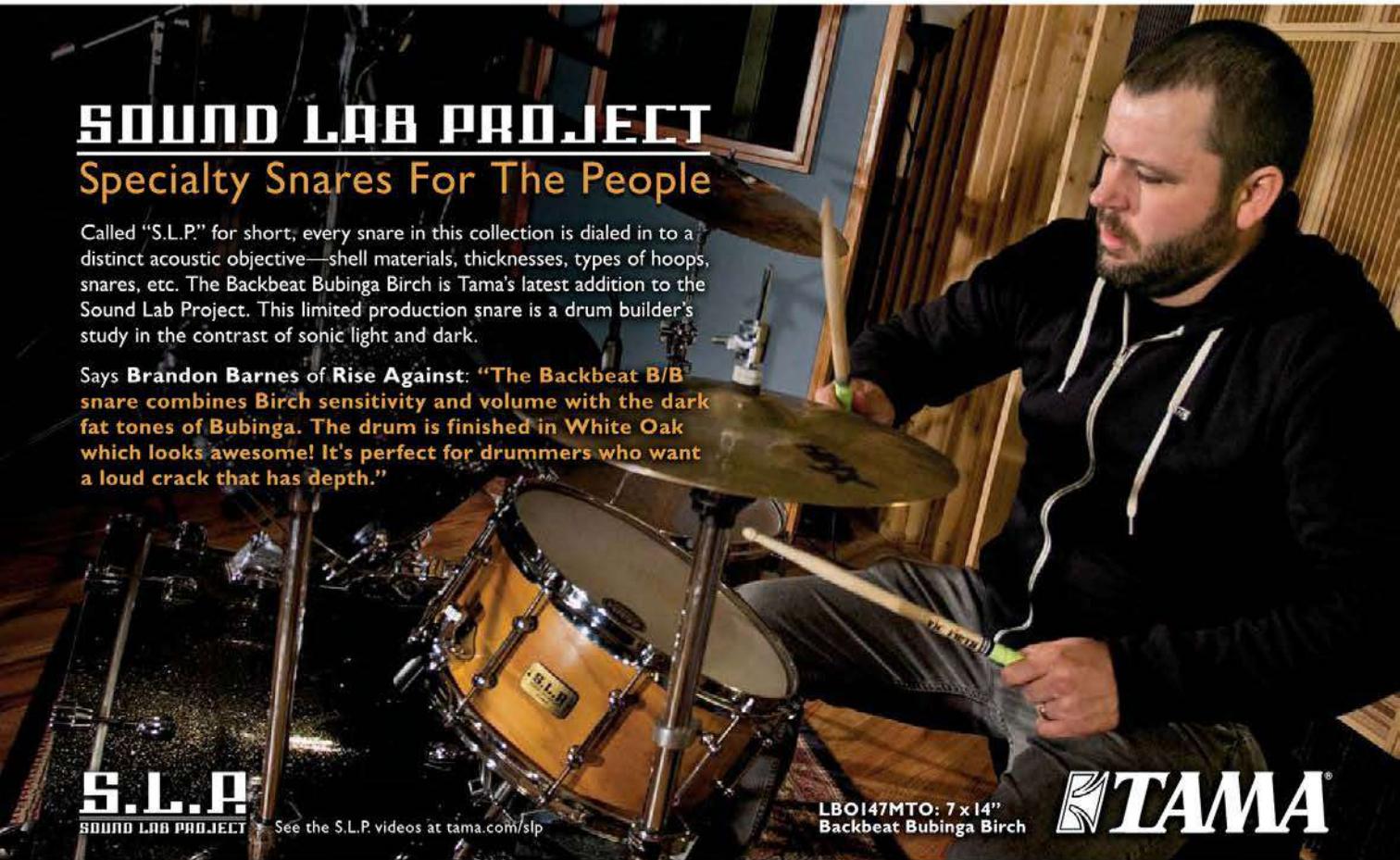
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PLAY ON TOP!

Using the Snare Drum as a Melody Maker by Adam Fischel

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X
S.D.	●
B.D.	●

I was sitting in the green room after a show a while back, listening to the James Brown record *Love Power Peace: Live at the Olympia, Paris, 1971*. One track, “Super Bad,” with John “Jabo” Starks on drums, had such a funky groove. In the B section of the tune, the beat features the snare as the lead voice, as opposed to the bass drum, which is more typically viewed as the main element of the kit in rock, pop, and R&B. In this article we’re going to use what Starks played as a starting point for exploring ways to use the snare drum in a more melodic manner.

Let’s take a look at Jabo’s groove.

1

Now we’ll add additional snare drum notes to create an enhanced melody.

2

Let’s continue with this concept and add to the snare part.

3

4

Using the next example as our main cell, we’ll begin to take away—or extract—some notes to create a more open feel. Deleting some of the notes will create more room to improvise within the groove.

5

In this example we’re extracting notes from the hi-hat and snare while quoting the initial groove.

6

Keeping with the concept of more extraction, we’ll use the sparser hi-hat line while also deleting notes from the snare. This will open up the groove even more. Space is sometimes overlooked but is very important when you’re performing with other musicians.

7

You can also adjust the rate by adding 16th notes to the melody line on the snare. The groove will get denser, which increases the drive coming from the snare. In the following examples you can see how creative, hip, and driving the snare drum line can become. Remember to always think of the melody you started with as you add notes. The goal is to be able to imply a melody and be deceptive at the same time.

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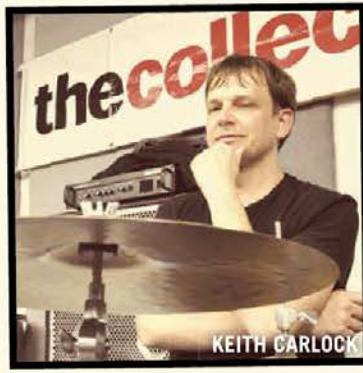
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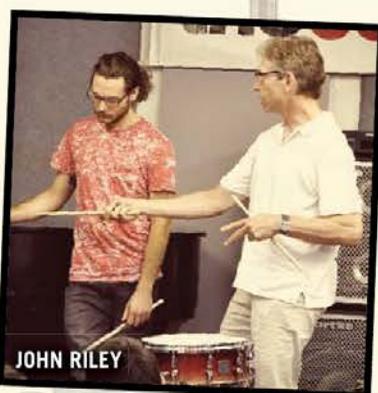
Other ways to expand on the phrasing include orchestrating the right hand around the drumkit, and increasing the subdivision in any of the limbs. As you’re coming up with your own grooves, think of ways to use the snare drum, as opposed to the bass drum, as your main voice, and you might be pleasantly surprised and inspired by what you come up with.

Adam Fischel is a New York-based drummer who has played with Debbie Gibson, Tiffany, and the Midtown Men. For more information, visit theinspiredmusician.com and adamfischel.com.





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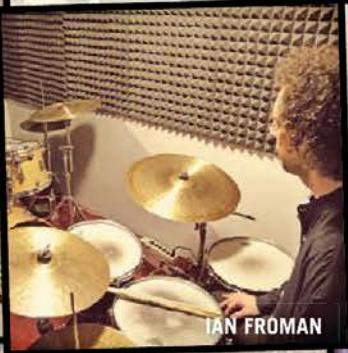


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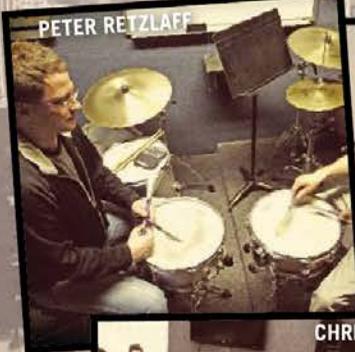
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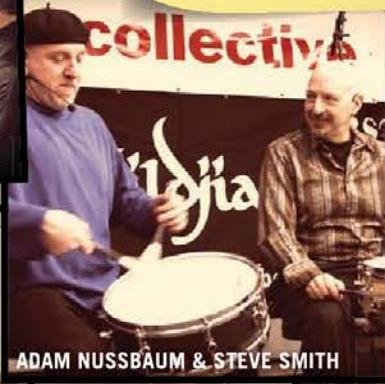
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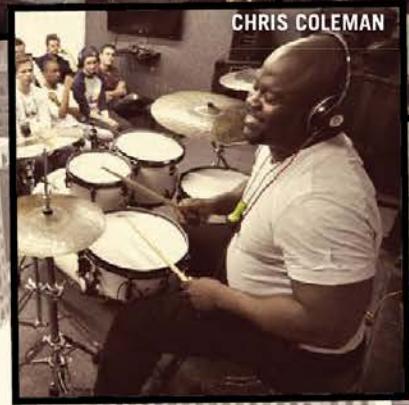
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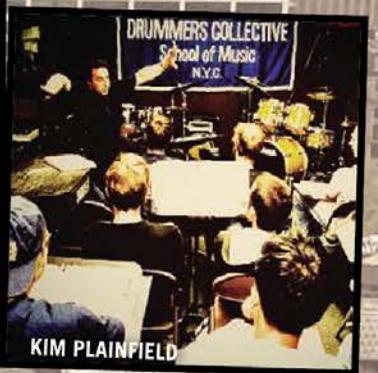
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DOUBLE BASS WORKOUT

Part 6: Paradiddle Patterns by Todd Vinciguerra

MUSIC KEY

- H.H. 
- S.D. 
- B.D. 

For the final lesson in this series we're going to have some fun with paradiddles, double paradiddles, and paradiddle variations over 16th notes, 16th-note triplets, and 32nd notes.

Remember to play to a metronome or click track. Also remember to start off slow and master each exercise before increasing the speed. To take these beats a step further, turn them into two-, three-, or four-bar repeating phrases. And instead of straight 8th notes on the hi-hat, you can also try using quarter notes, 16ths, or combinations of all three.

The bass drum patterns can be played as written, or you can experiment with them by switching the lead foot or by using double strokes. Experiment and have fun!

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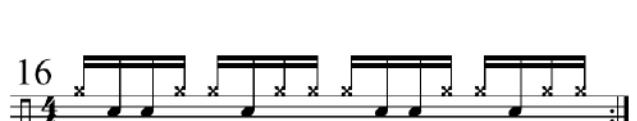
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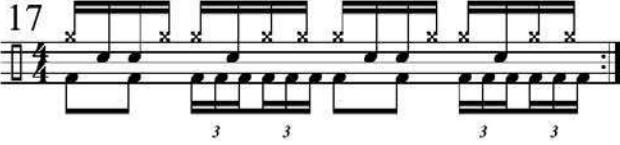
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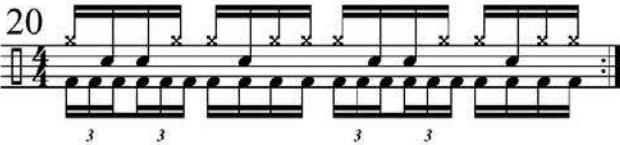
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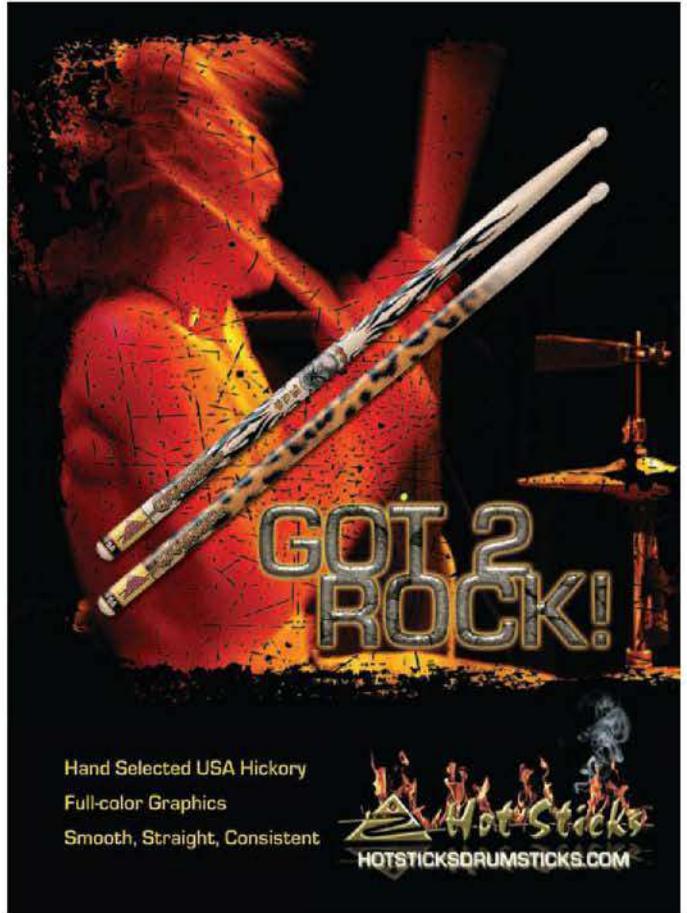
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Todd "Vinny" Vinciguerra is the author of several drum instructional books. His latest, *Double Basics: Complete Double Bass Drum Book*, is available through Mel Bay. For more info, visit anotherstateofmind.com.

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REDISCOVERING RUDIMENTS

Simple Ways to Progress Beyond the Snare by Miguel Monroy

MUSIC KEY

Regardless of your desire as a drummer, whether it's to play blistering solos or tasteful grooves, studying the rudiments will do much to help you take your craft to the next level. In this article our goal is not only to encourage you to study the rudiments

as they were written, on the snare, but to explore them in a way that opens up a whole new world of opportunities behind the drumset.

I have the privilege of teaching drumset to students ranging in age from five to forty-five. One question that I ask every one of them is, "How can you master multiple drums if you haven't mastered one?" Before we ever start applying rudiments to the full kit, we take a good while to work them up on the snare drum. Two things that I would encourage you to be mindful of when practicing rudiments is note consistency and tempo. Note consistency means that you have the ability to play a particular rudiment evenly at any volume level, from soft to loud. Tempo refers to having the ability to play a particular rudiment at any speed without sacrificing your note consistency.

A couple of great rudiments to start with are single-stroke and double-stroke rolls. If possible, record yourself playing these two rudiments and see if you can hear the transition from one hand to the other. After you've analyzed your playing, make adjustments that result in a silky-smooth sound.

1

RULES AND PARAMETERS

Once you get those two rolls to a satisfactory level on the snare, it's time to progress to the next phase, which involves creating parameters and rules for how to orchestrate them on the kit. Here are some examples.

Rule 1: Switch to a new sound source every two notes within the double-stroke roll.

2

Rule 2: With a single paradiddle (which is a combination of two single strokes and a double stroke), replace the right-hand part with the bass drum and then add quarter notes on the hi-hat with the right hand.

3

Rule 3: With a five-stroke roll (two double strokes and an accented single stroke), play the accented notes on toms while all the other notes are played on the snare, or vice versa.

4

After you get comfortable utilizing different parameters and rules with a rudiment, see if those ideas will work as a drum fill.

OSTINATOS

The next phase is to play various ostinatos with your feet while keeping the rudiment on the snare. I always start with a basic bass drum and hi-hat ostinato and then move on to Latin feels. Here's an example of a three-bar phrase using a samba ostinato beneath five-stroke rolls.

5

After the rudiment feels good on the snare with the various foot ostinatos, begin to implement some of the rules that we were using earlier to spice things up a bit. Here's an example of a six-stroke roll that starts with the left hand (L R R L L R), played over a basic foot ostinato.

6

Another way to explore the possibilities of a rudiment is by phrasing it between the hi-hat and snare. Start out by following the sticking pattern of the rudiment exactly as written. Begin with something simple, like a single paradiddle, and then add quarter notes on the bass drum. After you get comfortable with that groove, try moving the right hand around the drumset to see how things evolve.

7

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

The examples included in this article are just the tip of the iceberg. There are countless ways to expand on each rudiment, so don't be afraid to use your imagination and explore!



Miguel Monroy is the creator of LouisvilleDrummer.com, a free educational resource for drummers, and he serves as a drumset and percussion instructor for the community music program at the University of Louisville.



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SECRETS OF AFROBEAT

Dissecting Tony Allen's Subtle and Unique Style

by Miles Arntzen



MUSIC KEY

open	○	R.C.
H.H.	⊗	X
T.T.	⊙	⊗
S.D.	⊙	⊗
F.T.	⊙	⊗
B.D.	⊙	⊗
H.H.	⊗	⊙
w/ foot	⊗	⊙
	○	Ghost note

Afrobeat, as created by the late Nigerian musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti, is a captivating musical genre full of subtlety. On first listen, you may think you understand what's going on, but once you sit down to play the parts, whether it's along with a recording or live with a band, a whole new world opens up.

The signature Afrobeat sound surfaced after Fela took a trip to the United States in 1969, during which he discovered the power of bebop and free jazz and began finding his voice of sociopolitical protest. In the years prior, Fela had a career as a highlife musician and had already begun to incorporate soul-music sounds into his compositions. Upon his return to Africa, he realized the potential in bringing together the gritty funk of James Brown and Geraldo Pino, the jazz of Guy Warren and John Coltrane, and the swinging highlife music of Nigeria's Ambrose Campbell. The resultant sound was a true melting pot of styles.

Fela Kuti may have had the mind to bring together these different influences, but it was his drummer at the time, Tony Allen, who was the one responsible for locking it all up tight. Through his effortlessly conversational and deeply moving style, Allen was able to hold together a band of guitars, basses, percussion, horns, vocalists, and dancers with incredible lightness.

In this article we'll break down Afrobeat drumming into two main ideas that permeate through Fela's catalog. We'll begin with the clave and the way Allen applies 3-2 and 2-3 clave rhythms to the drumset. We'll also touch on the secret weapon of Afrobeat drumming: the hi-hat.

The final section highlights Allen's unique fills and groove variations and his extraordinary use of dynamics. When going through these patterns at the drumset, be sure to relax.

THE CLAVE

Most of Allen's drum parts are based on the clave. This makes sense with the rest of the band, as the guitar, bass, horns, and percussion also revolve rhythmically around the clave. All of the rhythms the band plays are phrased in a certain way that highlights the tension and release within the seemingly simple clave pattern. Here are a few examples.

"I No Get Eye for Back," from *Alagbon Close*

The clave is embedded in Allen's groove over the course of one bar. Tony indicates the clave most clearly at the very beginning of the song, where he's laying down a simpler groove without much embellishment. The snare articulates the three

side of a 3-2 clave.

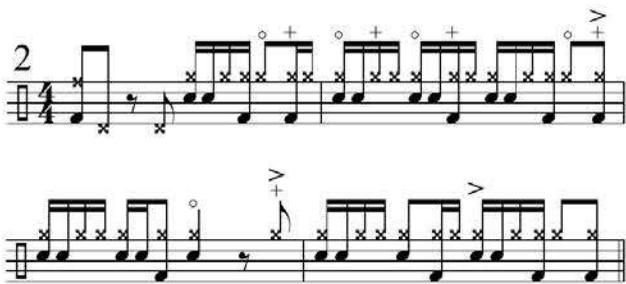
In the first nine bars of the tune, the only element that changes is the hi-hat. One key to playing Afrobeat music is to keep the hi-hat foot pumping on the offbeats. When the right hand hits the hi-hat as the foot is releasing, a splashy hi-hat sound results.

Also note that in the ninth bar Allen varies the snare and kick pattern to anticipate the horns' entrance. This is a subtle yet extremely effective way of building anticipation without playing an obvious fill. (0:00)

"Alagbon Close," from *Alagbon Close*

The clave in this song has switched to 2-3. Don't be fooled by this groove—the snare hits on beats 1 and 3. The kick drum is now defining the clave, emphasizing the three side in every bar.

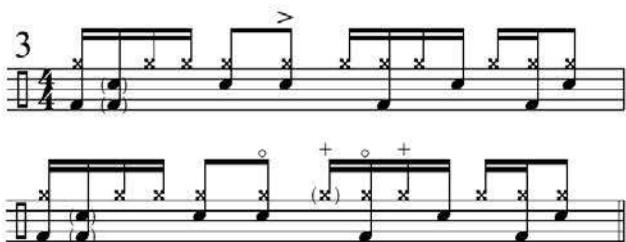
The excerpt included here is from when the drums first enter. Allen hits beat 1 on the kick drum and cymbal and lets the groove hang for two beats, with just his hi-hat foot keeping time on the offbeats. By the second bar, he has settled into the switched groove. Note the drop—something that's found in many of Fela's songs—that occurs in bar three. Fela plays a theme line on the keyboard that Tony quickly responds to with a hit on the snare and hi-hat. (1:39)



“Upside Down,” from *Upside Down*

“Upside Down” features a busier kick pattern that plays tag with the snare drum. The tension and release within the three side of the clave is felt heavily here. The kick and snare play with each other in a way that hints at a triplet. Additionally, Allen places emphasis on the “&” of beats 2 and 4 with his hi-hat, giving the pattern a feeling of rolling over onto itself.

The kick drum emphasizes beat 1 but also touches the second 16th note, which grooves hard with the shekere part. This contrasts with beat 3, in which the downbeat is left out and the second 16th note is stated forcefully. “Upside Down” also features a lot of varied hi-hat work. (0:00)



SECRET WEAPON: THE HI-HAT

When playing Afrobeat, it’s important not to allow the hi-hat to become static. It’s the job of the snare and bass drum to hold it down, while the hi-hat dances around the backbeat. Throughout all of these patterns, keep your hi-hat foot bouncing. This will create new sonic possibilities within the grooves that excite and propel the band. With your hi-hat foot bouncing, use your hi-hat hand to accent different 8th notes within the bar.

LEADING THE BAND

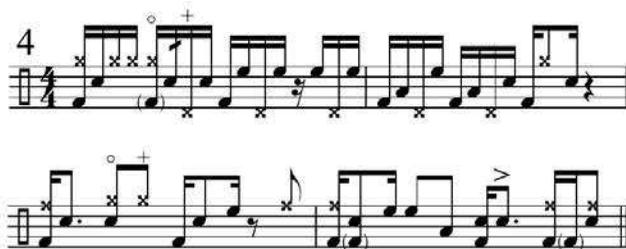
Fills are usually looked at as an opportunity to show your stuff, but they also have a key role in any song to usher in new sections. A commonly overlooked aspect of Allen’s drumming is his way of setting things up, whether it’s a horn line, a vocal part, or just a shift in dynamics. When Tony plays a fill, he doesn’t stop what he’s doing. His fills and variations are woven into the groove in creative and subtle ways. One way he achieves this is by always centering his fills on the clave. Here are a few examples.

“Upside Down,” from *Upside Down*

When your rhythms and inflections align with what’s going on in the rest of the song, a fill won’t stick out in an obvious way, and you’re freed up to express yourself over a longer period of time. In the first two bars of this example, Allen’s inflections hook up nicely with what the guitars and bass are playing.

Once bars three and four hit, Allen catches and plays around

the horn lines. The key to keeping it all coherent and moving forward is in the footwork, where the hi-hat pumps the “&” while the kick holds down mostly quarter notes. Try tapping a 2-3 clave rhythm while listening to this passage. (4:05)



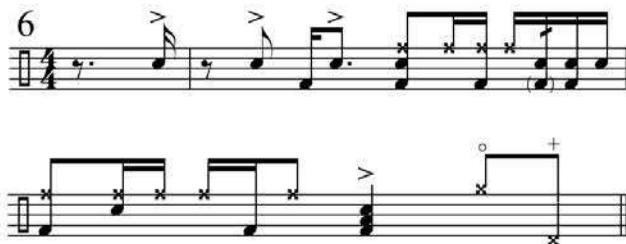
“Zombie,” from *Zombie*

Even in a blazing-fast pattern, Allen finds a way to create tension with a beautiful three-bar lead-in to the huge horn release. Again, tap a 2-3 clave pattern along with the fill to feel the accents. Remember to always keep the hi-hat bouncing on the offbeats. (2:22)



“Open and Close,” from *Open and Close*

This is an example of Allen’s supreme mastery of dynamics. He uses his drums not only to move bodies on the dance floor but also to call out to the band. With his snare drum as his voice in this early Afrobeat tune, he cues the group to get loud and then soft. This is another example of the classic Tony Allen drop that occurs in many of Fela’s tunes. Tony revs up the engine, draws some attention, and then shuts it all down with a huge whack on the snare drum. (7:19)



STOP COUNTING!

Once you get the basic drum patterns down, try to forget about counting through the bar. Breathe with your fills and your accents. After playing these grooves for a while, you might find a tendency to revolve your playing around the offbeats. Go with it! That helps create a push-and-pull effect, which propels the groove forward. Keep your feet marching and experiment playing freely over them, disregarding where the bar starts and ends.



Miles Arntzen is a New York City–based drummer who tours and records regularly with Antibalas, EMEFE, and Superhuman Happiness. For more info, visit milesarntzen.com.





DISCIPLINE

Small Changes for Massive Progress

MD Pro Panelist **Benny Greb** suggests that some minor adjustments in habit—and maybe a tweak in your attitude toward practice—can result in unexpectedly large dividends for your playing.

THE MINDSET

When you hear the word *discipline*, the hairs on the back of your neck probably begin to stand up. Discipline has gotten a bad reputation, mainly because the word has been widely misused, often by people in a position of authority, like teachers, parents, and bosses. Maybe at some point someone has said that *you* don't have enough discipline—or that you lack it entirely.

If any of this sounds familiar, let me tell you that you are not alone. I went through my whole school career hearing teachers telling me how undisciplined I was, and that I

should change, or else my future would not look very bright...as lazy as I was.

It wasn't until many years later that I realized they were wrong. They didn't see that every day when I came home, I sat down at the drums and played for many hours. This was my number-one priority—even though I didn't know it at the time. Of course, they didn't know it either, and they judged my performance in school without taking into account my willingness to put work into something that is necessary to move forward in life.

Many of us have been led to feel that discipline means the opposite of

freedom, because people usually use the word when they want us to *do* something. And if we don't do that thing, or don't do it enough, then they tell us that we lack discipline, when the truth of the matter isn't that we lacked discipline—we simply didn't want to do that particular thing in the first place.

The true meaning of discipline is setting your mind on something that you really want and then taking the necessary steps to achieve it. From there, it follows that discipline is not the opposite of freedom—discipline *is* freedom. And it's the most powerful tool to get what you want. If you look at your goal as a



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FIRST PERSON

destination, then discipline is your road map to make sure that, eventually, you will arrive there.

And discipline is a totally different game when used for something that you value highly. I think it was Nietzsche who once said, “When you have a strong enough ‘why,’ the ‘how’ becomes easy.” Here are a couple of thoughts on the “how.”

FREQUENCY

One defining factor in terms of discipline is how often you engage in the activities necessary for you to arrive at your desired destination. The more often you go at it, the mountains you have to climb become smaller, and you move forward faster.

Also, as you move forward, you gain momentum. It's easier to stay in motion and move forward when you do something every day, or at least regularly. Studies have shown that anything we do consistently over ten days tends to become a pattern. Anything we do regularly over a period of nine months becomes *so* much a

part of us that it becomes a habit, almost like an addiction—we would have to fight hard to get rid of it. So why not make a habit of constantly learning and getting better at what you love?

SMALL CHANGES, HUGE DIFFERENCE

Even the smallest changes can have a huge impact down the road, and even more so if you work at them with a high enough frequency. If you've ever used a bow and arrow or played golf, you know that a change of even one millimeter in the angle of your stance can cause you to miss the target. That millimeter at the start adds up to more and more, until eventually the ball or arrow lands ten or even twenty meters off target, in the woods somewhere.

It's the same with our day-to-day lives and in our practice routines. The average American watches more than five hours of TV per day. What if you resolve to watch thirty fewer minutes a day and get up thirty minutes earlier? This will give you one more hour a day

to work on your musicianship. That adds up to seven hours a week, thirty hours a month, and 365 hours a year!

What if you watch one whole hour less of TV and get up an hour earlier?

Five years from now, what would make a bigger difference to you—having watched more TV, or massively improving your drumming?

I can guess your answer.

THE CHALLENGE

First, investigate where your definition of discipline comes from, and, if necessary, change your attitude about it. Then take an honest look at your average week and identify activities that don't really serve you with regard to the things you really want. Finally, resolve to reduce those activities—or get rid of them entirely—and immediately substitute them with higher-value tasks, with high frequency.

Treat this exercise as if your whole way of drumming depends on it—because it does.



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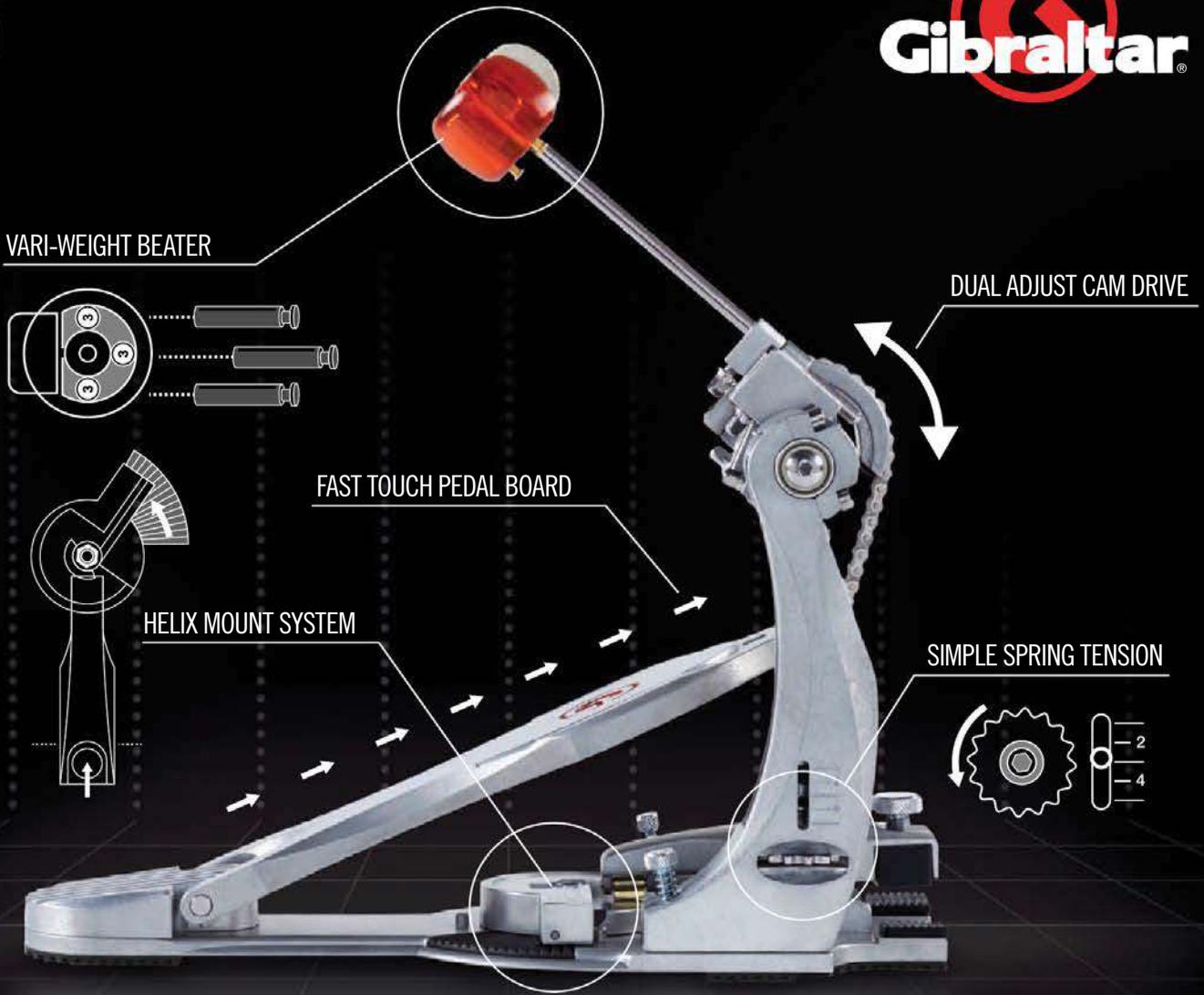
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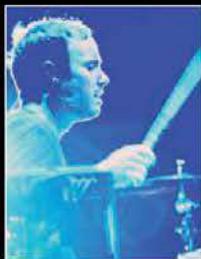
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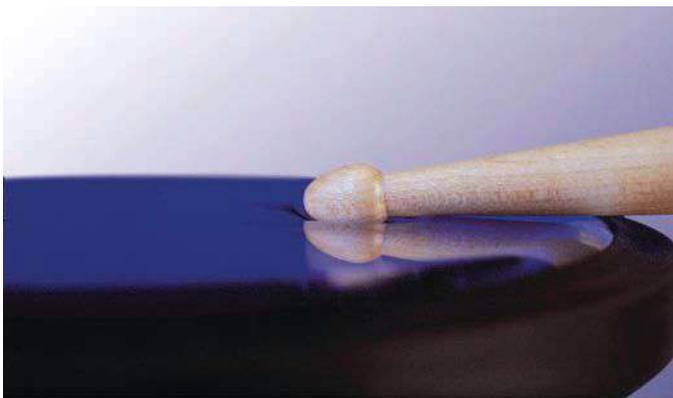
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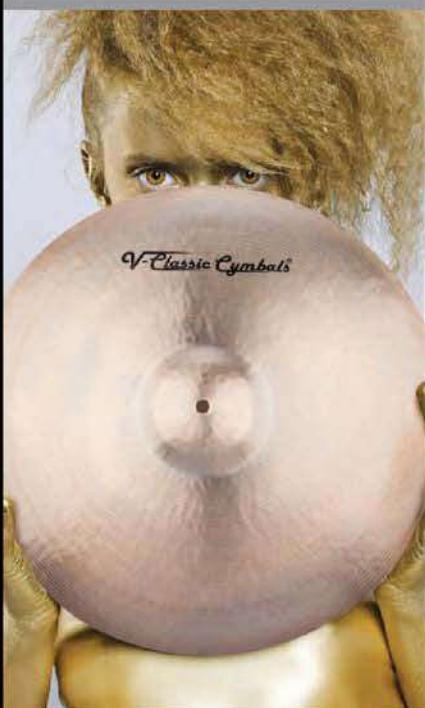
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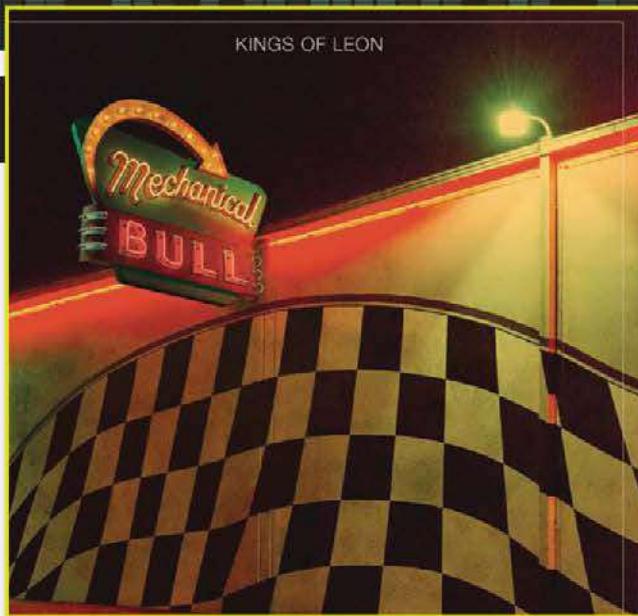


CRITIQUE

RECORDINGS

KINGS OF LEON *MECHANICAL BULL* The arena-filling, platinum-selling band gets groovin' on its latest album.

Nashville rockers Kings of Leon spin forlorn yarns that revel in high-plains drifting and deep-bottom grooves. The band's sixth album offers more rustic rock, boogie guitars, and howling vocals set alight by **Nathan Followill's** focused drumming, which, even more than on previous albums, centers on support and keeping that good groove. When he's allowed to stretch, as on "Coming Back Again," "Family Tree," and "Wait for Me," Followill erupts in explosive full-set combinations, slinky tom-centric beats, and staggered snare-drag assaults. A kind of shifty, low-end stomp appeal extends from his booming bass drum to his weathered-sounding snare, a mellow approach that's pure Southern soul. (RCA) **Ken Micallef**



GREGORY JAMES *CULT OF BEAUTY* The guitarist teams up with jam-master bassist Kai Eckhardt's Zeitgeist band for an excellent instrumental groove session.

Drummer **Deszon Claiborne** shines from his album-opening salvo on

Cult of Beauty, responsive to the music's leadings and settling into one serious pocket after another. Gregory James picks spots to engage in melodic interplay with the keys and with the ever-creative Kai Eckhardt, and Claiborne's jousting with the bassist is deliciously funky. Part legislator, part instigator, Claiborne has internalized the best of several of Miles Davis's drummers, such as the bold snap of Tony Williams and the swinging open-hat swagger of Al Foster, while navigating the 6/8 of "Freedom Om" and 9/8 of "Siren Song," and tenderly grounding the 11/8 ballad "As We Said." The beautifully recorded drums and patient, organic production bring some other Miles/Teo Macero brews to mind as well. (Valence)

Robin Tolleson



BRIAN HAAS/MATT CHAMBERLAIN *FRAMES* The studio drumming ace co-creates an atypically beautiful drums-and-piano album.

The drummer/piano player format is a little-explored niche; among the few examples that immediately come to mind are the Bill Bruford/Patrick Moraz recordings of the 1980s. But where that duo's vibe was

all about rhythmic pyrotechnics, Brian Haas and Matt Chamberlain's music hits the ears like warm wool mittens. Chamberlain's drums sound as if each head is covered with a thick towel, their dull thud allowing Haas's acoustic piano to ring out. Chamberlain delights in this Levon-meets-Ringo approach, allowing him to create burly beats ("Prism"), linear prog ("Of Many, One"), galloping groovers ("Drive"), and moments of undiluted stillness ("Death: An Observation"). (Royal Potato Family) **Ken Micallef**



DUMPSTAPHUNK *DIRTY WORD* Led by keyboardist/vocalist Ivan Neville, this revered New Orleans funk situation revels in stinky, bone-thumping, world-class groove.

Dumpstaphunk pays tribute to funk groundbreakers such as Parliament/Funkadelic and Sly and the Family Stone, but with an updated sound that's peppered with rock and second line. The nuclear driver is drummer **Nikki Glaspie**. Laying down hard-slammings yet finessed time, she'll flash fusion-grade chops at choice moments. And it doesn't hurt that she's a killer vocalist too. With a Beyoncé world tour under her belt, Glaspie joined Dumpstaphunk two years ago, and she's proved to be a catalyst. The band also includes Ian Neville on guitar and the surprising electric bass team of Tony Hall and Nick Daniels III, both of whom add vocals. When Glaspie kicks the two basses, it's a bottom-throbbing joy best experienced live. Though a disc can't truly contain these players, *Dirty Word* is a testament to the power of the ultimate nasty pocket. (Louisiana Red Hot) **Jeff Potter**

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CALIFORNIA TRANSIT AUTHORITY *SACRED GROUND*

Chicago's founding drummer reminds everyone exactly where his roots lie.

On the second release by the California Transit Authority, leader **Danny Seraphine** and crew lay as much claim to the musical beginnings of the legendary horn band as the original group itself, which has been without the drummer's services for over twenty years. The sound Seraphine helped create with his old bandmates really comes to mind on tracks like "Full Circle," featuring longtime Chicago vocalist Bill Champlin, while the instrumental "In the Kitchen" sounds like it could have been recorded with the Buddy Rich Big Band (an important Seraphine influence). Throughout these catchy jazz/rock and pop tunes, Seraphine's drumming is excellent and well recorded. The signature fills that kick off "The Real World" are front and center, before Danny switches up the time and lets guitarist Marc Bonilla and keyboardist Ed Roth show their stuff. This is certainly a *drum* record, but it's also a contemporary-sounding *song* record. You could easily imagine "Daydream Lover," for instance, being covered by a modern singer like the popular country artist Hunter Hayes—or, dare we say it, one of the many boy bands currently on the charts. Meanwhile, drummers will get off on the Porcaro/Purdie-influenced ballad "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know" and the up-tempo Michael Bublé vibe of "Strike." (Street Sense Records) **Billy Amendola**



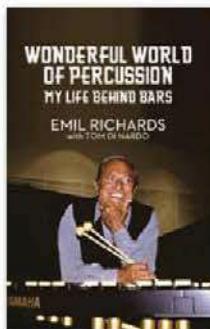
MARC CARY FOCUS TRIO *FOUR DIRECTIONS*

Though these individualistic musicians may offer "four directions," there is clearly one shared destination.

One of today's most original and innovative pianists, Marc Cary embraces the whole of jazz history as well as diverse "world" elements. Playing predominantly acoustic piano along with Rhodes and subtle synth touches, Cary shapes intriguing harmonies and captivating melodies over playful, complex grooves. **Sameer Gupta** shares Cary's love for Indian classical music. Gupta is a master of drumset and tabla, and his skills cross-pollinate. On the mesmerizing "Todi Blues," based on a traditional Indian raga, his overdubbed tabla enhances his drumming textures. On kit, he often eschews the typical "lead hand" on the ride or hi-hat, instead creating a tabla-like stream of alternating sounds that include rimclicks, rim taps, and multi-timbre snare hits. And on the hard swing of "Spectrum," Gupta drives with explosive sonic flurries. Bassists Burniss Travis and Rashaan Carter (who play together on one track) fertilize the organic whole. (Motéma Music) **Jeff Potter**

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If you've been to the movies at all during the past half century, you've likely heard Emil Richards play everything from stainless-steel mixing bowls (*Planet of the Apes*) to Super Balls on gongs (*Dances With Wolves*). Are you partial to the animated family Flintstone or Simpson? That's Richards playing xylophone on their soundtracks. In his long, illustrious career, the percussionist has played on thousands of TV and movie scores, recorded with more than 700 artists including Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, and negotiated the concept of "percussion doubling" with the studios. His page-turning memoir chronicles his life, the music he's made (one appendix lists the *dozens* of top drummers he's worked with), his friends (Emil introduced George Harrison to his future wife Olivia), his family, and even the food he enjoys. Richards reminisces about traveling the world with his beloved wife Celeste and collecting percussion instruments from every culture, and gives readers a behind-the-scenes peek at the soundtrack of his life. Fascinating stuff. (BearManor Media) **Andrea Byrd**



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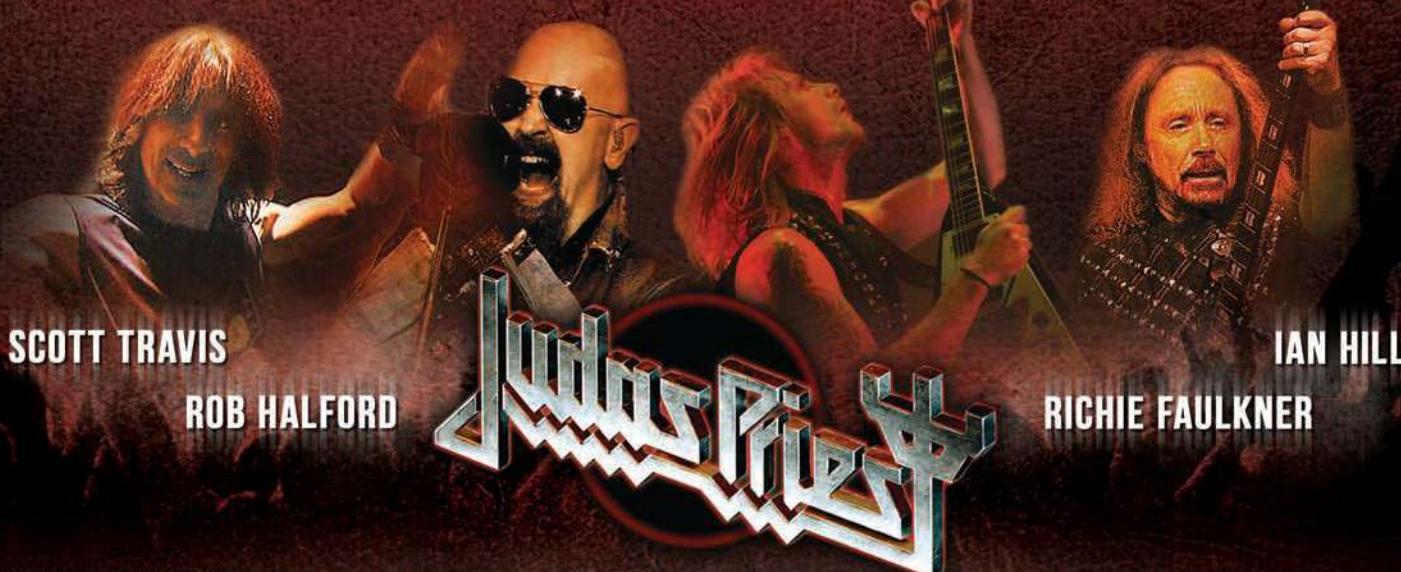
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2013 DCI World Championship Results

The 2013 drum corps season was one of the most competitive in recent memory; early-season contests included last year's silver-medalist Carolina Crown (from Fort Mill, South Carolina) touring



With a new look for its uniforms and drums, Carolina Crown won its first DCI World Championship in its twenty-four-year history.

the West Coast and trading victories with the fifteen-time (and 2012) DCI World Champion Blue Devils (from Concord, California) on the Devils' home turf. Those two corps were still neck and neck by the time championship week returned to Indianapolis this past August 8 through 10. The Blue Devils won the prelims, Crown won the semifinals, and by the finals more than 20,000 fans were on the edge of their seats at Lucas Oil Stadium, watching history being made as Carolina Crown captured its first title by only a quarter of a point.

"This is as good as anything that I've ever experienced," says Crown percussion arranger Thom Hannum, a member of the DCI Hall of Fame. What did the group's drums do to help push the corps from second in 2012 to first place? "We tried to be true to the integrity of the music,"

Hannum explains of the 2013 show "E=MC²," based on Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*.

"That's Crown's identity," Hannum continues. "That's our style. We had a lot of distance to cover this summer, and it was a bit of an uphill battle, but we kept to it. We're fortunate that the kids had an incredible attitude—totally exemplary. They were always ready to do the next thing we asked of them, and that made it possible for us to continue our progression during the last two weeks."

In addition to the tight race for the title, three drum lines traded caption victories all season: the twelve-time (and defending) drum champ Blue Devils (who won the silver medal), the ten-time high drum winner Santa Clara Vanguard (from Santa Clara, California), and the bronze-medalist Cadets (from Allentown,



Instead of the usual parking-lot warm-ups, corps in Indianapolis used the grassy areas of downtown's Military Park to prepare for the show in Lucas Oil Stadium. Pictured are the Genesis Drum & Bugle Corps from Texas (left) and the Concord Blue Devils B.

Pennsylvania), who eventually triumphed by winning the final three nights of competition in Indy to earn the Fred Sanford Best Percussion Performance Award for the seventh time in their history. So, what is Cadets percussion arranger and caption supervisor Colin McNutt's reaction to his first high drum victory as a staff member? "It's awesome!" he says, amid the cacophony of celebration on the field. "I'm happy for the kids, because they'll remember this forever.

"We were able to incorporate many different tempos into the show," McNutt explains of the Cadets' "Side by Side" program, featuring the music of Samuel Barber. "That allowed us to play a lot of flam literature and different rudimental things that we don't normally get a chance to do, because we're always running so fast. My favorite part of our drum show was the alternating flams. We did a lot of finger exercises so they could develop an evenness in their low-level technique."

With so many competitive drum lines this season, what did the Cadets do differently to win? "Honestly? Positive energy," McNutt says. "I thought about coaching psychology a little bit more this year. We did all the technical work in the winter, and then I tried to let the kids take charge of their own performance more. That helped us a lot."

Text and photos by Lauren Vogel Weiss



The Cadets' drum line won the Fred Sanford Best Percussion Performance Award for the seventh time since 1987.





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“It’s remarkably easy to play and sounds fantastic,” Roth says of his “#1” rig. “People go nuts for it. The only thing it can’t do is jump the fountains at Caesars—just like the real thing!”

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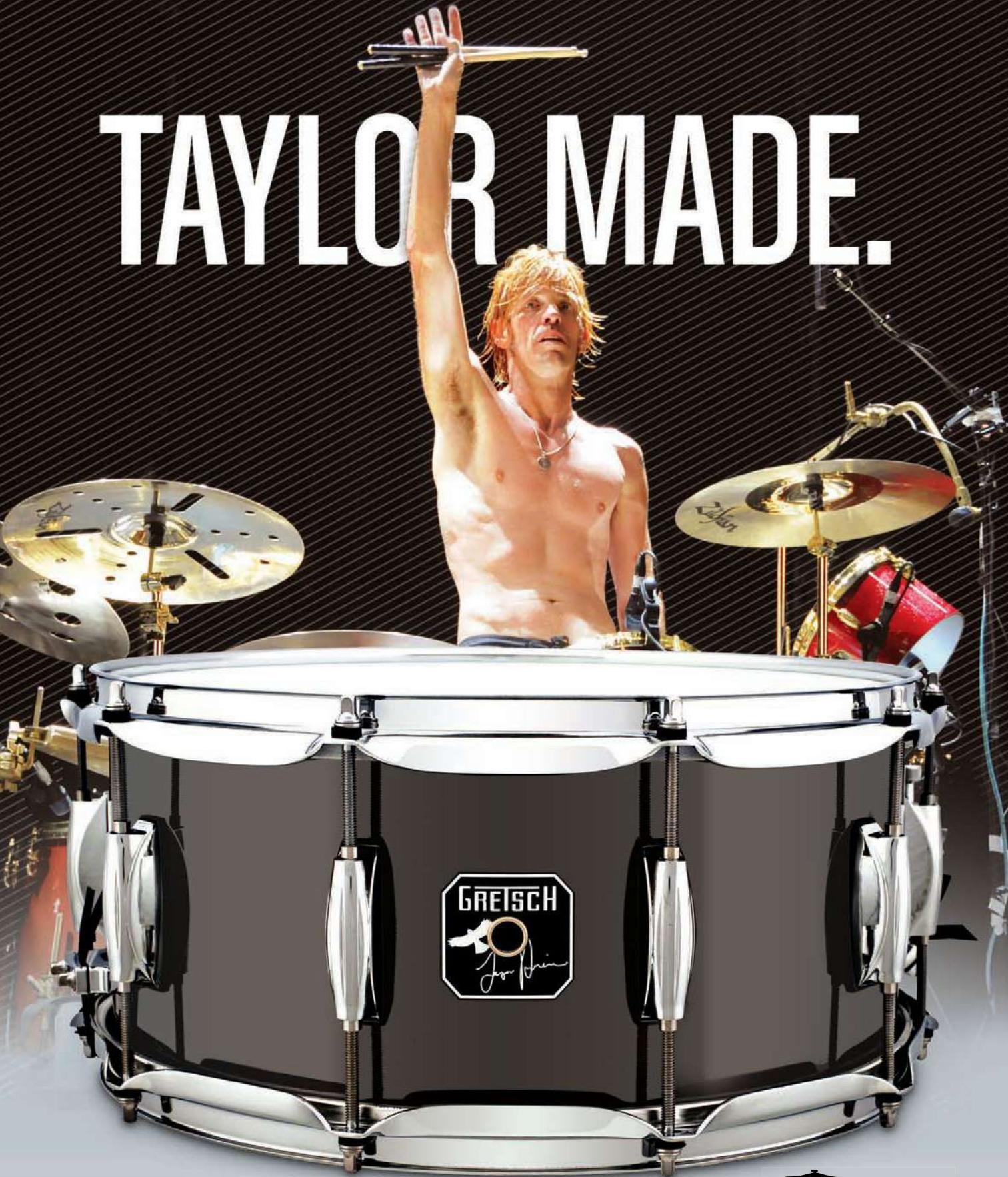
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