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DRUM MAGAZINE

MARCH 2014

The

50

Greatest Drummers of All Time

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by Ken Micallef

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Alex Rudinger by Ben Meyer

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The Greatest!

When John Lennon wrote the song "I'm the Greatest," he gave it to Ringo Starr to sing, feeling that his former Beatles bandmate could get away with such a bald-faced boast without anyone calling him an egomaniac—at least better than Lennon could! But in a way, John had nothing to be shy about; as the years passed, most observers would agree that both men in fact were the greatest at what they did. In life, the highest possible achievement is to become the best at what you love to do, and of all the pop musicians who ever lived, John Lennon and Ringo Starr could certainly make that claim.

When *Modern Drummer* set out to assemble a list of the fifty greatest drummers—from any era, in any style of music—we knew it was a pretty bold move. Can *one* drummer really be considered the greatest of all time? While thousands of readers jumped at the chance to let us know who their favorites were, a few suggested that there's no way to pick just one who's the greatest. While that argument has some merit, we still felt that the process could be not only great fun, but educational, and even historic. If a substantial number of the most educated drummers in the world had a hand in deciding the matter, then the exercise would have great validity.

At the *MD* offices, the anticipation preceding the final count was off the hook. I'm not going to give away the top name here, but you're only a page turn away from finding out for yourself who that is—and who the other forty-nine greatest drummers in history are. Taken together, it's a truly awe-inspiring collection of players, many of whose achievements we're not likely to witness again in our lifetimes.

We'd like to thank everyone who participated in *Modern Drummer's* 50 Greatest Drummers of All Time poll, and to give respect to every drummer who made the list—a historic achievement, no doubt, which you helped to make happen.

Enjoy the issue. It's a great one!



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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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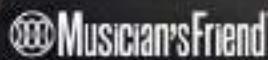
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READERS' PLATFORM



TONY THOMPSON AND THE POWER STATION

Thank you, and bravo, for the piece on Tony Thompson (Encore, November 2013). He definitely deserves an "encore." As a drummer who was and still is influenced by him, it's always great to see him recognized. More young drummers need to seek out his work. It

would improve their drumming lives greatly.

Although the second Power Station album was not a commercial success, Tony recorded some great grooves on that project. Another great track he did was "Love Injection" on Jody Watley's debut album—every bit the driving funk as what he played on the Madonna sessions. I wish we had more drummers like him today, but then again he was one of a kind, and I for one am very grateful.

DeHaven

THE GLORY OF THE ALBUM FORMAT

Kudos to Chris Brewer for the article "Deep Listening Makes for Deep Drumming" (First Person, November 2013). How truthful it is to listen to an album from start to finish, especially those *great* concept albums of the 1970s. At my age (fifty-seven) I'm thinking specifically about bands like Yes, Gentle Giant, Genesis, Led Zep,

Grand Funk Railroad, etc. While in art college in the mid-'70s I was introduced to jazz-rock fusion with bands such as Weather Report, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Miles Davis's "concept" work at that time, and, my all-time favorite, "if you could only pick one," stranded-on-a-desert-island album, Return to Forever's *Romantic Warrior*. Talk about *concept*. I hope that young drummers today will take the time and be inspired by listening to those great older albums. From beginning to end!

Steve Burch

Just wanted to say a huge hell-yeah to Chris Brewer's article in the November issue, "Deep Listening Makes for Deep Drumming." For the good of music it's time to actually sit down and listen to whole albums, whether they be new or old. Artists make albums for a reason—to tell a story. By listening to and buying whole albums, we are encouraging more creativity and depth in modern music rather than shallow one-hit songs. Thanks, Chris. Great article—thoroughly enjoyed it.

Trent Eacott



Chris Brewer

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UPDATE

MATT ABTS

Conjuring the best of the past with Gov't Mule

Whether smacking his tubs in Gov't Mule or in Planet of the Abts, his side project with Mule bassist Jorgen Carlsson and guitarist/keyboardist/vocalist T-Bone Andersson, Matt Abts gets a fat, deep drum sound that comes from years of experience and hard-won wisdom. "I don't hit that hard," Abts says. "You have to know how to draw the sound out of the drum. And I don't use any damping on the heads. On the bass drum I often go for the whole note, where the beater hits the drum and then I remove it—it's an old-school thing. On a faster song you have to dig in, but on a slower song it's easier to get that rebound off the head."

A no-nonsense musician whose personality informs his tasty drumming, Abts works a Pearl Reference set (6.5x14 wood or brass snare, 9x13 tom, 16x16 floor tom, 18x24 bass drum) and Sabian cymbals (15" Groove Hats, 18" and 19" HHX X-Treme crashes, 21" Medium ride). Abts' signature sound on Gov't Mule's latest, *Shout!*, varies from big and boomy to dry and intimate, depending on the track, but his sonic personality remains strong regardless of the mix. "I tune kind of high sometimes," Matt says. "I tune the floor tom up, but the snare has to have a crack to it."

Abts describes the *Shout!* track "Forsaken Savior" as a tribute to the Band's late, great drummer, Levon Helm. "Hopefully you can conjure a little Levon next time you listen to it," Matt says. "I usually play matched grip, but I played that whole song traditional, my tribute to Levon. He was the sweetest, most gracious person. He wanted me to play double drums with him at the Ramble [the popular jam series conducted at Helm's barn in upstate New York], but I never got the chance."

Abts shares credit for the vibe of his groove with Gov't Mule's guitarist, Warren Haynes. "Warren is a behind-the-beat kind of player too," the drummer says. "There's a lot to be said for long-term relationships like ours. And I go back to my influences: Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, and the jazz guys—Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Buddy Rich. I love that era of drumming, and how good the drums sounded back then." **Ken Micalef**

Anna Webber

OUT NOW



The John Lurie National Orchestra

The Invention of Animals (Billy Martin, G. Calvin Weston) ///

Transatlantic Kaleidoscope (Mike Portnoy) ///

Guardian Alien Spiritual Emergency (Greg Fox) ///

Lone Justice This Is Lone Justice: The

Vaught Tapes, 1983 (Don Heffington)

/// **Noturnall** Nocturnal Human Side

(Aquilaes Priester) /// **Bayside Cult**

(Chris Guglielmo) /// **Paul Rodgers**

The Royal Sessions (Steve Potts,

James Robertson Sr.) /// **Danilo**

Pérez Panama 500 (Adam Cruz,



Brian Blade) /// **Volcán** Volcán (Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez,

Giovanni Hidalgo) /// **Periphery** Clear (Matt Halpern) ///

Against Me! Transgender Dysphoria Blues (Atom Willard) ///

Adrenaline Mob Men of Honor (A.J. Pero)

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

Josh Marunde (Pop Evil) has joined Pearl's artist roster.

Carl Palmer is using OrigAudio signature headphones.



Giovanni Angelini

Vito Rezza (5 After 4) has joined the Paiste artist family.

Jesper Kristensen (Wilson Phillips, Brett Dennen, William and the Earth Harp), **David Haynes** (Till Brönner), **Brandon Mullins** (Beartooth), **Billy Joe Freeman** (Dustin Lynch), **Luca Scorziello**, **Martell Beigang** (Dick Brave and the Backbeats), **Martin Kruemmling**, and **Rob Brown** (the Stellas) are using Vic Firth products.



Rodger Carter (Rick Springfield), **John Otto** (Limp Bizkit), **Christian Eigner** (Depeche Mode), **Leo Crabtree** (the Prodigy), **Jonathan Joseph** (Jeff Beck), **Steve DiStanislao** (CSN, David Gilmour), **Karl Brazil** (Robbie Williams), **Moose** (Bullet for My Valentine), **Scott Underwood** (Train), **Mark Richardson** (Skunk Anansie, Little Angels, Feeder), and **Scott Phillips** (Alter Bridge) are using Porter & Davies silent drum-monitoring systems.



Sean Fuller (Florida Georgia Line), **Garrett Goodwin** (Carrie Underwood), **Jeff Marino** (Darius Rucker), **Billy Mason** (Tim McGraw), **Kent Slucher** (Luke Bryan), and **Rich Redmond** (Jason Aldean) are using Cympad cellular-foam cymbal washers.



BRITTANY HARRELL

Attacking Veera's pop-punk with surgical precision

On Veera's latest effort, *Growing Up Is Killing Me*, Brittany Harrell assaults her kit with speed, power, and deadly exactitude. "We did preproduction for a week before recording," Harrell says, "so I had a good amount of time to get my parts the way I thought they should be, and to make sure the intensity of the hits was good."

Mission accomplished. Though Veera's songs are filled with copious starts and stops, half-time breakdowns, and double bass blasts, the drumming always comes across as lean and mean. Harrell cites Blink-182 and New Found Glory as major influences—though it was a decidedly non-punk band that got the ball rolling for her. "When I was nine years old," she recalls, "Hanson was massive, and 'MMMBop' was everywhere. And drummer Zac Hanson was really close to my age. I saw them on TV and thought, *If he's that young and he can do that, I can too*. Then later I heard Blink-182's 'Adam's Song,' and it completely changed the way I viewed playing drums. Travis Barker is playing on the rims and the toms. Up until that point I thought verses had to be on the hi-hat and choruses had to be on the ride. It blew my mind and made me want to get more serious about the drums."

And *serious* is certainly the appropriate description of Harrell's work with Veera, whose live performances require more than a little stamina. "I try to practice on a pad before shows to build up my hands and endurance," Harrell shares. "If you don't warm up, on the first song you'll be shaky, and maybe by the middle of the set you'll be in your element. I warm up so that I don't have to worry about that—I'm already there."

"I always play my heart out," Harrell adds. "It makes me want to push the envelope harder. And you will never get worse from practice. I never want to let anyone down who's coming to see me. I have to be at the top of my game every night." **Ilya Stemkovsky**

ON TOUR



Maya Miller with the Pack A.D. // George "Spanky" McCurdy with Lady Gaga // Matt Nicholls with Bring Me the Horizon // Jeremy Spencer with Five Finger Death Punch // James Kottak with Scorpions // Longineu Parsons III with Yellowcard // Francois Comtois with Young the Giant // Dustin Boltjes with Skeletonwitch // Adam Carson with AFI // Stephanie Bailey with Black Angels and Roky Erickson

NEWS

RICH REDMOND'S "CRASH COURSE FOR SUCCESS" DRUMMER'S WEEKEND

This past November, Jason Aldean drummer Rich Redmond headed up a weekend of drumming "education, inspiration, and entertainment." Highlights included clinics by Troy Luccketta (Tesla) and Jim Riley (Rascal Flatts) and a studio-drummer panel featuring Nick Buda (Taylor Swift), Ken Coomer (ex-Wilco), Tony Morra (Downtown Batterie), and Tommy Harden (Reba). Producer Michael Knox conducted a Q&A session focusing on the creative process and what producers are looking for in drummers; Nashville's 3 Kings rhythm section (Jason Aldean, Thompson Square) discussed concepts related to performing in a rhythm section and building a career; Jim Handley ran a class on tuning; and students got to sit in with an all-star rhythm section featuring bassist Pete Iannacone (Joss Stone) and guitarist John Foster (the Consolers), and to perform with recording artists John Eddie and Adam Fears at a concert at Douglas Corner in Nashville. Redmond focused on his CRASH philosophy for success in the music business, plus subjects like the Nashville number system, song charting, overdubbing percussion, and creating click tracks. Door prizes and giveaways were provided by DW, Sabian, Pro-Mark, Remo, Roland, KickPort, Gon Bops, Audio-Technica, Cympad, Black Widow, Carmichael Throne, Auralex, Kelly SHU, Great Leather, Hansenfütz, and Gator Cases, among other companies, and all proceeds collected from admission benefited the W.O. Smith Music School in Nashville.



MORGAN ÅGREN DOCUMENTARY

The new documentary *Morgan Ågren's Conundrum: A Percussive Misadventure* features guest appearances by Mats Öberg, Devin Townsend, Marco Minnemann, Mike Keneally, Dweezil Zappa, Tosin Abasi, Thomas Lang, Danny Carey, Brendon Small, Dave Elitch, Simon Phillips, and Joe Travers, among others. It's available on DVD from MutantMall.com and for digital download through Vimeo On Demand.

TREVOR LAWRENCE JR. RELEASES NEW PLUG-IN AND BOOK

Trevor Lawrence Jr. (Dr. Dre, Herbie Hancock, Stevie Wonder, 2011 Modern Drummer Festival) has recently released a plug-in, Sound Squad, as well as an e-book, *Me Too! The Musicians Pocket Guide to Endorsements*.



JOAN JETT & THE BLACKHEARTS DRUMMER LEE CRYSTAL DIES

Lee Crystal, the drummer on Joan Jett's signature tune "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" and her cover of Tommy James' "Crimson and Clover," among other tracks, died recently from complications with multiple sclerosis. Crystal was featured in the January 1984 issue of *Modern Drummer* magazine.



CARMINE APPICE LAUNCHES ROCKER RECORDS

Legendary Vanilla Fudge/Rod Stewart drummer Carmine Appice has launched Rocker Records with the release of four titles, *Bogert/Appice & Friends*, TNA's *Live in Europe* (featuring Appice and guitarist Pat Travers), and *Live in Japan* and *Live in the USA* by Carmine's post-Vanilla Fudge group Cactus. Expect more Appice-related material to come in the near future.





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RYAN VAN POEDEROOYEN



A drummer has access to so many pieces of gear that make up his or her drumkit and personal sound. But there are always those special few pieces that really stand out. My biggest standout piece and a big part of my sound is my Pearl Reference Brass 6.5x14 snare drum. Of all the snare drums I've played, I've never come across one with more depth, tuning versatility, body, and overall sonic awareness. It's been on more of my studio recordings than any other snare.

Right up there in the ranks of must-have gear would be my Sabian 20" AA Rock ride. I've played this series of ride cymbal for over twenty years. I love a ride with a great bell that cuts and has a meaty tone to it, yet when I play the outer part of the ride, dynamically, it still maintains a smooth sound for all styles of music. I find the name Rock ride a little deceiving, as this is a very versatile cymbal.

Lastly, what's a drummer without his drumsticks! I've been playing Regal Tip sticks forever. When they came out with the 2BX model, I found the ultimate match for

my drumming style. Its weight is very balanced, and its extra length is perfect for the way my kit is set up. And most of all it's very durable and versatile for the band I play with live and for the various sessions I record.

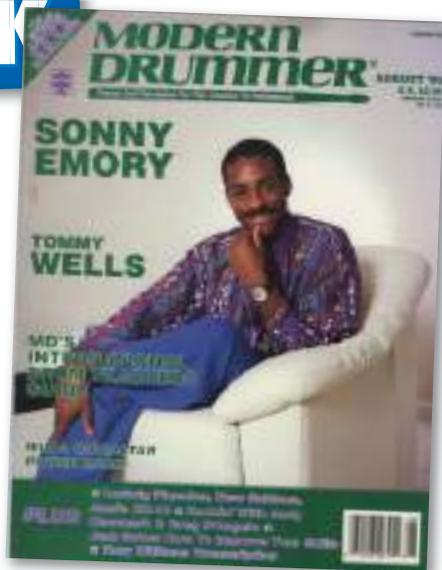
Versatility is the name of the game for me in must-have gear, and the products I mentioned are exactly that.



BACK *Through the* STACK

In August 1990, we asked **Sonny Emory**, who was working with Earth, Wind & Fire at the time, about his approach to drum tuning.

When I tune my toms, I try to tune them to a definite pitch. I listen for actual pitches when I'm tuning my drums, using a triad for my rack toms. The reason I say I try to tune to a definite pitch is because a drum is not a definite-pitch instrument, so it can be difficult to get it exactly in tune. My 8" tom is tuned to an A, the 10" tom is tuned to an E, the 12" tom is tuned as close as possible to a C, and my 14" tom is tuned to an A, an octave down from the 8" tom. That spreads the drums out better for me. On tape, you can really hear when the drums are spread well, tone-wise. If they're tuned too close in pitch, you can't really distinguish between drums. It also helps me convey more melodic ideas when I'm soloing. The only exception I make to this tuning method is when I'm touring with Earth, Wind & Fire. For that gig, I tend to tune everything a bit higher, so the drums can cut through all the amplification on stage.



To read the entire Sonny Emory feature—and all the other great material from the August 1990 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.



Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

Is Death Metal Dangerous?



I'm a twenty-one-year-old drummer, and I play in a death metal band. I also do the vocals on many of the songs. We wear makeup and costumes at shows, and we've developed a solid fan base. My problem is that my parents are freaked out by the music, and since I still live with them it has caused a lot of tension in the house. How should I handle this?

Manny

Since its inception, rock 'n' roll has been feared by many. There were record burnings, some people called it "devil's music," and Elvis Presley was often shown only from the waist up during performances on TV. It was thought that his hip gyrations were too sexual and would have a powerful negative influence on the younger generation.

In 1990, the band Judas Priest was involved in a civil trial where it was alleged that the group's music was responsible for the shootings of two young men. The plaintiff claimed that the subliminal message "do it" was embedded in the song "Better by You, Better Than Me" and had influenced the men to attempt suicide. The trial lasted about a month, but the suit was dismissed.

So ends my history lesson intended to illustrate that rock has come under scrutiny since long before the genre of death metal emerged. Let's move on to your specific problem.

Have you asked your parents what they object to specifically in the music you're playing? In that sometimes the lyrics in death metal songs espouse Satanism, extreme acts of violence, and the occult, I can see how your parents could be "freaked out" by your involvement in this genre.

The bigger question, however, is where are you at with the music you're currently performing? Let's explore this by looking at another art form—vampire movies. When Actor A lands a gig as the lead vampire in a film, the first thing he does is research his role and begin prepping his performance. He immerses himself in the process, watching how other actors have portrayed vampires on film. This is similar to when you first learned blast beats and when you started studying the lyrics to your favorite songs.

Let's imagine that the director of the movie wants an old-school-type vampire, replete with black cape, white face makeup, and long, sharp incisors. When filming starts, the actor begins his day by having a makeup artist create the look. This is identical to when you apply makeup or put on your costume before a gig.

After a day of filming, Actor A has his makeup removed,

changes back into his street clothes, and goes home to a "normal" life. He eats dinner and maybe plays a video game, looks over the script, and eventually goes to bed. He gets up the next day and repeats the whole process until filming is complete. Soon after, he and his agent begin looking for other roles.

Let's pretend that Actor B gets cast as the lead in a different vampire film. He goes through research and then begins filming. After his makeup is removed, however, he doesn't leave the role, and he starts to take his character home. He begins to wear all black and spends his evenings reading about vampires. After filming ends, he is still so enamored with the role that he comes to believe that he truly *is* a vampire and that a blood lust will soon overtake him. As absurd as that may sound, there have been purported cases of actors getting stuck in character, causing a negative ripple effect in their lives away from the set.

Take a minute to examine where your stage persona ends and the real you begins. How closely do you identify with the character you portray on stage? You mention that your band has a good following. During breaks or after the show, do you stay in character as "death metal drummer/singer" or does more of the everyday you come forward when you speak with fans? It's important that you're honest with yourself in terms of how closely you identify with everything connected with death metal, including the lyrics and what they mean.

I don't judge how individuals choose to lead their lives. If death metal is all encompassing in your life, then perhaps it's time to move out of your parents' house if they object to your involvement. Certainly you run the risk of losing the relationship you have with your folks. But at twenty-one, you're an adult and you should be free to make adult decisions.

If you are able to resume a "normal" existence between gigs (like Actor A), then the conflict with your parents may be an easy fix. Simply assure them that it's an act and that you don't subscribe to the subjects that they fear within the genre. Humans will always be drawn to the unusual, the outrageous, and the macabre, and death metal has done well to capitalize on that. But the difference that makes the difference is whether you see death metal as a way of life or simply a part you play in a production.



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.



TAMA

SILVERSTAR HYPER-DRIVE BIRCH DRUMSET

by Eric Novod

Tama and birch go back a long way. As stated on tama.com, "Back in the '70s, Tama was the first major drum company to bring birch into prominence in the workplace. At the time, most other drum companies used a myriad of wood materials, including gum, poplar, mahogany, maple, beech, etc. Few shells

Professional features, custom-type sizes, and quality birch shells make this kit one of the best deals of the year.

were comprised of 100% anything, much less a single wood choice." Tama has launched many successful birch lines since then, including the Superstar, Granstar, Crestar, and Starclassic series. Most recently, it introduced the Silverstar line, a smartly constructed, great-sounding, and affordable option for an all-birch drumkit.

WHAT WE GOT

Up for review is a six-piece Limited Edition Silverstar Hyper-Drive Birch set in indigo sparkle finish. Included is an 18x22 bass drum with a tom mount, 6.5x10 and 7x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and a 7x13 snare. The "limited edition" aspect of the kit includes the shallow rack toms and deeper, smaller snare, which differ from what's offered in the rest of the Silverstar line.

OVERALL SOUND

Tama describes birch as sounding solid, punchy, focused, tight, cutting, pre-EQ'ed, rich, raw, powerful, and full bodied. You really do find most of those traits in the Silverstar Hyper-Drive Birch. But what's really interesting about these drums is their construction using the new Star-Mount system, which has minimal points of contact with the shell to help maximize resonance. Combine this feature with low-mass lugs and shorter shell sizes, and you wind up with lighter, less encumbered drums that have a slightly sharper and faster attack. It's a clever update, and I imagine many beginner/intermediate players would prefer this more direct sound to the denser "studio ready" tone often associated with birch kits.

DRUM BY DRUM

The 18x22 bass drum was punchy and powerful and worked within a wide tuning range. Its medium-long decay sang best at medium or medium-low tension. I tried Evans coated EMAD and clear EQ2 heads on it and preferred the coated EMAD, as it rounded out the punch a bit for pop/funk applications. The hoops are somewhat lightweight, so be careful not to bang them up in transport.

All four of these toms had that cool, dark, EQ'ed birch sound. Given their shallower depths, the rack toms sounded great when tuned anywhere but very low. I preferred pushing them to a medium-high range, while the floor toms were left at a natural medium tuning. I also much preferred the sound of the toms (especially the floors) with clear or coated 2-ply heads as

opposed to single-ply versions. The toms were easy to tune individually and in relation to one another, and the compact sizes and mounting system allowed for virtually any setup configuration.

The matching eight-lug, 6-ply, 6 mm, 7x13 snare was surprisingly lightweight. Its sound was snappy yet controlled, and it had a fun low-end bark. It seemed to work best at medium to medium-high tunings, but it was versatile and naturally fell between the tonal range of the 12" rack tom and 14" floor tom, which is exactly where I'd want it to live.

The last thing I'll point out, which is one of those "every kit from now on should have these" details, is the swiveling eyebolt used on the tom-mount system. These can be adjusted from side to side so that the tightening bolts are never in the way of anything else on your kit, regardless of how or where you decide



to position the toms. For setup flexibility and ease of use, this is a clear standout feature.

CONCLUSION

Silverstar Hyper-Drive Birch drums are a welcome addition to the market. Affordable birch shells are great for the working drummer or hobbyist, and the compact sizes and fast, articulate sounds

from this specific kit should especially excite players in the pop, R&B, and gospel communities. For most rehearsal, gigging, and live-recording scenarios, there are loads of upsides. Arrange these toms low and flat, crank them up, and have fun! The list price is \$1,218.74, with a street price of around \$800.

tama.com



MASTERS OF MAPLE

BLACK UGLY, BELL BRASS, AND COPPER SNARES

by Michael Dawson

Founded by the Southern California-based drum tech/builder Sahir Hanif in 2002, Masters of Maple began as a custom company that manufactured its own ply shells,

Paying homage to some of the most coveted snares in the world, these high-powered drums satisfy the demands of working pros and discerning tone aficionados alike.

with a special emphasis on exotic timbers. These days the company also offers a range of metal-shell drums, including the 6.5x14 snares we have for review here: the vintage-inspired nickel-over-brass Black Ugly and the super-hefty, cast Bell Brass and Copper.

BLACK UGLY

Masters of Maple's take on the highly coveted nickel-over-brass shell begins with a rolled 1.2 mm sheet of high-grade German brass that's brazed for optimal stability. The shell is then torched to "ugly it up" and create a one-of-a-kind patina finish. The Black Ugly comes standard with 2.5 mm brass triple-flange hoops but is also available with heavy-gauge single-flange brass or triple-flange copper hoops. (We were sent versions with triple-flange brass and copper hoops.) You can choose between vintage-style brass beavertail and solid-brass tube lugs, and the drums are offered with eight or ten lugs. Trick Multi-Step throw-offs and twenty-strand snappy snares are standard. The edges are folded over to 45 degrees.

When asked about the concept behind the Black Ugly, Hanif explains, "Many artists and producers are in love with the drums of yesteryear. However, because of many factors, these drums were so inconsistent. I set out to capture that legendary tone, and by incorporating my perception and manufacturing, the Black Ugly was born." Nickel-over-brass snares are the choice for many drummers because they're super-versatile, possessing warm but bright and open tones that can be melded to fit any particular sound, depending on head choice, tuning, muffling, and playing technique.

We tested the two Black Ugly drums we received for review (a 6.5x14 with brass hoops and tube lugs and a 6.5x14 with copper hoops and beavertail lugs) alongside a mass-produced black-nickel-over-brass drum, and while the basic sonic characteristics remained consistent with all three, the Black Uglys possessed more of everything—more volume, more sustain, more power, more tone, more tuning sweet spots.... The overtones were also better balanced throughout the entire tuning range, which meant the Uglys required less muffling.

The sonic differences between the Black Ugly with beavertail lugs



Black Ugly with copper hoops



Bell Brass



Copper

and copper hoops and the one with tube lugs and brass hoops were minor, with the copper hoops adding a slightly softer attack. The version with brass hoops had a sharper attack. Both drums had a big, full tone, supreme snare sensitivity, and a very wide tuning range. For working drummers desiring that classic nickel-over-brass sound, only with more power and dependability, get your hands on a Black Ugly; it's the real deal. The street price is \$850.

BELL BRASS AND COPPER

Bell-brass snares are all the rage right now, with rare '80s models garnering tons of praise from top studio and touring drummers for their powerhouse sound, while collectors are dishing out thousands of dollars to own one. To capitalize on this ballooning market, several manufacturers have released new bell-brass drums, but not all shells are the same. Some are cut from a pipe, while others—like Masters of Maple's—are more true to the original and are cast in molds.

Masters of Maple's 6.5x14 Bell Brass features a super-heavy (18.5 pounds) 3 mm solid brass shell, with chrome-over-brass hoops and solid brass tube lugs, a Trick Multi-Step throw-off, and PureSound thirty-strand wires. The shell is torched similarly to the Black Ugly to give the drum a well-worn appearance. Whereas the rolled-brass Black Ugly's sound can be characterized as being open, wide, rich, and nuanced, the Masters of Maple Bell Brass had a more precise and more robust tone, and it was very powerful. Whether tuned high and tight or low and fat, it cut right through the mix with a jackhammer-like attack, clean and controlled overtones, and a short sustain. It's a straight-to-the-point snare

sound that would work just as well on a big stage battling it out with Marshall stacks as it would in the studio under the scrutiny of high-end microphones.

Unique to Masters of Maple is the Copper shell. Cast in the same molds as the Bell Brass, these 6.5x14 drums share the same basic features (3 mm shell, chrome-over-brass lugs and hoops, PureSound wires, and Trick Multi-Step throw-off). Since copper is softer than brass (brass is made by blending copper with zinc to provide hardness), the Copper had a spongier tone than the Bell Brass, which could prove to be more appealing to players who want the added power that a cast-metal shell provides but who prefer the softer feel and more open sound of a thinner rolled shell. The Copper had more than enough presence to stand up to the most aggressive playing situations, along with a slightly wider and more complex tone that bridged the gap between the Bell Brass and the Black Ugly. These cast-shell snares aren't cheap (list price is \$2,000), but they possess a level of power, precision, and punch that simply can't be found in many others.

mdrums.com

ECENTRIC SYSTEMS

QUICK TORQUE BASS DRUM PEDAL CAM

by Michael Dawson

In the 1980s, Eccentric Systems developed a new cam for bass drum pedals, called the Eccentric Drive, which went on to become a standard component on many brands' offerings, including DW's popular 9000 series. The latest development from the company is the Quick Torque cam, designed to replace the spring arm on your favorite pedal for increased speed.

The concept behind the Quick Torque cam, according to the Eccentric website, is that it "reduces the pressure required to push the pedal down, while multiplying the return force generated by the return spring." The company claims that this new cam returns the beater 30 percent faster, with less spring tension.

The Quick Torque is easy to install; simply remove the existing spring and spring arm from your pedal, attach the new cam with the included Allen wrench, and replace the spring. I was able to get a DW 5000 series pedal working with the Eccentric cam in

less than five minutes, and it was just as easy to reinstall the original parts afterward. The Quick Torque has two points of adjustment, both of which are controlled with an Allen-wrench screw. One adjustment changes the beater angle, and the other controls a lever that extends out from the backside of the cam to press on the chain that wraps around the cam. The farther you extend the arm, the more torque (i.e., speed) you get. Eccentric Systems suggests that you back off the spring tension on your pedal to the loosest possible setting and then use the torque-adjustment screw to dial in the desired amount of speed.

When using the Quick Torque cam on the DW 5000 series pedal,

Looking to get extra speed from your favorite bass drum pedal? Try the new Quick Torque cam. It works!



I noticed a considerable increase in speed, in terms of how quickly the beater accelerated toward the drumhead. This made fast 32nd-note doubles easier to execute, and less overall force was required to set the beater into motion. I personally prefer a more powerful—rather than faster—stroke from my bass drum pedal. But for highly technical drumming styles (fusion, metal, electronica), the Quick Torque definitely makes rapid rhythms easier to play. The list price is \$40 for a single cam and \$80 for two cams for double pedals.

eccentricsystems.com



CRESCENT

HAPTIC SERIES CYMBALS

by Michael Dawson

Crescent's new Haptic series was developed for world music artist Jamey Haddad, who wanted cymbals that he could play with his bare hands as well as with sticks. (See Haddad's Setting

Designed especially for world percussionist Jamey Haddad, Haptics provide dark, earthy tones for hand drummers and drumset players.

Sights feature in the February 2014 issue for more insight into the development of these cymbals.) The series comprises 16" and 18" riveted Hand Chinas (\$400 and \$470), 16" and 18" Hand crashes (\$380 and \$450), and unusually shaped 16" and 18" Resonators (\$420 and \$490). All of these thin, heavily hammered cymbals are unlathed for dry, earthy tones. Let's take a closer look at each.

HAND CHINA

Haptic Hand Chinas are the most "normal" cymbals in the series. They are thin in weight but firm in feel, and they feature rivets all the way around the outer edge except for a few inches where you would strike the cymbal. This little detail is great for hand drummers who might be apprehensive about smacking a sizzle cymbal with bare hands for fear of snagging a finger on one of the rivets. Sonically, these Chinas had a dark and dry tone, and the rivets added a lot of pleasing hiss. The cymbals responded quickly and fully to barehand strikes, yet they could put out a nice, aggressive accent when punched harder with sticks. The 18" Hand China also provided a complex, articulate ride sound without the sizzle overwhelming the stick attack. The 16" had a bit more snarl, and it worked best as an accent cymbal.

HAND CRASH

Haptic 16" and 18" Hand crashes are very thin and wobbly, and they opened up nicely when struck at any dynamic with any implement. They had a short sustain, so they burst on impact

but got out of the way quickly, and I could get some clean, useful articulation when hitting them on the bow with small-tip sticks. The crash sound was dark, low pitched, and moody, and the ride sound was dry and earthy. Striking the bell brought out a slightly brighter tone, plus a considerable amount of wash. The vibe of these crashes was very dramatic, even when I barely touched the cymbals with fingers or mallets.

RESONATOR

For drummers and percussionists who crave more unusual cymbal sounds, Crescent offers the Haptic Resonator, which is an ultra-thin, hand-hammered model that's so flexible it droops on the stand. (Salvador Dalí would've dug this surreal-looking instrument.) The extra flex causes it to wobble a lot when played, which looks cool and creates an audio tremolo effect. The Resonators also had more trashiness than the Hand crashes. They were surprisingly dry and articulate for riding and also quite responsive to quiet swells played with the fingers. You can create more extreme special-effects sounds by bending or muting them with one hand/arm while striking them with the other. I wouldn't go to these cymbals for every gig, but in softer acoustic situations with a hybrid drumset/percussion setup, they would sound much more interesting than a typical 16" or 18" thin crash.

crescentcymbals.com



ZYMÖL

SOLO SPRAY CLEANER AND GLAZE

by Michael Dawson

Zymöl, a leading manufacturer of automotive-care products for the past thirty years, recently released a series of cleaners for musical instruments. The one specially formulated for drums is called Solo. This unique spray differs from most other cleaners and polishes in that it's made—in Zymöl's factory in Florida—from all-natural ingredients, including carnauba sap, springwater, avocado oil, coconut oil, and propolis, which is a resin-like substance derived from honeybees.

For eco-friendly drummers, Solo is the perfect product to remove dirt, dust, fingerprints, duct tape residue, and any other gunk that has built up on a drum's finish. All you have to do is shake the bottle, spray it evenly on the shell, let it stand for fifteen to twenty seconds, and then wipe it off with a microfiber towel. (Don't use paper towels or coarse fabrics, as they can scratch the finish.)

We tested Solo on three very dirty surfaces: a set of acrylic drums from the '70s, a natural-finish mahogany snare from the

'50s, and a chrome-plated steel snare from the early '80s. None of the drums had been cleaned since I'd acquired them, and each had a varying degree of residue. The acrylic had gotten cloudy

An all-natural drum cleaner that works as well as other harsher products? Yes, please.

over the years, and Solo did much to restore the shells to some of their original luster. The mahogany snare, which was rescued from a Dumpster, was covered in dirt and soot, with the finish cracking in various places. I wouldn't think to clean this drum with a more abrasive product, but given that Solo is made from natural ingredients, I gave it a shot. Again, I was very impressed with how well it was able to remove the gunk and bring some nice shine back to the old lacquer finish. The steel snare had tons of tape glue on the shell, and Solo removed all of it, as well as decades-old fingerprints and tarnish, with little effort, and when I was done the chrome looked practically brand new. I don't clean my drums often, but when I do in the future, it'll be with Solo. The list price is \$24 per eight-ounce bottle.

zymolmusic.com



Dunnett

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YAMAHA

DTX562K DRUMSET

by Michael Dawson

Yamaha made a smart move by offering its three more reasonably priced drumset configurations in the DTX502 series. The most affordable option, the DTX522K, comes with three rubber tom

A no-fuss setup, soft and playable pads, and dozens of useful sounds make this one of the best mid-price e-kits around.

pads, three-zone hi-hat and cymbal pads, a kick tower, and the white-silicone DTX-PAD snare. The middle option, the DTX532K, features the same toms, cymbals, and snare as the 522K but with the upgraded RHH135 hi-hat that fits on a standard Yamaha hi-hat stand (included). The top-level 502 series kit, the DTX562K, replaces the rubber tom pads with XP70 DTX-PADS.

All three kits come with a tube rack, L-arm mounts for the toms, a standard Yamaha tom arm for the snare, and two cymbal arms. (The 522K comes with a third cymbal arm for the hi-hat, instead of the regular stand included with the 532K and 562K.) All three kits also feature the user-friendly DTX502 module. We were sent a DTX562K for review.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The 562K comes in two large boxes. One contains the rack, module, and cymbal arms, and the other holds all the pads, wires, and hi-hat stand. The rack is very simple to set up. You just have to attach the legs to the sides and then attach the sides to the center section. The clamps are made of plastic, so they're a bit stiff to operate, but with a little finagling I was able to fully assemble the rack in less than five minutes.

The DTX-PADS attach to the rack via L-arms (toms) and a standard Yamaha mount (snare). The brackets for these arms are prepositioned on the rack, so it took only a few more minutes to get the drum pads into a comfortable spot. (The brackets are fully adjustable if you need to move things around.)

The three-zone cymbal pads and hi-hat require special brackets to keep them in place on the included arms and stand, so they took a little longer to get into position. The module also requires a special bracket (included) to connect it to the rack, but thankfully Yamaha replaced the Phillips-head module-mounting

screws with thumbscrews, which made this a much easier, tool-free process. The same goes with the KP65 kick tower, which comes in two parts that connect using similar thumbscrews.

Yamaha also supplied a clearly marked wire snake for connecting the pads to the module, so that final step took no time. The full assembly, from unboxing to powering up, required about twenty minutes, and I expect that subsequent teardowns and setups would take even less time.

HOW'S IT FEEL?

Yamaha's top-shelf electronic kits, in the DTX700 and DTX900 series, are designed to play and feel as much like acoustic drumsets as possible, but they carry a high price tag (listing for upwards of \$8,700). For the 502 series, the company wanted to retain as much of the comfort factor as it could, while bringing the price down to a more manageable level. (The 522K lists for \$2,200, the 532K is \$2,450, and the 562K is \$3,255.) These still aren't "cheap" kits, so we expected the 562K to feel like a professional instrument—solid, comfortable, and sturdy. And it definitely did, albeit in a smaller and more compact configuration.

From the bottom up, the KP65 kick tower is the same trigger Yamaha has been using for its electronic kits since the earlier DTXTREME and DTXPRESS series. It's a small kick, with just enough playing surface to accommodate the twin beaters of a double pedal, but it was sturdy and solid, with a soft feel that was pretty close to that of a medium-tension drum.

The XP80 three-zone snare pad is 8" in diameter and has a raised rubber rim with separate triggers for rimshots and rimclicks (or whatever else you decide to assign to those zones). The main playing surface is made of textured cellular silicone, so it has a rough feel that's reminiscent of a coated drumhead. The pad also incorporates a free-floating design that increases sensitivity while eliminating cross talk (i.e., sounds misfiring when you play other pads). The XP80 is quieter than a rubber practice pad, and it triggered flawlessly. In fact, none of the drum pads, including the single-zone 7" XP70 toms, required any adjustments within the module; they worked perfectly from the onset.

The two cymbal pads included in the 562K are the 13" three-zone (edge, bow, and bell) PCY135. These are designed to

react similarly to acoustic cymbals, and they were fairly accurate in tracking my playing. I found that the bell triggered best when hit with the shank of the stick rather than the tip, and the choke feature functioned as well as any I've experienced.

The RHH135 hi-hat attaches to a modified clutch, so it moves up and down on a pull rod, and it comes with a base assembly that sits on the cup of the stand. This design offers a realistic feel, but the RHH135 is a bit heavier than most acoustic cymbals, so you'll want to tighten the pedal spring accordingly. The trigger also tracked my playing quite accurately, from closed tip strokes to open shank hits and everything in between.

HOW'S IT SOUND?

The DTX502 module comes with fifty preset kits, and aside from a few extraneous vocal samples and somewhat cheesy pad loops, all comprise very useful sounds, from the all-purpose Maple Custom to several classic drum machine kits (Hexagon, Beat Box8, and Beat Box9) and the hard-hitting Metal Kit, which smartly replaces the hi-hat foot-chick sound with a second bass drum sample.

The module also comes with sixty

songs, which are fun for play-along practice. There are forty-nine kicks, forty-eight snares, seventy-seven toms, fifty-eight cymbals, twenty-three hi-hats, 128 percussion samples, and more than a hundred special effects, as well as adjustable reverb, so you should have no problem finding sounds to spark your inspiration.

The biggest sacrifice that I found with this more affordably priced module was in nuance, offering not-quite-realistic cymbal dynamics and more machine-gun-like tom/snare sounds during rapid-fire patterns than what you get with its bigger brother, the DTX900. But when I was laying down a groove and playing more deliberate fills, the DTX502 performed as well as, if not better than, any other module at its price point.

The DTX502 can record performances, and it comes with several training modes, which are great for developing timing and groove control. It also has USB functionality, so it can be used as a MIDI controller for computer software that houses much higher-resolution samples. Thumbs up in our book!

usa.yamaha.com



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Eddie Fisher
OneRepublic

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GIBALTARHARDWARE.COM



GEARING UP

DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview by John Martinez • Photos by Alex Solca

Intronaut's DANNY WALKER

Drums: DW Collector's series in ebony satin oil finish

- A. 6.5x14 black-nickel-over-brass snare
- B. 8x10 tom
- C. 9x12 tom
- D. 14x16 floor tom
- E. 18x22 bass drum
- F. 5.5x14 maple snare (backup)

"Growing up in Camarillo, California, I was next door to Oxnard, where the DW factory is, and I was always interested in them," Walker says. "I started using a Collector's series 5.5x14 maple snare drum, which I've had for eighteen years now. I've used it on almost every record that I've done.

"I've always used this configuration, with the rack toms off to the side and not centered. Then I could bring my ride cymbal in a little bit closer. I view the rack toms as if I had two kick drums, as far as a center point, still having room for the ride. It's more comfortable for me.

"I've triggered my drums in the past. But for Intronaut, being that we're going for a more organic quality, we cut the trigger on the kick to go for a more organic thud. I have used an Alesis DM5 Pro module and ddrum triggers. If I'm doing any of the death-metal stuff for different bands, I do trigger."

Cymbals: Meinl

- 1. 14" M-Series Traditional Medium hi-hats
- 2. 14" Byzance Traditional China
- 3. 17" Mb10 Medium crash
- 4. 8" Byzance Traditional splash
- 5. 10" Byzance Traditional splash
- 6. 19" Mb10 Medium crash
- 7. 20" Mb20 Heavy Bell ride

8. 18" Mb20 Rock China

"I'm digging these hi-hats. Matt Garstka of Animals as Leaders handed them over to me. I love the crispiness and attack. Even when I'm just chicking the hi-hat with my foot, it cuts. If I'm not doing double bass but I'm playing a tom groove, I like to have the hi-hat going to give an extra layer. They're super-bright.

"I've been using this Heavy Bell ride for a long time. [It has] a lot of stick definition, and the bell is massive. I can't get enough of that ride."

Hardware: DW, including 5000 series hi-hat stand and 9000 series double pedal, cymbal stands, and throne

Heads: Aquarian coated Response II snare batter and Classic Clear bottom, clear Force 10 tom batters and Classic Clear bottoms, and Super Kick II bass drum batter with Double Kick pad

"I've always tuned by ear. I tend to tighten my top heads a little bit higher than the bottoms. I know some people like to match the pitch or tune to a certain note, but there just seems to be a little more attack when I have the top head tighter.

"Live, I'll tune by ear. But in the studio I'll use a DrumDial to start with and then just tweak it from there. I usually don't have much time to get crazy with tuning."



Electronics: Roland SP-404SX sampler

In-Ears: Shure E5c

"Now that we're playing with a click track, these are good for isolation. I plug them straight into my phone, because I'm using the Frozen Ape Tempo iPhone app."

Sticks/Accessories: Vic Firth 5B wood-tip drumsticks, MSBAG2 stick bag (on floor tom), and Stick Caddy (on hi-hat stand)



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Tama transfigures steel drum construction, creating cast shells, rather than bending and stressing steel plates. The Integrated Reinforcement Ring enables an unprecedented level of sonic focus.

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1980s

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The

50 Greatest Drummers of All Time

Whose playing endures through the decades? Whose music do we reach for when we want new ideas? When we want to practice? When we want to *laugh*? Who inspires and delights us most?

Drumming is a vast and mysterious art, but those are the concepts that help determine greatness.

Now you can turn the page and find the artists who, regardless of genre or era, are revered by the drumming community most consistently. The results, after all, were made by *you*—drummers, from hobbyist to superstar. Many thousands of you submitted your top ten in our online poll, we tallied it all up, and now we present for all the world *MD's* 50 Greatest Drummers of All Time.



1

Buddy Rich

Tom Copi

His skills were so extraordinary that more than a quarter century after his passing, we're still calling him what they called him back in the day: the greatest drummer of all time.

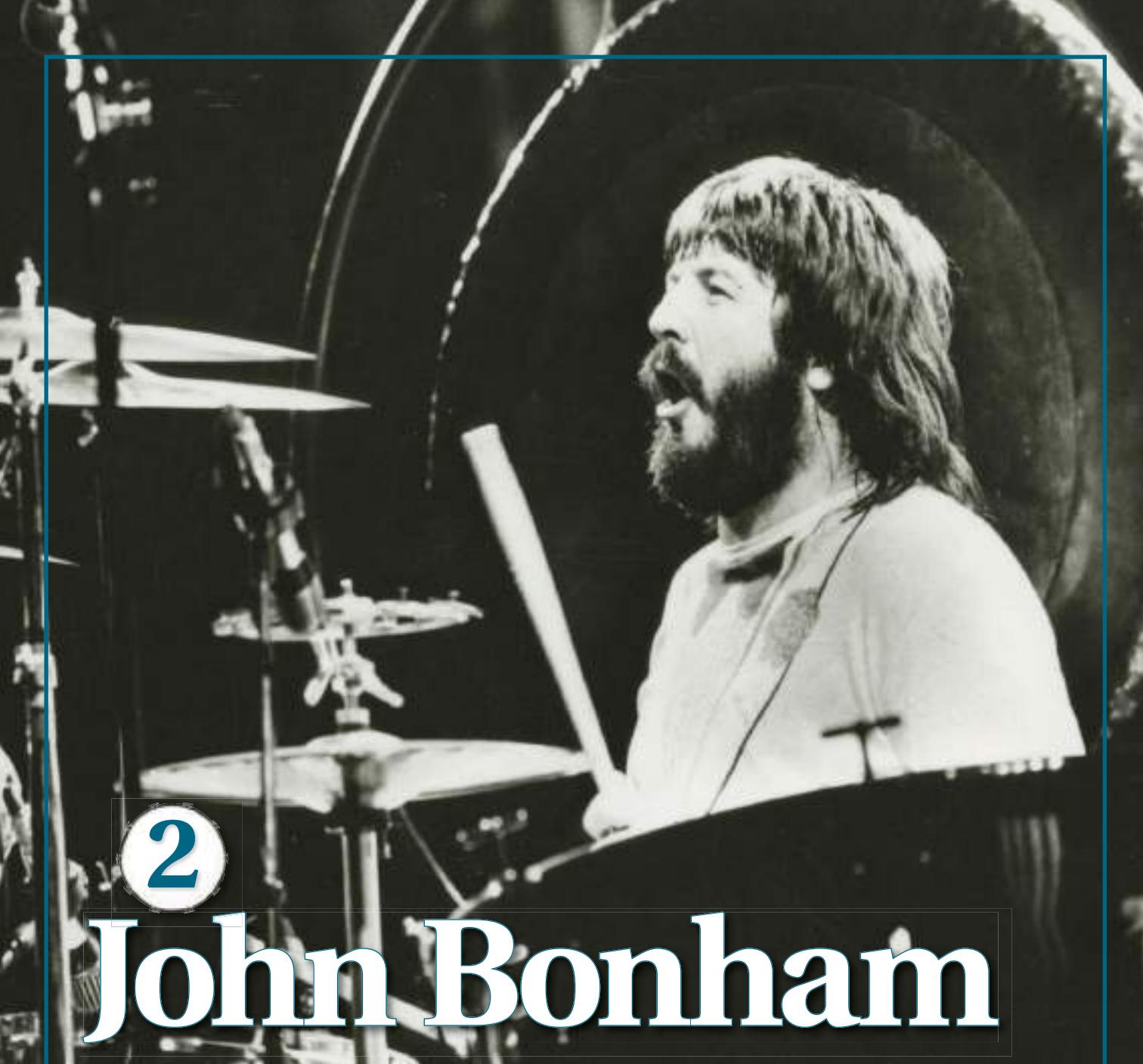
If *Outliers* author Malcolm Gladwell is right in his famous theory that it takes 10,000 hours, or twenty hours a week for ten years, to master any skill, then Buddy Rich (1917–1987) was even more of a magician than we thought. What would Gladwell make of the eighteen-month-old “Traps, the drum wonder,” the centerpiece of his parents’ vaudeville act and one of the highest-paid child stars of the time? At eleven Rich would lead his own pro group. By twenty-five he was well on his way to appearing with nearly every major big band star of the day, and was inarguably the king of drums.

Ten thousand hours of work? Clearly, in Buddy’s case, it was on-the-job training. Later, while leading his own big bands, he

became known as a harsh taskmaster. But his ultimate responsibility was always to the audience, especially a live one. Rich’s commitment to putting his group in front of the people, even in the least financially forgiving times, was total. And he literally took the music *to* them, often appearing at high schools and colleges.

And what of his drumming? “Buddy was a savant,” Jim Keltner said in a December 2012 *Modern Drummer* cover story on Rich. “Everything about him was above everyone else.” “His swing was ridiculous,” added jazz great Antonio Sanchez, “and his feel and use of dynamics were remarkable.” “Buddy was a technical genius,” offered contemporary jazz star Terri Lyne Carrington. “His solos were pure composition. And yes, he was a show drummer, but he did it with integrity. Buddy’s *important*.”

Go check out: “West Side Story Medley,” “Channel One Suite”

A black and white photograph of John Bonham, the drummer of Led Zeppelin, captured in profile as he plays the drums. He has long, wavy hair and a beard, and is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is dark, with the circular rim of a drum visible behind him. The lighting highlights his face and the drumsticks.

2

John Bonham

In the first thirty seconds of the first track of the first Led Zeppelin album, John Bonham (1948–1980) announces himself as an absolute master, with visionary ideas, a heavy groove, and a supreme right foot that’s able to channel a jazz drummer’s dexterity with the heft of a rocker. And it was only upward from there. Through his sparkling, highly influential career with the mighty Zep, Bonham came armed with fitting concepts for every song, giving each piece its signature ornamentation with playing that felt spontaneous and natural, seemingly just flowing out of him. And in concert, that flow reached tsunami levels, as Bonzo tossed away the thoughtful restraint that made his studio work so brilliant and let his ferocious chops rule unchecked, in dramatic high-wire improvisations with guitarist Jimmy Page, bassist John Paul Jones, and singer Robert Plant, and in rollicking “Moby Dick” solos that sometimes flirted with the thirty-minute mark.

Bonham died young, at age thirty-two, bringing a sudden halt to one of the hottest acts in rock history, and the fact that he seldom did interviews has only fueled his mystique in the decades since. What we do have of the man, though, is a ton of precious music. Zeppelin’s eight proper studio albums show a highly dynamic, very diverse drummer, defining for the ages streamlined backbeats (“Black Dog,” “Kashmir”); fire-breathing, kick-throbbing rockers (“The Wanton Song,” “Achilles Last Stand”); supercharged slow blues (“Since I’ve Been Loving You,” “Tea for One”); and light-and-shade acoustic-plus numbers (“Ramble On,” “Tangerine”). And the *Song Remains the Same* film and two-disc *Led Zeppelin DVD* allow those who never saw the band to join Bonham on his swashbuckling onstage adventures; from the fearsome, sinewy presence of the early days to the stocky, bowler-hatted English rocker of 1979, Bonzo is a drummer’s treasure.

Go check out: “Good Times Bad Times,” “Moby Dick”

3 Neil Peart

Neil Peart (b. 1952) joined Rush in 1974; Ron Spagnardi started *Modern Drummer* in 1977. Since the founding of this magazine, Peart has inarguably been the most visible, most popular symbol of the modern drummer, making it no surprise that he was voted the highest-ranking active player on our list. This seven-time (and counting) *MD* cover star is ever hungry to learn and improve, digging into musical inspirations from around the world with great relish and adding these ingredients to his own homemade brew with each Rush release. Taken as a whole, his body of work over the past forty years—including video tutorials on studio tracking, soloing, and playing live—reveals a staggering breadth and depth of percussive exploration both deadly serious and whimsically good-humored. Oh, and meanwhile Neil has also written most of the band's lyrics; his words *and* his rhythms have helped Rush become a definer of heavy progressive rock.

With a fierce commitment to making every idea and every note as clear as day, Peart divides his time among the

conception of parts, honing and polishing, and, finally, recording. For years he famously left little to chance on stage or in the studio...until he began to embrace the idea of improvisation more fully—yet another example of his dedication to personal and band growth. Indeed, Rush has enjoyed a fruitful period lately, issuing two well-received studio albums and several live releases since 2007. And last year the band toured with a string ensemble behind 2012's *Clockwork Angels*.

The Canadian trio is taking a hard-earned rest in 2014, routing Peart's 360-degree electroacoustic rig—and his well-traveled motorcycle—off the road. But we can content ourselves by revisiting Rush classics and digging, among other delights, Neil's trademark Latin-style ride pattern (“Limelight,” “Subdivisions”), time-travel grooves (“La Villa Strangiato”), over-the-top song suites (“2112,” “Cygnus X-1”), soloing prowess (*Exit Stage Left*'s “YYZ”), and get-'em-jumping-out-of-their-seats, kit-busting fills (take your pick!).

Go check out: “Tom Sawyer,” “The Spirit of Radio”

4

Tony Williams

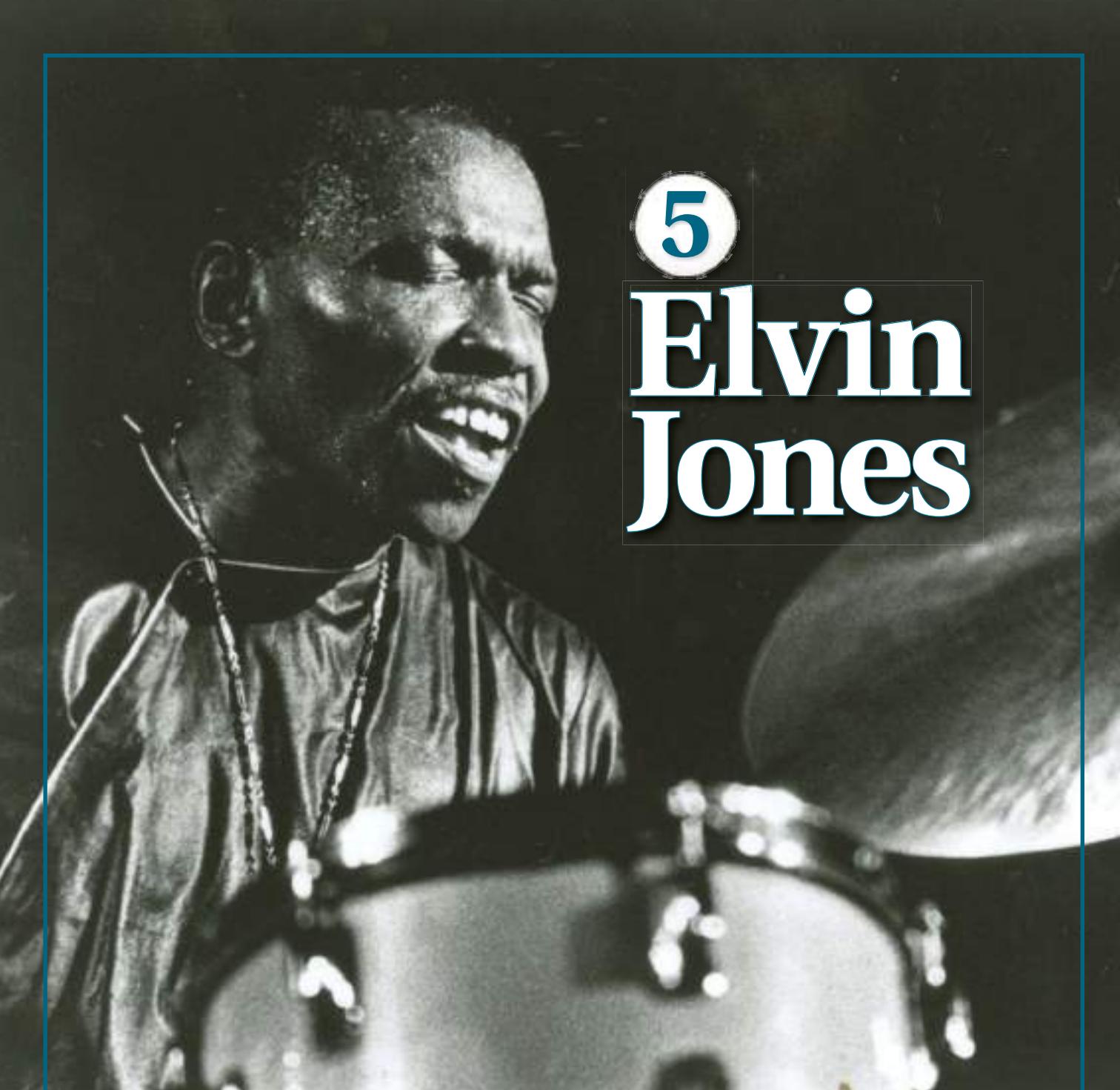
Miles Davis snatched Tony Williams (1945–1997) from saxophonist Jackie McLean’s band when the prodigy drummer was just seventeen years old, and immediately made him the focal point of a new quintet, which included Herbie Hancock on piano, George Coleman on saxophone (to be replaced by Wayne Shorter), and Ron Carter on bass. Williams’ debut recordings with Davis, the studio album *Seven Steps to Heaven* and the live double disc *The Complete Concert 1964: Four & More/My Funny Valentine*, are the ultimate study in Tony’s superhuman chops, propulsive time feel, and adventurous rhythmic approach. (Good luck keeping up with his right hand on the barnburners “Seven Steps to Heaven,” “Joshua,” “Walkin’,” and “Four.”) The quintet’s subsequent studio albums, *E.S.P.*, *Miles Smiles*, *Sorcerer*, *Nefertiti*, *Miles in the Sky*, and *Filles de Kilimanjaro*, feature Williams prominently, albeit in a more restless, turbulent environment

leaning closer to the avant-garde.

As much influenced by the Beatles as he was by Charlie Parker, Williams left Davis’s band in 1968 to lead his own group, Lifetime, which combined jazz improvisation with heavier grooves and electric guitar and organ. Lifetime had a fresh, edgy, modern sound that connected with a younger rock-listening audience. Fellow greats Steve Smith, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Dennis Chambers, among many others, have made reference to the big influence Williams’ heavier fusion-era drumming had on their playing, especially on the albums *Emergency!*, *Believe It*, and *Million Dollar Legs*.

Toward the end of his career, Tony returned to the acoustic quintet format, composing music for his own band, doing all-star reunion dates with fellow Davis alumni, and supporting young lions like Wallace Roney, Branford Marsalis, and Wynton Marsalis during the hard-bop revival of the 1980s.

Go check out: “Seven Steps to Heaven,” Miles Davis; “Red Alert,” Tony Williams



5

Elvin Jones

Arguably *the* most influential jazz drummer, Elvin Jones (1927–2004) turned the drumming world on its head in 1960 when he joined visionary saxophonist John Coltrane’s hard-hitting, spiritually driven quartet. Never before had a drummer played with such a passionate, unbridled beat, and Jones’s unconventional approach to soloing pushed rhythm down a more liberal, expressionistic path that would later become standard practice during the free-jazz movement of the late ’60s. Elvin’s trademark triplets, asymmetrical phrasing, and broken ride patterns made a lasting impact on everyone from jazz greats Jack DeJohnette and Peter Erskine to classic- and prog-rock pioneers Ginger Baker and Bill Bruford. “He showed us that there was more to drumming than keeping a beat,” Bruford told *MD* in 2004. “He had more to do with the wind and the waves than

numbers and click tracks.”

Jones’s recordings with Coltrane remain as modern and evocative today as they were the day they were released, and the various albums Elvin played on as a sideman, with Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Larry Young, McCoy Tyner, Tommy Flanagan, and others, are equally essential. The drummer also put out his own records, including 1961’s *Elvin!* and his Blue Note debut, *Puttin’ It Together*, a trio date with Coltrane mate Jimmy Garrison on bass and Joe Farrell on woodwinds. And his band, the Jazz Machine, remained active through the 1990s and rivaled Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers as a preeminent institution for aspiring artists, with alumni including trumpeter Nicholas Payton, saxophonist Joshua Redman, pianist Kenny Kirkland, and trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis.

Go check out: “Pursuance,” John Coltrane



6 Steve Gadd

You'd be hard pressed to find a more prolific, well-rounded, and influential drummer in the past thirty years than Steve Gadd (b. 1945). In 1975 alone, he laid down a slinky groove on the disco hit "The Hustle," defined linear drumming with a unique open-handed intro to Paul Simon's "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," and swung hard on guitarist Jim Hall's *Concierto*. Gadd also ushered in a groovier, smoother, and more nuanced style of fusion drumming through his work with crossover artists like Chuck Mangione, George Benson, David Sanborn, Stanley Clarke, Grover Washington Jr., Tom Scott, and Chick Corea. In the pop world, Steve's laid-back feel has enhanced albums by everyone from Frank Sinatra and Paul McCartney to Kate Bush, Steely Dan, Eric Clapton, and Jon Bon Jovi.

Informed by a background in tap dance and drum corps,

Gadd's drumming style is characterized by a deep groove and an inventive application of the rudiments, including snare/tom/kick ratamacues, hi-hat/snare paradiddle combinations, and split-flam Latin patterns. Equally influential is Gadd's signature fat, clean drum sound (thanks in part to his use of oil-filled Evans Hydraulic drumheads in the early days and thick Remo Pinstripes more recently) and two-up, two-down kit configuration (10" and 12" rack toms, 14" and 16" floor toms), which is still used by many drummers today. Steve also helped usher in the drum-video age with the classic *Up Close* and *In Session*. He has remained active in the new millennium, touring and recording with top pop artists like Paul Simon, Eric Clapton, and James Taylor, as well as leading his own ensemble, Steve Gadd & Friends.

Go check out: "Aja," Steely Dan; "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," Paul Simon

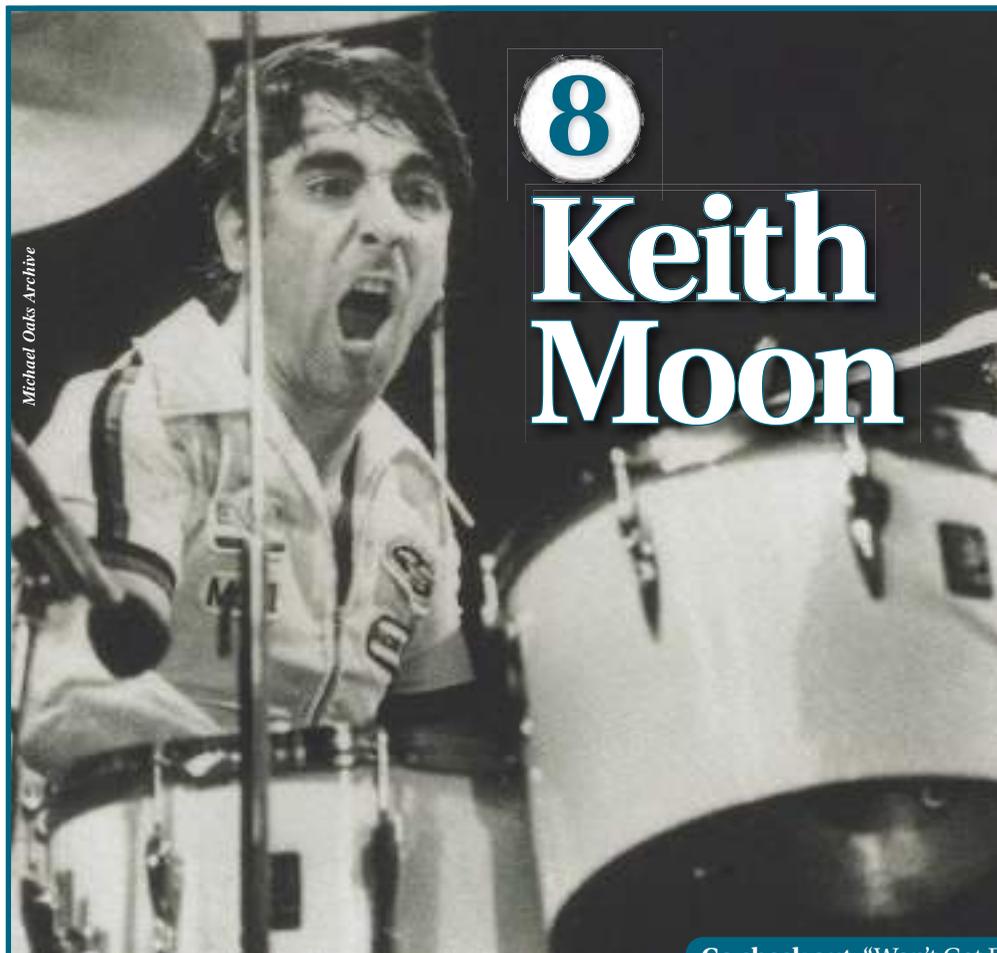


Deborah Stuer

7 Vinnie Colaiuta

Vinnie Colaiuta (b. 1956) isn't a drummer's drummer—he's *the* drummer's drummer. In 1979 Colaiuta established his role as an unfettered explorer of the outer reaches of rhythmic complexity on Frank Zappa's notorious three-act *Joe's Garage* LPs, a reputation later sealed with releases by Randy Waldman, Allan Holdsworth, Jing Chi, and dozens of others, as well as a 1994 self-titled solo album. Beyond his highly intelligent approach to time manipulation and rhythmic illusion, what really grabbed people's attention was Vinnie's fearlessness—many a drummer has described witnessing him go so far out on a limb that they were convinced he'd fall to a tragic musical death, only to marvel at his feline ability to land safely on the 1. Perhaps just as impressive is Colaiuta's pop prowess, which he's proven on mainstream releases by Sting, Faith Hill, Joni Mitchell, and Barry Manilow.

Go check out: "Keep It Greasy," Frank Zappa; "I'm Tweaked/Attack of the 20lb. Pizza," Vinnie Colaiuta



Michael Oates Archive

8 Keith Moon

The playing of the Who's Keith Moon (1946–1978) was extremely different from that of most drummers, because Keith Moon was extremely different from most drummers. Logic defying, energetic—no, *tidal*—Moon was an extreme bundle of contradictions: He battled loneliness at home but was always the life of the party; he symbolized drumming excess on stage but never took a solo on record. In his autobiography, *Who I Am*, Who guitarist and songwriter Pete Townshend upends common misperceptions by stating that Moony kept time along to sequences like the one on the Who classic "Baba O'Riley" (new ground in 1971) better than any drummer he'd ever witnessed. Unlike his personal life, Keith had control of his playing—he just loved letting out the reins and stepping over boundaries. All those shockingly offbeat crashes and rambunctious double bass triplet runs...repeated listening reveals an artfulness and orchestral sense that's rare, but *so* right.

Go check out: "Won't Get Fooled Again," "Love, Reign O'er Me"

Once Ringo Starr (b. 1940) joined the Beatles as the final member, the band's recipe for success was complete. Ringo drove the early music hard, with a gleefully bent but solid sense of swing and a tireless right hand. His puppy-dog eyes and dry wit meshed with the image and demeanor of the other Mop Tops, ensuring the group would be followed by deafening screams for years to come. As the Beatles left the stage for the studio and pushed their songwriting into new and unexplored areas, Starr unfailingly found fresh sounds, clever orchestrations, tasty beats, and imaginative, wonderfully off-kilter fills. "It's been mentioned that I am a songwriter's drummer," Ringo told *MD* in November 2005, "and I think it's because of this principle: If the singer's singing, let's listen to him or her." The beloved drummer has kept the peace and love alive, sharing that '60s spirit via his All-Starr Band well into the twenty-first century.

9

Ringo Starr



Go check out: "All My Lovin'," "Rain," *Abbey Road* medley

Buddy Rich might have captured people's imaginations, but before that, Gene Krupa (1909–1973) won their hearts. With his Hollywood good looks and warm demeanor, Krupa made drumming, and jazz music, more acceptable to the masses. As he danced across his tom-toms with exaggerated arm movements, influenced by Duke Ellington drummer Sonny Greer's approach, he tapped into the dark nature that drumming represented in the Western world's collective subconscious. But he did it with such sophistication and joy that musicians, dancers, and plain ol' regular folk got the message. Heck, they even made a movie called *The Gene Krupa Story* while the man was still in the thick of his career. Krupa's innovations in the 1930s and '40s—from popularizing the live "drum feature" to establishing the basic drumset configuration—remain staples of our craft to this day.

10

Gene Krupa



Go check out: "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman

THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

11. Mike Portnoy

Like one of his heroes, Neil Peart, Mike Portnoy (b. 1967) inspired legions with a drumming style that was complex, active, and creative yet comprehensible, and he did it with a band, Dream Theater, that was the most popular heavy progressive act



of its time. Portnoy, who has won numerous awards in *Modern Drummer's* annual Readers Poll, left Dream Theater in 2010, after twenty-five years as its de facto leader. If anything, his output has only increased and improved, including work with Adrenaline Mob, Flying Colors, and the band he's currently focused on, the hard-rock trio Winery Dogs.

Go check out: "A Change of Seasons," Dream Theater

12. Stewart Copeland

Born in the States and raised in the Middle East, Stewart Copeland (b. 1952) took a veritable planet's worth of drumming influences and distilled them down to a thrilling spark-plug style that's uniquely and utterly personal to him—and one of the most recognizable sounds in pop. Copeland's range helped the Police convincingly blend rock, punk, new wave, and reggae, with sophisticated songwriting and



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musicianship. His amply caffeinated feel and firm touch brought urgency to the music, from the group's '70s inception to its 2007-8 reunion. The unstoppable Copeland also helms movie soundtracks, has formed the bands Animal Logic and Oysterhead, and lately hosts improv sessions at his Sacred Grove studio.

Go check out: "Roxanne," "Message in a Bottle," "Walking on the Moon"

13. Max Roach

The most prominent bebop drummer of the 1940s and '50s, Max Roach (1924–2007) is credited with solidifying the streamlined style of modern jazz, thanks to his longtime association with groundbreaking artists like Dizzy Gillespie, Clifford Brown, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, and Charlie Parker. Roach also redefined soloing, whether improvising over forms ("Now's the Time") or bass lines ("Jodie's Cha-Cha"), or composing pieces for solo drumset ("The Drum Also Waltzes," "Blues for Big Sid"). "[Max] established that a drummer was just as important as any other instrument," Jack DeJohnette told *MD* in 2007. "When he soloed, you heard the song."

Go check out: "The Drum Also Waltzes," Max Roach; "Cherokee," Clifford Brown and Max Roach Quintet

14. Jeff Porcaro

Hailing from a musical family, Jeff Porcaro (1954–1992) was both a band guy, as a founder of Toto, and a prolific studio ace, with Steely Dan, Boz Scaggs, Dire Straits, Eric Clapton, and Michael Jackson, to name but a few of his collaborators. He had wicked chops but kept them mostly under wraps, serving the song with steady, snapping time and a mastery of all sorts of shuffles. "No matter what he played," Vinnie Colaiuta told *Modern Drummer* in a 2002 tribute, "the time just felt so good." Twenty-plus years after his premature passing, Porcaro is still cited as an inspiration in nearly every issue of *MD*.

Go check out: "Rosanna," Toto; "Doctor Wu," Steely Dan



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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME



15. Billy Cobham

Perhaps the first true fusion drummer, with Miles Davis, Mahavishnu Orchestra, George Duke, and others, Billy Cobham (b. 1944) combines the finesse and vocabulary of a

jazz player with the power and groove of a rocker, burning up his expansive kit with flaming rolls in any direction. Explaining his left-hand-lead style in the July 1986 *Modern Drummer*, the right-handed Cobham said, "The ride and hi-hat being on the same side opened up my concept to add as much as I wanted to." In November 1998, Gary Husband told *MD*, "[Billy] has the ferocity of a Mike Tyson, in terms of how hard he'll fight to play creative music."

Go check out: "One Word," Mahavishnu Orchestra; "Stratus," Billy Cobham



16. Papa Jo Jones

Often referred to as the father of modern drumming, Jo Jones (1911–1985) elevated the role of the hi-hat within jazz timekeeping and brought an unprecedented sense of style to brushwork—in contrast to his demeanor, which could be brutally frank, given the right circumstances. He was a hero to

many famed jazz drummers who revered the wit, subtlety, and grace of his playing, which can be heard across numerous classic Count Basie recordings of the '30s and '40s, and on his own albums as a leader.

Go check out: "Sweet Georgia Brown," Jo Jones



17. Bill Bruford

Even among the revolutionary drummers who emerged from the original prog-rock era, Bill Bruford (b. 1949) stood out. With Yes, the British group that he

cofounded in 1968, Bruford's unique sound, featuring a distinctly high-pitched snare, was apparent from day one.

On albums like *Fragile* and *Close to the Edge*, his unexpected punctuations and penchant for toying with the backbeat fascinated observers, while his subsequent work with King Crimson and with his own bands, including Earthworks, integrated African influences, electronics, the melodic incorporation of Octobans and Rototoms, and acoustic jazz elements in fresh and fascinating ways.

Go check out: "Heart of the Sunrise," Yes; "Indiscipline," King Crimson

18. Roy Haynes

Roy Haynes (b. 1925) was a key player on the NYC jazz scene when bebop was invented, serving as saxophonist Charlie Parker's drummer from 1949 to 1952, and he's remained on



the cutting edge of modern jazz ever since, supplying his trademark dancing swing feel and mambo-influenced solo vocabulary to dozens of artists, including legendary beboppers Sarah Vaughan, Thelonious Monk, and Bud Powell; post-bop leaders Eric Dolphy, Jackie McLean, and Andrew Hill; and contemporary giants Pat Metheny and Chick Corea. Haynes' discography as a leader also spans nearly six decades, from his 1954 debut, *Busman's Holiday*, through 2011's *Roy-alty*.

Go check out: "Matrix," Chick Corea



Tom Coppi

19. Philly Joe Jones

"Try to play like Philly Joe," said the notoriously blunt trumpeter Miles Davis to anyone who came into his jazz groups after Philly Joe Jones (1923–1985) left in 1959. Jones, who got his nickname so as not to be confused with Count Basie's famous drummer Papa Jo, is the quintes-

sential hard-bop drummer, combining the streamlined swing of Max Roach with the drive of Art Blakey, along with a penchant for employing rudiments on the kit in ways that sounded fresh and unquestionably hip. Jones was also a master of the brushes, and the now commonly placed rimclick on beat 4 is forever branded "the Philly lick."

Go check out: "Billy Boy," Miles Davis

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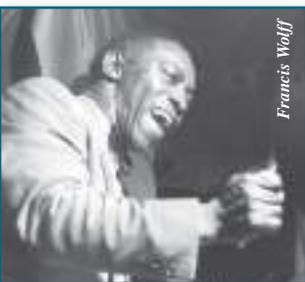
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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME



Francis Wolff

20. Art Blakey

From the '50s until the late '80s, the legendary hard-bop band the Jazz Messengers was

the most important jazz institution—the place where young instrumentalists cut their teeth alongside Art Blakey (1919–1990), one of the genre's greatest

ambassadors and one of drumming's hardest swingers. Blending classic bebop vernacular with the groovier sounds of R&B and the deep folkloric rhythms of African and Afro-Cuban music, Blakey played with fire and grit, always from the heart. As he stated many times in lectures and interviews, "Music washes away the dust of life." And nobody played a better crush roll.

Go check out: "Roll Call," Hank Mobley; "Moanin'," Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers

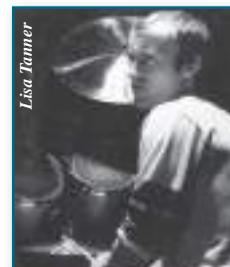
21. Phil Collins

His string of solo hits in the '80s made Phil Collins (b. 1951) a superstar. But it's his recordings with Genesis that drummers venerate. Collins' style, a marriage of R&B soulfulness, fusoid flair, and proggy oddness, is immediately recognizable for its Motown-inspired time feel, dramatic

concert-tom fills, and nimble kick work. Early Genesis efforts like *Selling England by the Pound* feature Collins' stellar approach to

outlandish long-form compositions, while later cuts, including freelance work with Eric Clapton, Robert Plant, Philip Bailey, Howard Jones, Adam Ant, Tears for Fears, Frida, Band-Aid, and ex-bandmate Peter Gabriel, are quintessential examples of slinky big-beat nirvana.

Go check out: "Supper's Ready," Genesis; "In the Air Tonight," Phil Collins



Lisa Turner

22. Dave Weckl

When Dave Weckl (b. 1960) landed the gig with Chick Corea's Elektric band in 1985, the international drumming community took notice. (Those already in the know were familiar with Weckl

from his work in the NYC studios and with Simon & Garfunkel.) Not only did the twenty-

five-year-old drummer have the virtuosity to match Corea's challenging new material, but his technique was smooth, his drumkit sounded crystal clear, and he was adept at blending electronic and acoustic tones in a fresh and musical way. Weckl's first album, 1990's *Master Plan*, was a full-on exposé of a super-slick style that's equal parts precision, flair, and inventiveness.

Go check out: "Rumble," Chick Corea Elektric Band; "Festival de Ritmo," Dave Weckl



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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

23. Ginger Baker

Currently enjoying a resurgence on the heels of the riveting 2012 documentary *Beware of Mr. Baker*, Ginger Baker (b. 1939), despite myriad health issues, is still sporadically logging time at the kit, exploring the gritty, plodding, jazz- and African-influenced style he forged with Cream in the '60s. His flat-angled drums, spread-out double bass rigs, and pounding tom fills remain the stuff of legend.

Unrepentantly cantankerous, Baker has made enemies the world over yet befriended many of his jazz idols and has enjoyed successful, inventive collaborations with artists as diverse as John Lydon, Fela Kuti, and Bill Frisell and Charlie Haden.

Go check out: "Sunshine of Your Love," "White Room"



breakthroughs in ostinato education, cymbal development, and, given his impossibly huge rack-mounted rigs, drumset construction. Terry has also gamely filled in with acts like Korn and Fantômas and explored solo and orchestral chamber-type works. The guy never slows down.

Go check out: "The Black Page," Frank Zappa; "U.S. Drag," Missing Persons

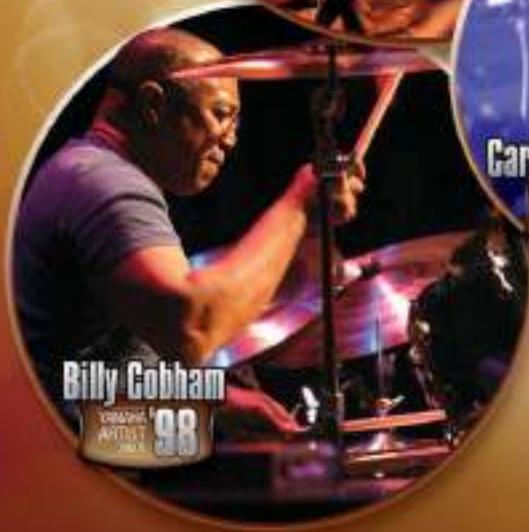
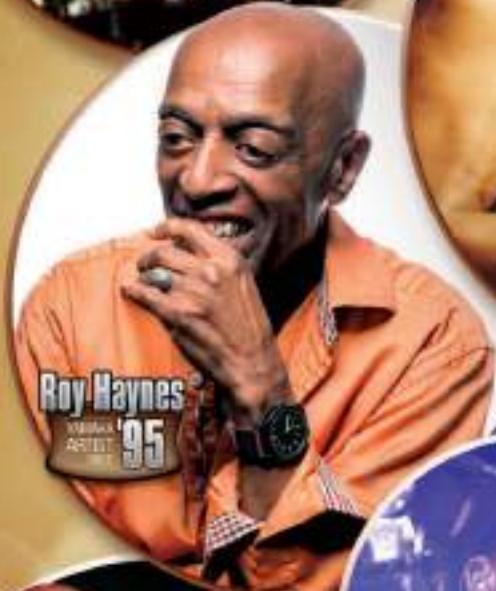
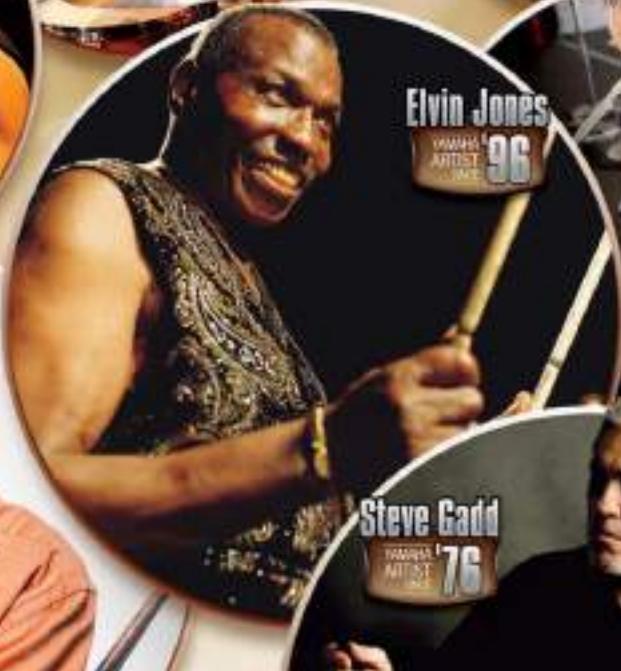
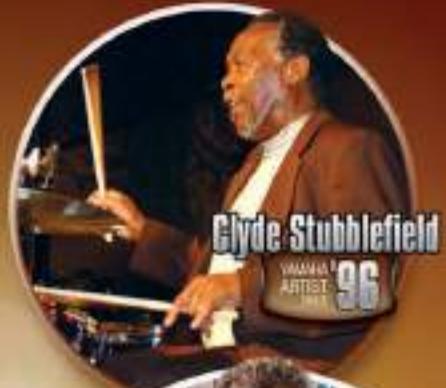
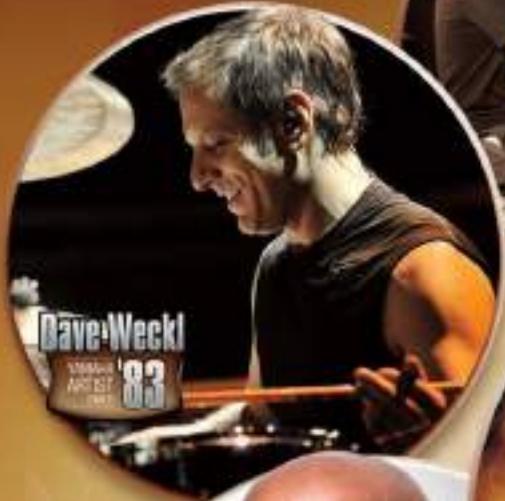
24. Terry Bozzio

Think of the hallmarks of history's greatest drummers, and you find that Terry Bozzio (b. 1950) bears all of them. With Frank Zappa, Missing Persons, the Brecker Brothers, Jeff Beck, and others, he's made stellar music even better by his very presence, through transcendent chops, a fertile imagination, a deep time feel, riveting showmanship, and a disregard for genre boundaries. Bozzio, with his searcher aesthetic, has made

25. Bernard Purdie

Rather than recapping his recording credits with Aretha Franklin, Donny Hathaway, Roberta Flack, Miles Davis, and a zillion others, it might be quicker to list the artists that groover extraordinaire Bernard Purdie (b. 1939) *hasn't* worked with. When Purdie, brimming with confidence, hits his namesake half-time





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shuffle or any other finger-snapping rhythm, he locks in super-tight, with a strong anchor on the bottom and a buoyant lightness on top. "He always had some unique stylistic thing that you would never imagine in advance and that nobody else would do," Steely Dan's Walter Becker says on the *Classic Albums: Aja* DVD.

Go check out: "Rock Steady," Aretha Franklin; "Home at Last," Steely Dan

26. Hal Blaine

If you hired Hal Blaine (b. 1929) and his group of L.A. studio heavies, the Wrecking Crew, during pop's '60s and '70s golden

a quarter of the way through the alphabet yet, you dig? And Blaine's single-headed "Monster" kit might've started a craze, but really it was the confidence, class, and creativity that Hal brought to bear that made all the difference.

Go check out: "The Boxer," Simon & Garfunkel; "Hurting Each Other," the Carpenters

27. Steve Smith

A small number of drummers get to lead the double life of pop star and shredster icon—on this list, Vinnie Colaiuta and Phil Collins come to mind. Rivaling them for



age, there was a great chance you'd see your record go straight up the charts. America, the Association, the Beach Boys, the Byrds, the Carpenters, Cher, the Crystals, Diana Ross, Dion, Dick Dale, Dusty Springfield, Elvis—we're not even

the remarkable range of his credits is Steve Smith (b. 1954), whose refined and efficient approach to Journey's pomp-rock has garnered him as many accolades as his dense, Indian-inspired flights of rhythmic fancy on his many jazz-fusion gigs. Smith's

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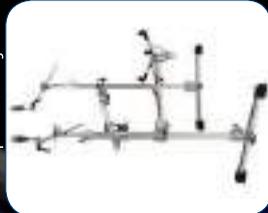
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**Joe Amato - Front of House
Engineer,
The Gaslight Anthem**

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**Howard Burke - Front of House Engineer,
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**Charles A. Martinez - Front of House Engineer,
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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

relaxed but studious disposition is the picture of control, making him an obvious role model for thousands of drummers who've admired his flawless technique and absorbed his popular educational materials.

Go check out: "Enigmatic Ocean, Parts I-IV," Jean-Luc Ponty; "Separate Ways," Journey

28. Mike Mangini

With the prog-metal band Dream Theater, which he joined in 2010 after acing an audition competition with six other top-tier drummers, Mike Mangini (b. 1963) finally found the ideal forum for his freakishly complex, imaginative, and precise playing. A hard-hitting, ambidextrous superdrummer who played with Extreme, Mike Keneally, and Steve Vai before DT and has held several World's Fastest Drummer records, Mangini is also a highly respected educator, sharing his Rhythm Knowledge method and four-way-independence concepts through clinics and a decade-long teaching stint at Berklee. His new DVD, *The Grid*, focuses on expanding drummers' creativity and improv skills.

Go check out: "Egg Zooming," Mike Keneally; "Outcry," Dream Theater

29. Dennis Chambers

A child prodigy, Dennis Chambers (b. 1959) began playing clubs in his hometown of Baltimore at age six. At eighteen, he was nabbed by funk legend George Clinton for Parliament Funkadelic, a gig he held until the mid-'80s before becoming *the* go-to guy for various electric jazz artists, including Special EFX, George Duke, and John Scofield. It was with Sco that Chambers made his most significant impact, laying down hard-hitting grooves and blazing fills on the guitarist's '80s fusion classics *Blue Matter*, *Pick Hits: Live*, and *Loud Jazz*. Chambers also toured with Steely Dan in the '90s, and he's supplied the backbeat behind Latin-rock great Carlos Santana for over ten years.

Go check out: "Give Up the Funk," P-Funk All-Stars; "The Nag," John Scofield



DeJohnette

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30. Jack DeJohnette

Though steeped in tradition, Jack DeJohnette (b. 1942) has always approached music without limitations or boundaries, whether playing light and airy Latin-inspired textures with saxophonist Charles Lloyd (*Forest Flower*); dense, abstract fusion with Miles Davis (*Cellar Door Sessions 1970*); post-bop with Pat Metheny (*80/81*); or impressionistic piano-trio music with Keith Jarrett (*Setting Standards*). DeJohnette has also led his own genre-bending ensembles, Directions, New Directions, and Special Edition, and released several genre-less albums under his own name, including 1977's *Pictures* and 1997's *Oneness*. A fine pianist as well, DeJohnette takes a compositional approach to the drumset that reflects that aesthetic—full of color, contrast, and melodic/rhythmic/harmonic interplay.

Go check out: "Nardis," Bill Evans; "Picture 1," Jack DeJohnette

31. Dave Grohl

Dave Grohl (b. 1969), the youngest player on our list, unleashed to the masses an infectious combo of relentless punk energy and catchy, bombastic beats when Nirvana hit it huge with "Smells Like Teen Spirit," the first single off the 1991 album *Nevermind*. Grohl's fills in that song are as air-drum-worthy as they come, with other notable hooks including the fat flam/kick assaults and triplet fills of "In Bloom" and the syncopated kick-driven chorus beat of "On a Plain." Grohl continued to crank out memorable parts with his own band, Foo Fighters ("Everlong," "My Hero"), as

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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

well as on records by Queens of the Stone Age, Juliette and the Licks, and Them Crooked Vultures.

Go check out: “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” Nirvana; “No One Knows,” Queens of the Stone Age

32. Jim Keltner

The Red Hot Chili Peppers’ Chad Smith has called Jim Keltner (b. 1942) “a real Southern gentleman,” a description that could apply equally to his warm, giving disposition and his mysterious, dripping-with-personality feel. A member of the individual Beatles’ inner circles—he’s appeared on classic albums by George, John, and Ringo—Keltner is the ultimate song drummer, but he can rise to seemingly any occasion, such as longtime collaborator Ry Cooder’s more esoteric soundtrack work. In all situations, though, Keltner’s secret weapon is really no secret at all: Always seek to elevate the music, not yourself—and have fun doing it.

Go check out: “Dream Weaver,” Gary Wright; “Josie,” Steely Dan

33. Mitch Mitchell

Not merely holding his own behind Jimi Hendrix but pushing the guitarist ever higher with his feverishly active—and reactive—drumming, Mitch Mitchell (1947–2008) ensured his rightful place on any roster of great timekeepers. Influenced by jazz drummers like many of his 1960s

rock peers, he had a deep bag of rudimental chops and was equally adept at playing furiously burning beats and airier, more settled grooves. Mitchell’s onstage duels with Hendrix, with fills escalating into the stratosphere, brought even more flames than the bottle of lighter fluid that Jimi doused his axe with in Monterey in 1967.

Go check out: “Fire,” “Little Wing”

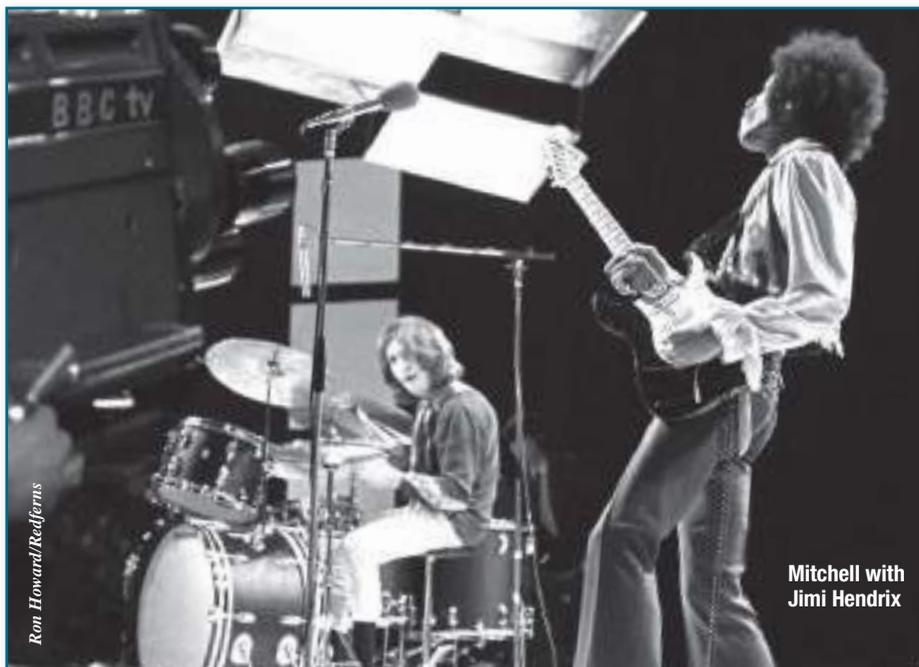
34. Gavin Harrison

Gavin Harrison (b. 1963) is the most highly regarded drummer to come out of Britain’s ’90s prog-rock wave. His work with the genre leader Porcupine Tree is marked by an immense sense of control, complex hand/foot combinations that feature the astoundingly accurate incorporation of toms and small cymbals, and demanding linear-type beats. In addition to his acclaimed work with Porcupine Tree, Harrison appears on more than a dozen albums by Italian superstar Claudio Baglioni and has toured with King Crimson. A multiple award winner in *Modern Drummer*’s Readers Poll, Gavin performed during the magazine’s 2008 Festival Weekend.

Go check out: “Anesthetize,” Porcupine Tree

35. Charlie Watts

You won’t find bigger fans of Charlie Watts (b. 1941) than his Rolling Stones bandmates past and present—and the fact that



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Charlie continually fires up his comrades says a lot about the man's drumming. Watts grew up a jazz fan and found his rock 'n' roll/R&B style together with the Stones, which helps explain the way band and drummer breathe together as one. His very earthy, organic style—he plays a vibe more than a part—is marked by a laid-back yet steady gait and a deep sense of swing. Watts also often has one of rock's tastiest snare sounds.

Go check out: "Honky Tonk Women," "Midnight Rambler," "Shattered"

36. Jojo Mayer

Swiss-born Jojo Mayer (b. 1963) first broke on the international jazz scene when he joined pianist Monty Alexander's group at age eighteen. But it was his five-year live drum 'n' bass party, Prohibited Beatz, which began in 1996 in New York City, that solidified Mayer as the world's preeminent

electronica specialist, thanks to his "reverse engineering" approach to executing seemingly impossible DJ-style drum programming on an acoustic drumset. Mayer also played in the modern fusion group Screaming Headless Torsos, and his own band, Nerve, has been actively touring and recording since 1997. In 2007, Jojo released the epic DVD set *Secret Weapons for the Modern Drummer*. **Go check out:** "Catachresis," Nerve

37. David Garibaldi

Whereas James Brown's drummers branded the displaced backbeat in the '60s, David Garibaldi (b. 1946) flipped funk upside down with the ear-twisting permutations he created with the powerhouse R&B band Tower of Power, beginning on the 1970 album *East Bay Grease*, which features an airtight, ghost-note-heavy beat on "Knock Yourself Out." It's the band's 1973 self-titled release and 1974's *Back to Oakland* that showcase Garibaldi's sophisticated funk approach best, however, with choice cuts being the feverishly funky vignette "Oakland Stroke" and the backbeat-avoiding groove to "Soul Vaccination." Garibaldi has also published several method books, including the modern funk classic *Future Sounds*.

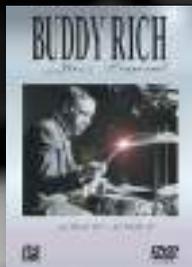
Go check out: "Soul Vaccination"

38. Joe Morello

How many drummers can claim they appeared on a million-selling instrumental hit? That features a drum solo?



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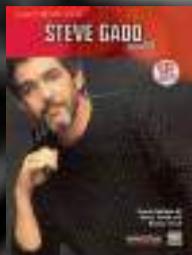
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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

In 5/4 time? If that were all Joe Morello (1928–2011) accomplished—the track in question is “Take Five” by the Dave Brubeck Quartet—it would have been remarkable. But Morello’s illustrious career, which included overcoming near blindness to become one of the most sublime soloists and most proficient technicians in history, was distinguished by dozens of other hit recordings with Brubeck, many featuring his uncanny ease with odd times. And Joe displayed a lifelong

dedication to drum education, authoring the classic text *Master Studies* and teaching a number of players who would earn fame themselves.

Go check out: “Take Five,” “Blue Rondo à la Turk”

39. Clyde Stubblefield

When James Brown appeals to “give the drummer some” on “Cold Sweat,” that’s Clyde Stubblefield (b.1943) doling out the groovy, oft-sampled break. Legend has it that when Stubblefield joined



Brown in 1965, he was the band’s *sixth* drummer. Soon, only the finest two timekeepers remained: Stubblefield and John “Jabo” Starks. Clyde lay back further in the pocket and worked the funky ghost notes, while Jabo was the shuffle king. “Did he mean to put one drummer who was the summation of the past several decades [Starks] together with a guy ready to play the sound of things to come [Stubblefield]?” RJ Smith asks of Brown in the fascinating biography *The One*.

Go check out: “Cold Sweat,” “I Got the Feeling,” “Funky Drummer”

40. Peter Erskine

Peter Erskine (b. 1954) is a drummer that drummers love to love. He oozes wisdom, and a conversation with him about music always inspires one to think more and, usually, to play less—but *better*. Listening to him on the drums, of course, has the same effect, and as there are several hundred albums in print featuring him, there’s ample opportunity to be schooled. Tellingly, not only has Erskine been employed by jazz and rock luminaries like Bob Mintzer, Elvis Costello, Diana Krall, Eliane Elias, John Abercrombie, Gary Burton, and Joni Mitchell, he’s continuously hired back—the mark of a true great.

Go check out: “Northern Cross,” Steps Ahead; “Comes Love,” Joni Mitchell

41. Carl Palmer

There aren’t many drummers who can rationalize touring with an engraved stainless steel drumset weighing more than two tons. But Carl Palmer (b. 1950), whose Buddy Rich–inspired drumming with the British art-rockers Emerson, Lake & Palmer was the very definition of outrageous, got away with

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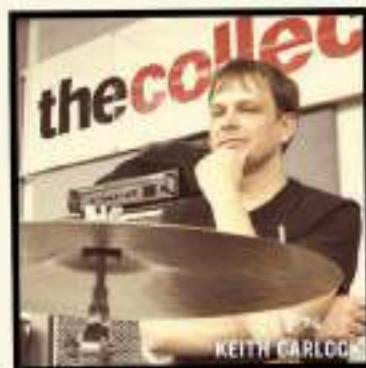
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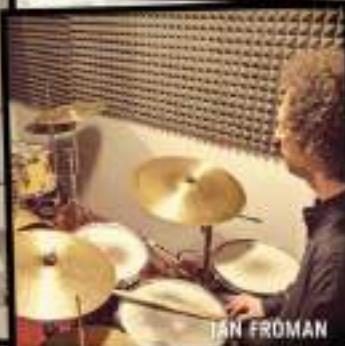
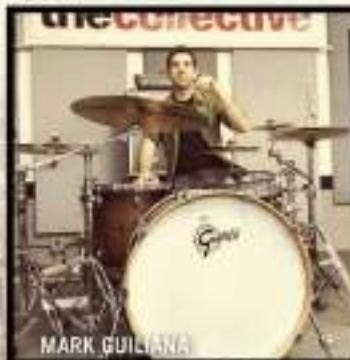
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it—and *much* more. ELP's unprecedented mash-up of classical, jazz, and rock was hugely popular, and Palmer's restless, dazzling playing on classic 1970s albums like *Tarkus* and *Brain Salad Surgery* was more than ballsy enough to support ELP's audacious directive of selling Mussorgsky, Bartók, and Aaron Copland to stadiums full of rock fans. Excess? Bah—success!
Go check out: “Karn Evil 9”



42. Lars Ulrich

As a cofounder and all-around driving force of the massively influential, hard-touring band Metallica, Lars Ulrich (b. 1963) helped to create the thrash style of drumming in the group's early years, on progressive LPs such as 1986's *Master of Puppets*. Metallica ingeniously stripped away much of the orchestrated complexity for 1991's self-titled “black album,” and this reinvention resulted in its best-selling release. “I wanted to have more fun with the drums and be more of the backbone of the music, set up the guitars more, and put more swing, groove, and attitude into the beats,” Ulrich told *MD* in 1996.

Go check out: “Master of Puppets,” “One,” “Enter Sandman”

43. Simon Phillips

British drummer Simon Phillips (b. 1957) is renowned for his precise, exciting work with many of the biggest names in classic rock and electric jazz. Though he's revered for his ability to lift the



music with blazing double bass and remarkably accurate, full-set fills bearing the influence of jazz-rock greats like Tony Williams and Billy Cobham, Phillips can tailor his sound to nearly any musical environment, from the grandiose rock of the Who to the slick pop of Toto to the complex fusion of Hiromi. Simon's famous attention to detail is perhaps best witnessed on his solo albums, on which his composing and production abilities also shine.
Go check out: “Space Boogie,” Jeff Beck; “Face the Face,” Pete Townshend

44. Danny Carey

It was the crazy opening fill and sludgy disco-metal groove on the song “Sober” that announced the arrival of Tool's Danny Carey (b. 1961) to alternative rock drumming fans in 1993 (even though he played with the comedy rock band Green Jelly a few years earlier). Tool may have released only four full-length studio albums, *Undertow*, *Aenima*, *Lateralus*, and *10,000 Days*, and one EP, 1992's *Opiate*, but each possesses a lifetime's study in smart and challenging prog-rock drumming, whether it's quick double bass licks (“Crawl Away”), barline-crossing grooves (“Eulogy”), polyrhythmic tribal battery (“Aenima”), or odd-time featurettes (“Schism”).
Go check out: “Aenima”

45. Alex Van Halen

Eddie Van Halen may have changed guitar forever, but drummers love his big brother, Alex (b. 1953). With his heavy galloping feel and signature sound—ringing snare, beefy bass drums, and

thick, pingy ride—Alex has brought sonic heft, cool beats, and imaginative fills to Van Halen the band across forty years and three lead singers. His enormous tricked-out kits have been ever-changing (remember the rows of Rototoms in the “Jump” video?) but unfailingly make drummers drool and provide a fun focal point for audiences.

Go check out: “Hot for Teacher,” “Everybody Wants Some!!”

46. Louie Bellson

Swing great Louie Bellson (1924–2009) rose to national prominence at age sixteen, when he won Slingerland’s prestigious Gene Krupa contest. Shortly thereafter, he landed in the hot seat with the famed bandleaders Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and Harry James. Bellson’s biggest gig came in 1951, when he joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra; with that group his feature composition “Skin Deep” would bring widespread acclaim. Combining genial charm with the fiery chops and

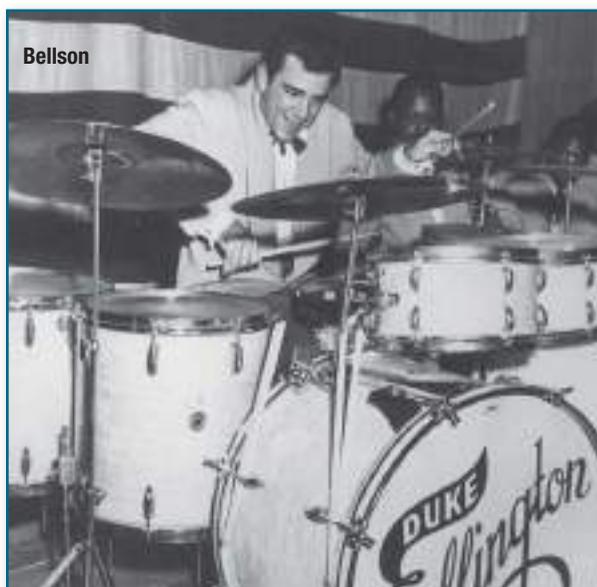
showmanship of his heroes Chick Webb, Jo Jones, and Gene Krupa, Bellson remained a leading spokesperson for drumming until his final days. Oh...and he pretty much invented double bass.

Go check out: “Skin Deep,” Duke Ellington

47. Carter Beauford

Through his twenty-plus-year association with the genre-crossing pop group Dave Matthews Band, Virginia-born drummer Carter Beauford (b. 1957) has done much to introduce adventurous funk/fusion-style techniques—double bass flourishes, 32nd-note tom fills, hi-hat diddles, displaced grooves—to a broad mainstream audience. For proof, listen to the slick splash/tom break at

2:26 on the band’s 1995 smash “What Would You Say,” as well as the surprisingly musical bass drum 16ths during the outro of the mellow hit “Crash” and the massive 32nd-note fill played with rods in the intro to “Say Goodbye.” Who says pop drumming has to be simple?
Go check out: “Ants Marching”



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THE 50 GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME

48. Steve Jordan

“Good music makes you think about the musicians, but great music makes you think about yourself. Steve Jordan [b. 1957] makes great music.” That quote, from *Billboard*’s Timothy White in the introduction to Jordan’s instructional DVD, *The Groove Is Here*, sums it up perfectly. Whether swinging with Sonny Rollins, shuffling with Eric Clapton, or sitting in the pocket with Boz Scaggs, Jordan plays with a level of authenticity and humanity that

transcends technique and shakes you at your core. His trademark groove has also helped propel hits by John Mayer, LeAnn Rimes, Bruno Mars, and Bruce Springsteen, among many others.

Go check out: “Big Enough,” Keith Richards; “Who Did You Think I Was,” John Mayer Trio

49. Tony Allen

As the inventor of Afrobeat along with bandleader Fela Kuti, Tony Allen (b. 1940) stands among the world’s finest

Allen



funk drummers. With his percolating bass/snare interplay and a swinging right hand that pays tribute to jazz heroes like Max Roach and Art Blakey, Allen animated Fela’s sharpest unit, Africa ’70, in the 1970s. The Nigerian drummer now lives in France and has issued some of his best work in recent years, including 2009’s *Secret Agent*. “I’m playing different things at the same time,” Tony told *MD* in 2009, “and the only way to get it is to be cool. I’m a cool person; I’m playing the way I behave in life.”

Go check out: “Open and Close,” Fela Kuti; “Secret Agent,” Tony Allen

50. Carlton Barrett

Carlton Barrett (1950–1987) was the longtime drummer with the international reggae superstar Bob Marley. Barrett’s innovations were honed in the mid to late ’60s alongside his bass-playing brother, Aston, in legendary Jamaican producer and singer Lee “Scratch” Perry’s Upsetters. Barrett’s idiosyncratic, deceptively simple approach to popular Jamaican beats like steppers and one-drop are immediately identifiable by his copious use of three-against-two hi-hat punctuations, his famously laid-back groove, and his super-high-pitched snare and bone-dry single-headed toms. Though Barrett was tragically killed more than twenty-five years ago, his playing remains a major influence on nearly every drummer to subsequently experiment with Jamaican rhythms.

Go check out: “King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown,” Augustus Pablo; “Jamming,” Bob Marley and the Wailers

Entries written by Adam Budofsky, Michael Dawson, and Michael Parillo

An advertisement for Ahead Armor Cases. It features a man in a black jacket and camouflage pants standing next to a large stack of black drum cases. The background is dark with the text "THE NEXT LEVEL IN PROTECTION" in large, bold letters. The Ahead Armor Cases logo is prominently displayed. At the bottom, it says "AHEADARMORCASES.COM" and "DISTRIBUTED BY BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION | 818.727.1127". A signature for Virgil Donati is also visible.



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Nate Wood

His playing in the resolutely unclassifiable band Kneebody seems like a match made in heaven. But you might be surprised by what he has—and hasn't—focused on while perfecting his craft.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Paul Zaia



s Kneebody the contemporary version of New Orleans' beat-slaying band the Meters? Well, it is and it ain't. The quintet, based in L.A. and Brooklyn, takes a similar rhythmic approach in theory, if not in literal execution. Like the Meters, Kneebody, which features a drums/bass/keyboards/saxophone/trumpet lineup, plies multiple rhythms and often several time signatures within the same song, pitting those rhythms against each other. Drummer

Nate Wood might play in 6/4 while his mates play in 4/4, or he'll create a rhythmic web comprising snare drags and ruffs, off-kilter beats, and sequential bass drum accents, propelling the band to outer space and back. Is Kneebody jazz? Math rock? Avant-funk? Free hip-hop? The group is all these things and none of them. Its weird sound is of everywhere and nowhere.

On Kneebody's nine albums, including the latest, *The Line*, the band meshes amorphous styles with something unquantifiable in queasy, free-flowing compositions. And Wood is the perfect drummer for this polyglot ensemble. Not only is he a mastering engineer and singer-songwriter in his own right, but he plays guitar and sings in Foo Fighter Taylor Hawkins' Coattail Riders, plays drums *and* bass in guitarist Wayne Krantz's influential free-form trio, and drums with out-of-bounds jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan and in Mark Guiliana's and pianist Sean Wayland's groups. Wood's

“I learned a little Moeller technique—which really screwed me up. I'd already worked out my *own* way of playing.”

two solo albums, *Reliving* and *Fall*, recall the Silverlake singer-songwriter scene more than jazz, rock 'n' roll, or anything in between.

From his experiences double drumming with Keith Carlock in Krantz's trio, Wood seems to have grown similar Carlock-ian limbs with Kneebody, creating on *The Line* everything from itchy snare ruffs and time-stretching metric modulations to jarring beats (“Trite,” “Still Play”) and booming bass drum enunciations (“Sleeveless”). But Wood is entirely his own drummer on the album's cacophonous title track and the carnival-esque “Work Hard, Play Hard, Towel Hard,” where his full-set slamming and speedy note spray are simply astonishing.

MD: Your drumming often consists of linear, angular beats featuring metric modulation and snare drags and ruffs. How would you describe the core of your playing?

Nate: I'm trying to think melodically and rhythmically and not use any reference points. That is really our goal in Kneebody, to not play from our comfort zones or repeat ourselves. I've listened to a ton of Wayne Krantz's music and Miles Davis with Tony Williams, and I love Jack DeJohnette and Paul Motian. And I've also really been into rock, drum 'n' bass, and hip-hop like A Tribe Called Quest and D'Angelo. It's like a blender.

MD: Kneebody's music can be dissonant and in minor keys. Does that kind of harmonic info cause you to play differently?

Nate: It forces my response to be more angular and less straight up and down. If the music is unresolved, it forces me to play

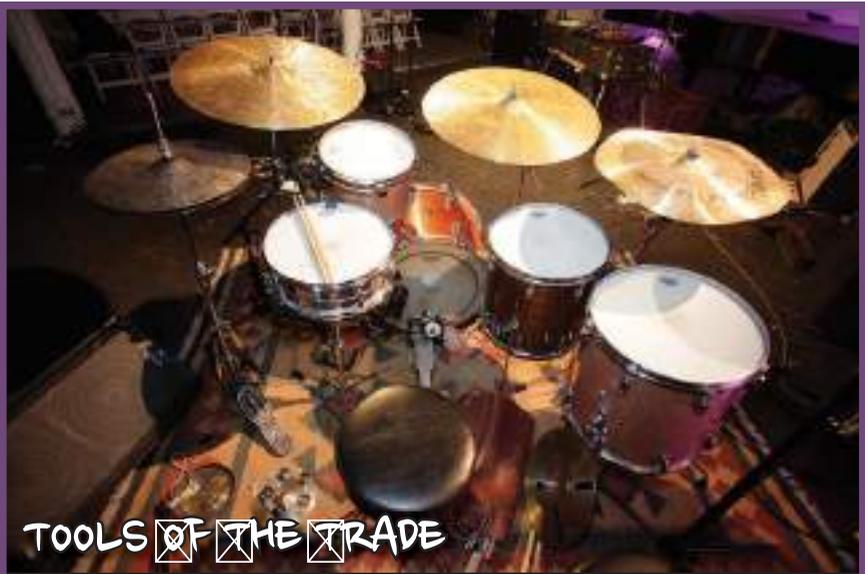


“I’ll either dig the beater into the bass drum head or let it bounce away so the drum rings more. I try to get short and long notes out of every drum.”

unresolved in a way. We are making the music with no compromises. I’m free to do anything.

MD: Your drum sound is also unique. The snare sometimes sounds as if the air has been sucked out of it, and at other times it sounds like a sample.

Nate: I treated the snare drums on *The Line*. To make it more dead sounding, I put a piece of paper on the head, or, to make it even more dead, a cloth. At other times I’ll place a splash cymbal or mini gong on the snare drum. It makes the attack really short; it also gives me another surface to hit. We backlined a Gretsch kit from SIR, and I used a wood Gretsch 5x14 snare and an old Leedy. And on half the record I played a super-light 1960s student drum.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Wood plays a vintage Gretsch kit featuring an 8x12 tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, a 14x20 bass drum, and a 5.5x14 snare. His Istanbul Agop cymbals include 15" Cindy Blackman OM series hi-hats, a 22" 30th Anniversary ride, a 24" 30th Anniversary ride, and a 20" Trash Hit. His Remo heads include a Coated Ambassador snare batter and Ambassador Snare Side, Coated Ambassador tom batters and Clear Diplomat bottoms, and a Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Coated Ambassador front head. He uses Vic Firth 5A sticks and Jazz brushes.

MD: What kind of paper did you put on the snare head?

Nate: Anything I could find at the bar: 8½x11 notebook paper, newspaper,

whatever. I learned that trick from producer Jon Brion. I did a movie date with him where he put two pieces of paper on my snare head for a particular

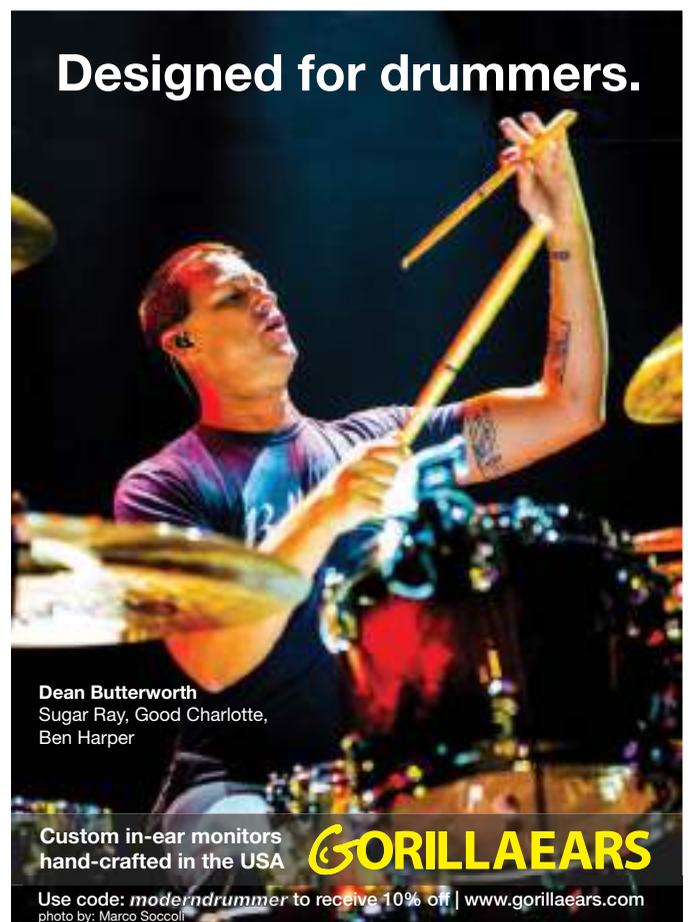


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INFLUENCES

The Police all (Stewart Copeland) /// **Wayne Krantz** Greenwich Mean (Keith Carlock) /// **Paul Motian** It Should've Happened a Long Time Ago (Paul Motian) /// **Astroid Power-Up!** Google Plex (Deantoni Parks) /// **Miles Davis** Nefertiti, Live at the Plugged Nickel (Tony Williams) /// **AlasNoAxis** Splay (Jim Black) /// **D'Angelo** Voodoo (Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson)

RECORDINGS

Kneebody all /// **Tigran Hamasyan** Aratta Rebirth: Red Hail, Shadow Theater ("Red Hail is probably the record I'm most known for internationally," Wood says. "Tigran has taught me more about odd-time phrasing than anyone else.") /// **Ben Wendel** Frame /// **Nate Wood** Reliving, Fall



sound he wanted.

MD: Your bass drum changes pitch and tonality as well.

Nate: It's all in how I hit it. I either dig the beater into the head or let it bounce away so the drum rings more. I try to get short and long notes out of every drum. I often put splash cymbals on top of the toms or tune the toms real open for long notes as well.

MD: On "Lowell" you play a lockstep rhythm with the Rhodes piano. You're almost marching across the staff with the keyboard. Why do you do that where you do it?

Nate: That was the writer's idea. We do that lockstep thing very emphatically there. When I play with Wayne Krantz he doesn't like that; he wants everyone doing different and complementary things.

MD: "Trite," your showcase on *The Line*, sounds like 2 and 4 on the snare with the drums in half time, while the band seems to play at a faster rate around you.

Nate: Exactly. What I'm playing is pretty simple. The tune is in six, but the band is playing in 4/4. I'm just hitting backbeats and following the bass

pattern with the kick drum.

MD: Do you use matched or traditional grip?

Nate: Mostly matched. I tried traditional during a three-week tour with Wayne and Keith Carlock, where I played drums and bass. Traditional ultimately didn't work for me. We set up a second drumset on that tour. When I was bored with playing bass, Keith and I would play double drums. Wayne's next record is half me playing drums with him and Keith, and half me playing drums and Tim Lefebvre playing bass.

MD: What does playing both bass and drums in Krantz's group give you?

Nate: Playing bass in that band is so different from playing drums. The energy and interaction there is up to the drums and guitar. The bass has more of a complementary voice and augments whatever Wayne is playing to make the music sound prettier or nastier or more obscure. I am technically nowhere near Tim Lefebvre on bass. [But] I understand the role and can complement and stay out of the way.

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DRUMSTICKS

NATE WOOD

MD: Does playing bass in Krantz's trio give you any special insight as a drummer?

Nate: When you double drum like that you learn a lot about your playing and your sound. Keith has a really big, beautiful, relaxed sound. And it's very precise because his hands are so precise. That made me realize that my sound is sharper. And I don't play as loudly as Keith; it's a different sound. I realized that Keith used more bounce or rebound than I did. On that tour I played stiffer and more into the drum, not really using any bounce. But I learned from watching Keith how to let the drum and the cymbal do more of the bounce, and my sound is a little bigger now.

MD: How did you develop your linear approach?

Nate: It comes from listening to Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams. You could isolate those guys and they would be playing melodies the entire time. They're making their own piece of music that is concurrent with the music



that's happening. More rock-based linear drummers are more like a drum machine programmed to random. I like that sound too. I've always worked on playing a phrase and making it melodic. My linear playing comes out of trying to

do that.

MD: Can you break down your sticking on "Work Hard, Play Hard, Towel Hard"?

Nate: No, I honestly can't break down anything unless I slow it down and analyze it. I don't work from stickings,

An advertisement for Tycoon Percussion's DOHC Cajon. The ad features a circular inset showing a man playing the cajon, and a larger image of a man building the instrument. Two finished cajons are shown in the foreground. The text is in a clean, modern font, and the Tycoon Percussion logo is at the bottom right.

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and I never went through the [rudimental] books. I don't think of it like that; I think of it more in terms of how something sounds.

MD: So how did you develop your technique if you didn't go through *Stick Control* or other rudiment-oriented materials?

Nate: Just playing something until I really had it nailed. When I first tried to play jazz at fifteen, I played along with *Four & More*, the most frenetic Miles Davis album ever. I would get a few minutes into it, then my hands would burn out. But I did it over and over again, and eventually I could play along.

MD: But you studied music in college.

Nate: I went to L.A. Music Academy for three quarters of a year, then to California Institute of the Arts for three years. And I learned a little Moeller technique—which really screwed me up. I'd already worked out my *own* way of playing, but it all came back. People ask now if I'm using Moeller, but I'm not; I'm just trying to get a sound. Part of what I learned from Keith Carlock

was how to play off the drum, and that might be related to Moeller, trying to get a bigger sound.

MD: How did your drumming progress?

Nate: I come from a family of musicians. My dad, Steve Wood, was a touring keyboard player, and he worked with a lot of great drummers, including Tris Imboden, who played in his band, Honk. And my mom was a singer-songwriter. At an early age I was working hard to make the time sound good in my parents' band. Later I did more jazz and avant-garde gigs, especially here in New York.

MD: Playing Kneebody's music could be both overwhelming and an excuse to overplay. How do you balance that?

Nate: I like to focus on the quietest person in the band. If you can hear them, you can hear everybody. Then you're not going to run all over everybody, unless you're an egomaniac. I want to make the band and the soloists sound as good as possible.

MD: How did you focus your practice time in college?

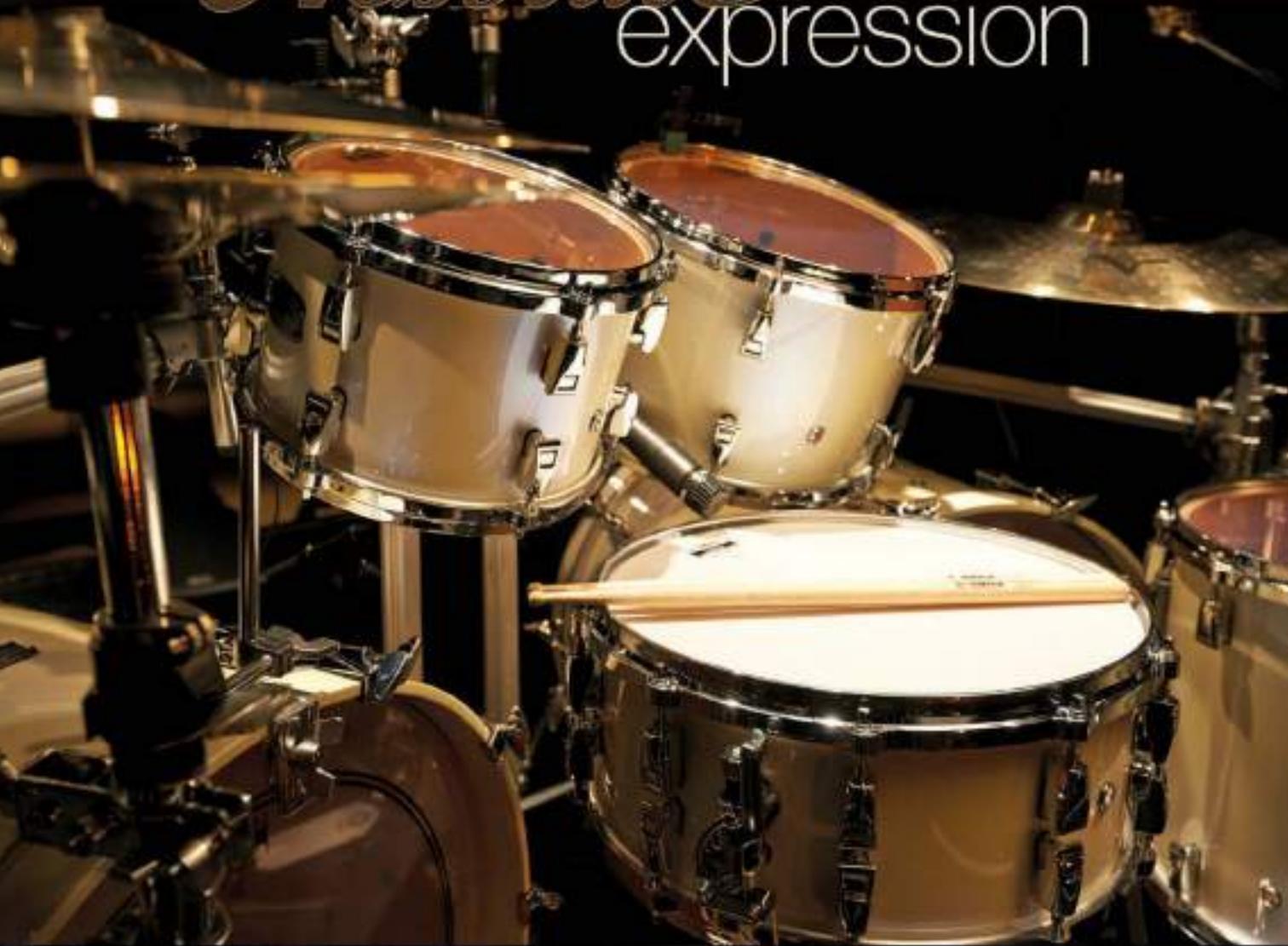
Nate: I've practiced three or four hours a day since I was nine. I'd play along to records on bass or drums or guitar. I also played with a click, and I improvised. Now I'm focusing on getting a good sound on the drums, working on playing things I can't do, or coming up with new things. And I'm working on my hands—I was always jealous of drum corps players.

MD: What has playing multiple instruments ultimately given you?

Nate: The ability to play with a lot of people. Producers have hired me to play all the instruments on records. I learn the music more thoroughly because I'm learning all the parts, not just the drums. I also record bands at my studio in Greenpoint, New York, where I master records as well. I mastered Wayne's last record, for instance. But the coolest thing is that it's given me the ability to play with some of my favorite drummers in the world. I'm not always worrying what Nate the drummer wants.



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James Brown, "Cold Sweat," from *Cold Sweat* (1967)

Drummer: Clyde Stubblefield

Stubblefield's legendary break near the end of this funk milestone allows him to add a bit of color to the original groove. He throws in tasty tom hits and does some nice snare/bass drum work, particularly in the last bar.



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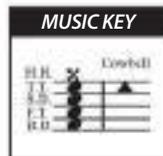
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PUERTO RICAN CLAVES

Afro-Boricua Basics and Contemporary Applications for Drumset

by Jorge Emmanuelli Náter and Sam Werk



Many percussionists trained in music from the Western world assume that Afro-Cuban clave patterns are universal for all Afro-derived Latin American genres. But the truth is that there are a number of nuances to the clave throughout different regions of the Americas. Sometimes these rhythms are played with a select instrument, such as Afro-Cuban claves. Other times, clave patterns are embedded within rhythms. This is the case with Afro-Puerto Rican, or Afro-Boricua, clave patterns.

While the Afro-Cuban forms of clave fit most of the music of Puerto Rico, there are some Afro-Puerto Rican rhythms that follow a slightly different pattern and have a marginal difference in terms of rhythmic/melodic emphasis or contour. There are two main claves associated with Afro-Puerto Rican music. One is in 6/8, and the other is in cut time (4/4 played twice as fast as notated). Both of these patterns can be played in 3-2 or 2-3 orientation.



The Cuban clave contains a “bombo” note that’s often emphasized by lower pitches, and a “ponche” note that’s generally emphasized with a higher tone. These notes fall at slightly different places within the Afro-Puerto Rican patterns.

Cuban Clave



Puerto Rican Clave



Although the Afro-Puerto Rican (Boricua) clave pattern is not stated by a single instrument, as is often the case in Cuban music, it can be found in some of the parts that are played in bomba and plena rhythms. Below is the Puerto Rican “barril”

(barrel drum) pattern for one of the traditional styles of bomba, called holandé. The clave Boricua is stated outright, with emphasis on the low and high sounds with open and slap strokes, to help create the right amount of push and pull within the rhythm. (In the notation, C stands for *caja*, which is similar to a bass/palm stroke on congas. S stands for *seco*, which is similar to a slap. H stands for *hondo*, which is similar to an open tone.)

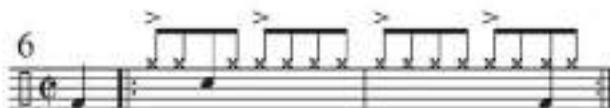
The barril is the traditional instrument of bomba and is similar to a conga. These characteristics distinguish the barril: The openings at the top and bottom of the shell are the same size; the head is made from goatskin, not cow skin; and a barril is shorter than a conga but wider, because it’s a barrel. If you don’t have access to a barril, you can get similar basic sounds by playing the pattern on congas using the appropriate strokes. The following examples are all bomba-derived.

Bomba Holandé



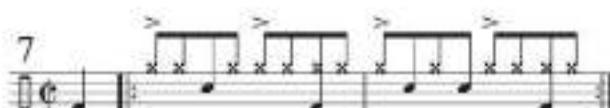
When you start to transfer these rhythms over to the drumset, you can easily add accompaniment parts to the holandé pattern. The simplest way to do this is to play 8th notes on the hi-hat and then state the low note on the bass drum and the high note on the snare. Since we’re in cut time, it’ll be easier to play the hi-hat pattern with two hands using an alternating sticking.

Basic Holandé Drumset Pattern



Plenty of variations can be created by substituting any low-pitched instrument, such as a tom, in place of the bass drum and by substituting any higher-pitched sound, such as a block or a cowbell, in place of the snare. Additionally, playing all of the hondo (open tone) notes on low instruments and all of the seco (slap) notes on higher instruments can lead to more developed drumset rhythms.

Full Holandé Drumset Pattern



To further accentuate the rhythmic/melodic aspect of the Boricua clave, you can play different instruments in each measure to bring out the necessary emphasis on the fourth quarter note of the three side of the clave and the second quarter note of the two side of the clave.

Further Developed Holandé Drumset Pattern



These same concepts can be applied to the other styles of holandé.

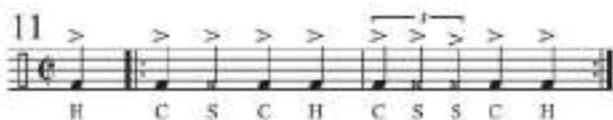
Modern Barril Pattern



Here's one way to play that on the drumset.



Old Styles From Cataño, Puerto Rico



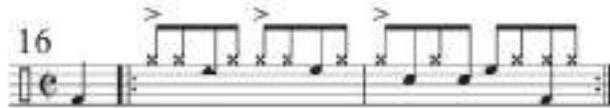
Here are ways to play those rhythms on the drumset.



Old Style From Mayagüez, Puerto Rico



Here's a way to play that on the drumset.



After working on the concepts above, experiment to create your own holandé variations for drumset. Our hope is that the rhythms and ideas contained in this article will also inspire you to further explore everything that Afro-Puerto Rican music has to offer. This is just an introduction.

Special thanks to Melanie Maldonado Diaz for her assistance during the creation of this article.

Elder and master of both bomba and plena, **Jorge Emmanuelli Náter** is the great-grandson of the master bomba musician Sergio Náter Peña. He is the leader of Hermanos Emmanuelli Náter, one of Puerto Rico's premier bomba and plena families, and is the musical and artistic director of the conceptual orchestra CAPRE (Chicago Afro-Puerto Rican Ensemble).

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GIVE THE AUDIENCE SOME

Grounding Odd-Time Grooves With a Quarter-Note Pulse

by Mike Johnston

MUSIC KEY



Playing songs in odd times can be challenging to you as a drummer, but one thing that doesn't get much attention is how tough odd times can be on the audience. It's called "odd" for a reason—because it *feels* odd. But it doesn't necessarily have to be this way. A great number of pop tunes are in an odd meter, yet they don't feel uncomfortable at all. Some examples are "Saint Augustine in Hell" and "I Hung My Head" by Sting (with the great Vinnie Colaiuta on drums), "Dreaming in Metaphors" by Seal, and "Seven" by the Dave Matthews Band.

Time signatures can be organized into two groups: common time (4/4, 2/4, and 6/8) and odd time (3/4, 5/8, 7/8, 11/16, etc.). With a song in 5/8 or 7/8, the audience is constantly trying to find the pulse, but as soon as they think they get it, they're off again. A good way to make everyone happy, at least in a situation where you aren't purposefully trying to stress out the listener, is to superimpose a quarter-note pulse on top of the odd-time groove. When you do this, you'll be playing two time signatures at once, such as 5/8 and 5/4 or 7/8 and 7/4. The way to create the quarter-note pulse is to accent every other number of the time signature over the course of two bars.

In Example 1, you'll see a simple 5/8 groove with the snare on the fourth 8th note. If you played the groove without the hi-hat accents, listeners would have to reset their internal pulse after each bar. But if you accent every other hi-hat note, the listener can feel the implied quarter-note pulse over the course of two bars.



Quick tip: In each of the following exercises you'll be accenting the odd-numbered 8th notes in the first measure (1, 3, 5, and 7) and the even-numbered 8th notes in the second measure (2, 4, and 6).

Let's take the 5/8 beat from Example 1 and add the bass drum on the "&" of 2.



In this example we're increasing the difficulty by giving the hi-hats a more subdivided rhythm.



Take it to the next level by opening the hi-hats on the quarter-note pulse.



This variation features constant 16ths on the hi-hat and a few extra bass drum notes.



Now let's try the same things with 7/8. Here's the basic groove to give us a handle on playing the quarter-note pulse in this time signature.



Now add a couple snare hits and move the second bass drum note to beat 6.



In this example we're increasing the difficulty with a subdivided hi-hat rhythm.



Take it to the next level by opening the hi-hats on the quarter-note pulse.



Lastly, try playing constant 16ths on the hi-hat while emphasizing the quarter-note pulse with accents.



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.



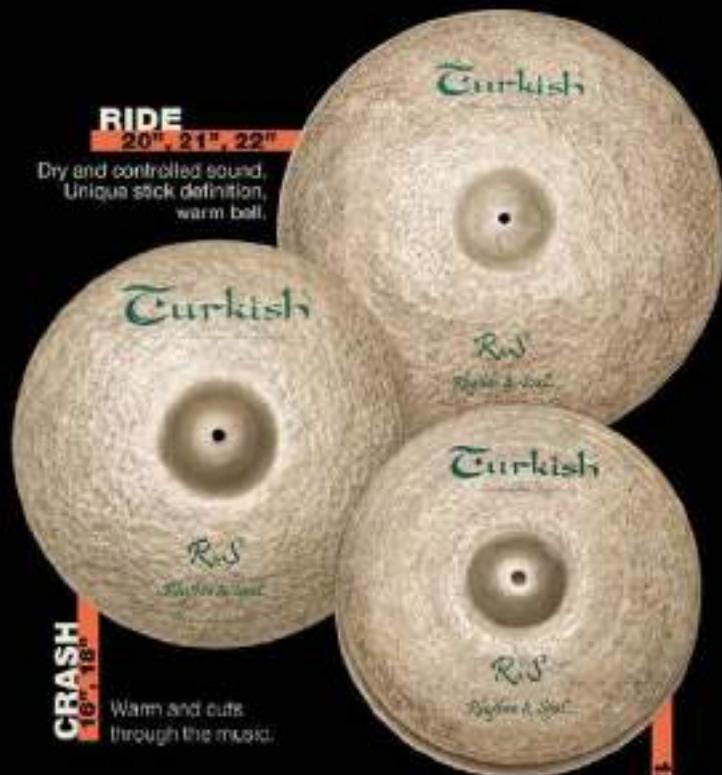
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STICK CONTROL REVISITED

Part 4: Up-Tempo Studies

by Steve Fidyk

MUSIC KEY

R.C.

S.D.

B.D.

H.H.

w/ foot

Welcome to the fourth and final installment in our series on *Stick Control* drumset applications. This month we'll explore ways of interpreting author George Lawrence Stone's exercises while playing up-tempo swing rhythms.

As you practice the following applications, it's important to remain as relaxed as possible, allowing the sticks to rebound naturally. Try working out these examples in front of a mirror to ensure that your wrists, forearms, and fingers are moving together in a natural way. Practicing with a metronome is also strongly suggested. The following variations can be applied to any of the "72 Single Beat Combinations" found on pages 5-7.

Let's begin by reading each sticking as whole notes, with each R on the bass drum and each L on the snare. A good starting tempo for these is 220 bpm. Here's a phrase that incorporates the first measure from Examples 5-8 from page 5. Play these over the swing ostinato notated above.

Now try reading each sticking as half notes. (For clarity, the half notes are notated as quarter notes followed by quarter-note rests.) This time, mix in the hi-hat as a substitute for each L sticking. Here's the first measure from Examples 49-52 interpreted that way.

Next, try reading each sticking as dotted quarter notes, with each R on the bass drum and each L on the snare. Here's Example 70 from page 7 utilizing this concept.

3

Now try playing dotted quarter notes with your feet while reading the L stickings as quarter notes on the snare with your nondominant hand. Here's Example 1, played with the feet, mixed with Example 6.

4

Another fun way of interpreting this material is to assign two-measure phrases to each sticking pattern. For example, for each R, play the following two-measure riff on the bass drum.

5A R-

And for each L sticking, insert the following two-measure pattern on the snare.

5B L-

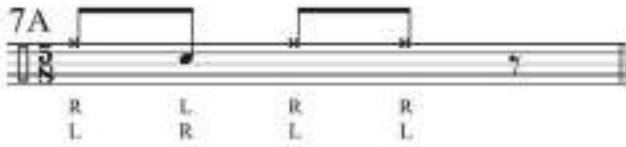
This application requires a great deal of concentration as you keep the riff going while reading and remaining relaxed. Below is Example 3 from page 5.

5C

Our next pattern is a substitution application. For each R, play a double paradiddle between the ride cymbal and snare; for each L, play a single paradiddle. Below is Example 21 from page 5.

6

Our final application uses a paradiddle sticking with an added 8th-note rest.



Substitute this 5/8 rhythm for each R and L sticking as you read down the column. Below is Example 1 utilizing this application.



Once you've worked through these ideas, use your imagination to come up with your own up-tempo applications of the various exercises in *Stick Control*.



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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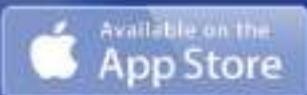
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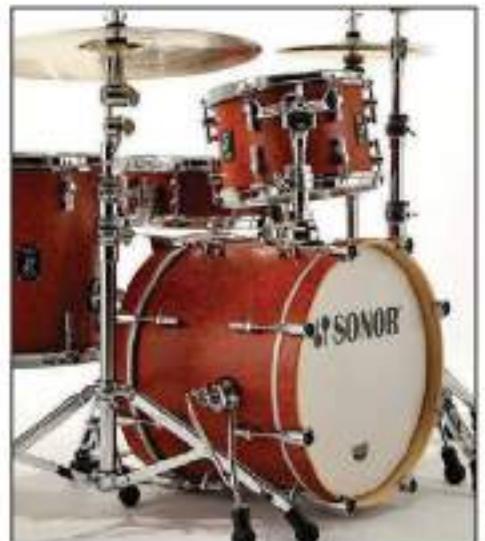


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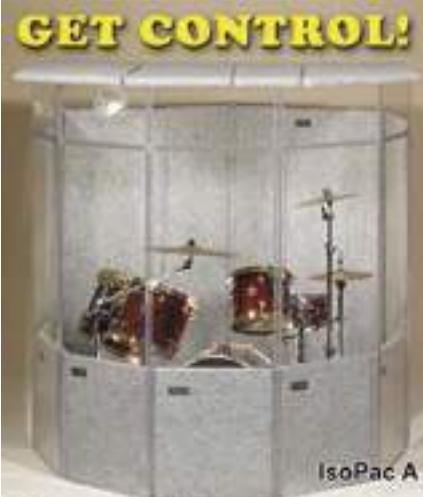
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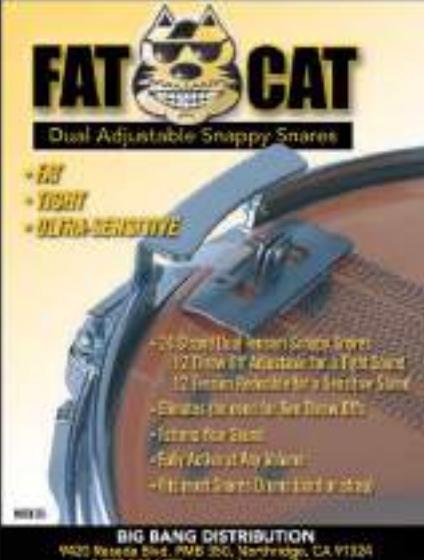
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Alex Rudinger

by Ben Meyer

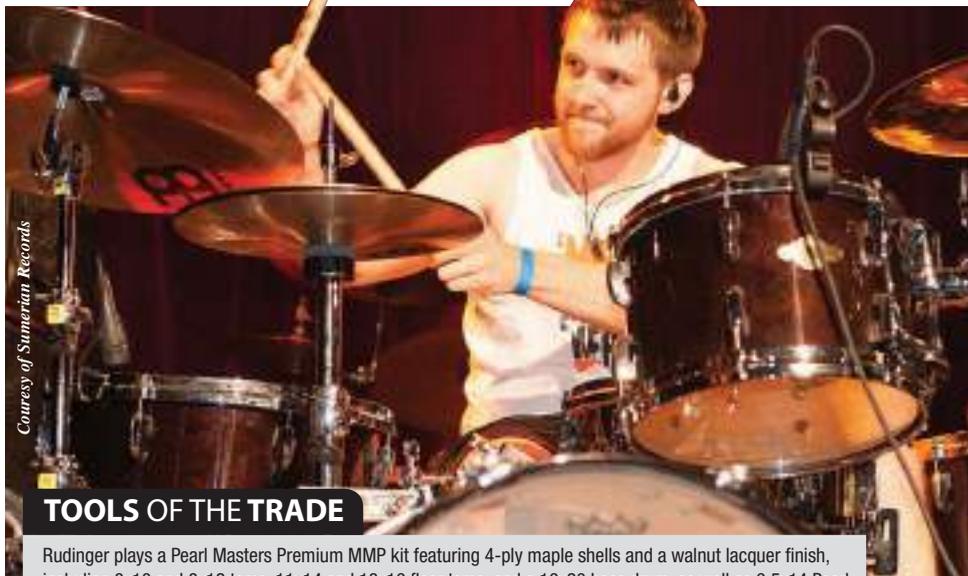
The new drummer with the progressive metal band the Faceless has turned heads with a combination of old-world ethics and future-shock techniques.

Alex Rudinger has built a great deal of musical momentum on the technical-metal scene, all at the ripe old age of twenty-two. Ceaseless practice, a laser-like dedication to sharpening his abilities, and a great attitude have led to jobs with increasingly high-profile groups, like the Canadian melodic death metal band Threat Signal and Sumerian Records favorites the HAARP Machine and the Faceless.

With the help of a select few private teachers, Rudinger, who is based in Frederick, Maryland, has developed a mature musical voice, which he's honed with a number of bands on the flourishing Washington, D.C., metal scene. Early influences included masters of extreme drumming. "When I was first getting into metal," Alex recalls, "I was really into Derek Roddy [Malevolent Creation, Hate Eternal] and George Kollias [Nile]. Those were some big dudes for me. They really inspired me early on to keep playing."

Later, European metal heavyweight Dirk Verbeuren [Soilwork], as well as Matt Garstka, who recently joined the D.C. prog-metal juggernaut Animals as Leaders, made huge impressions. Rudinger's camaraderie with other like-minded locals, including ex-Periphery/current Darkest Hour drummer Travis Orbin, also greatly fed his development. In fact, the friendship, support, and mutual bar raising among these players has helped to fuel something of a technical-metal renaissance in the D.C. area over the past several years. Today Rudinger is a veritable encyclopedia of heavy drumming, and his love of many metal subgenres comes through clearly in his work.

Rudinger plays a hybrid ambidextrous setup with an open-handed concept inspired by Dream Theater's Mike Mangini, as well as by some of the aforementioned drum heroes. "Travis Orbin in particular has been a *huge* inspiration to me," Alex says. "His playing is what really drove me to work on open-handed playing more and more."



Courtesy of Sumerian Records

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Rudinger plays a Pearl Masters Premium MMP kit featuring 4-ply maple shells and a walnut lacquer finish, including 8x10 and 8x12 toms, 11x14 and 13x16 floor toms, and a 16x20 bass drum, as well as 6.5x14 Pearl Reference Brass and Reference Steel snare drums. He chooses from a wide selection of Meinl cymbals, swings Vic Firth Tomas Haake model sticks, and uses Pearl hardware, Remo drumheads, and Gator cases.

Since beginning his drumming journey at age thirteen, Rudinger has drawn influences largely from YouTube; likewise, the video medium has played a significant role in his own success. Regarding the millions of views of his drum covers and studio work, he says, "I don't think I could have done much of what I've done thus far without YouTube. It helped me get exposure—as well as get some gigs."

These videos, which Rudinger says are at least partially made to prove that he's playing everything you hear on recordings, are impressive for their great natural drum sounds, as well as the incredible preparation that is apparent in Alex's execution. Part of that preparation involves the use of charts, which are created with Arobas Music's Guitar Pro 5, a favored composition and transcription tool among technical-metal drummers, including Orbin.

"Guitar Pro is cool software for that," Rudinger says, "because when you're transcribing, it uses a series of numbers that represent different sounds. Each number represents something on my kit, and it

allows me to write out parts note for note. [Composing parts away from the kit] allows you to think stuff up that you might not be able to improvise on the spot—kind of crazy parts—and then later, when you look at it on paper, you know what you meant and you can slowly work it out and bring it up to speed."

Like many of his D.C.-area drumming peers, Rudinger maintains an in-person and Skype-based teaching schedule in addition to commitments with his main band. He also offers groups and individual musicians the ability to have him record drums for their projects from his home studio. As an added bonus, he shoots multi-angle video of his tracking work and offers to post the results on his own YouTube channel for free, which provides added-value promotion for artists.

Rudinger spent much of last fall on tour with the Faceless, and in December and January of 2014 he concentrated on some exciting new projects, including one featuring members of Cannibal Corpse.



Meinl Cymbals bring the sounds
that are in my head to life.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'R' followed by a smaller 'ü' and a 'dinger'.

Alex Rüdinger
The Faceless



CRITIQUE



FRETLESS BROTHERS *FOOTSTEPS*

Another cool chapter in the career of one of rock's most intriguing drumming personalities.

The fact that **Brian Chase** of Brooklyn indie-rock heroes the Yeah Yeah Yeahs would be the drummer of choice for an instrumental jazz album performed entirely in the twelve-tone "Ultra Plus" tuning system makes more sense than one might initially think. The tuning method employed here by bassist Hansford Rowe (Gong) and guitarists Jon Catler (La Monte Young) and Dane Johnson (the Hangmen), which adds pure harmonic-series pitches to the standard twelve, permits the creation of unusual melodies that seem somehow very wrong and very right at the same time. Chase, who's no stranger to pushing the creative envelope—search his name at moderndrummer.com to read about his other left-of-center extracurricular projects—has spent a lot of time exploring pitch as it pertains to percussive instruments, and his highly developed ear and remarkably giving nature make him an ideal collaborator in settings such as this. Anyway, despite the muso talk above, you might be pleasantly surprised by the approachability of this music, which Chase helps further with confident backbeats ("Grace"), funky and buzzy snare playing ("Footsteps"), thunderous floor tom riding ("Stillwalker"), and swinging, crystalline ride cymbal work throughout. (microtones.com) **Adam Budofsky**



MATT WILSON QUARTET + JOHN MEDESKI *GATHERING CALL*

This cool experiment is right on target, exploring that fascinating place where old and new ideas coalesce.

Right out of the gate, drummer Matt Wilson urgently rides straight-ahead with a classic rimclick on beat 4, making it clear what this disc's about. There's plenty of diversity, from a Beyoncé cover to a traditional folk song, but the heart of the outing is a nod to grooving, vintage Blue Note-style hard bop and good-time swinging. It's not literal, buttoned-down reverence; these guys keep it appropriately brash, making it their own. And Wilson plies his impressive chops for intuitive left turns. Guest star pianist John Medeski makes a brilliant showing with Wilson's outstanding band, featuring cornetist Kirk Knuffke, reed player Jeff Lederer, and bassist Chris Lightcap. The group's *simpatico* is dramatized on the title track, featuring an intriguing drum solo framed by the ensemble as the players expand and contract in meter-less unity. Though no longer the new downtown kid, Wilson still plays young and hungry. (Palmetto) **Jeff Potter**



CHICK WEBB & ELLA FITZGERALD

THE COMPLETE DECCA SESSIONS (1934–1941)

Digging into this set reveals details of a historic musical pairing—and the early stages of jazz drumming's fascinating evolution.

The first great star drummer/leader, Chick Webb steered his big band with commanding technique and dazzling showmanship. Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Louie Bellson would all cite his influence. When Webb hired the unknown teen vocalist Ella Fitzgerald, a wildly successful partnership was born. This marvelous eight-CD box set compiles the Decca recordings of the Fitzgerald years from 1935 until Webb's death in 1939. Also included are thirteen pre-Ella tracks, recorded as early as 1929, and fifty-nine selections from between 1939 and 1941, when the singer assumed leadership following the drummer's passing. The thirty-six-page book features a superlative historical essay plus exhaustive recording information. Mosaic has accessed the best possible sources for every track, offering surprising clarity. On the earliest tunes, the drums are minimally audible, yet Webb's driving pulse is felt. As the years pass, the fidelity improves and we hear the evolution from an antiquated two-beat to the birth of the early swing-era time feel. On Fitzgerald's vocal numbers, Webb plays with reserved but infectious song-serving swing, but on instrumentals he cuts loose with explosive breaks, as on the breakneck-tempo "Harlem Congo," the brisk brushwork of "Sweet Sue, Just You," and the soloing feature "Liza." A definitive treasure that's a gift to jazz drumming history. (Mosaic) **Jeff Potter**



PETER JOSEPH BURTT AND THE KING TIDE *BONE TO STONE*

A Modern Drummer contributor adds soulful seasoning to this sonic stew.

It's not always easy to pull off the simple and understated, but **Mike Adamo** lays it down just right on *Bone to Stone*, supporting multi-instrumentalist Peter Joseph Burt's down-home Afrobeat soul jams without drawing too much attention to himself. Adamo, who wrote the "Funk Drumming Training Camp" series over several 2013 *MD* issues, brings a smooth Fela Kuti/Tony Allen flavor to "Be the One" and plays a dancing-hi-hat, triplet-feel pattern on "The Day the Bull Fell Into the Well" that's straight from Paul Simon's *Graceland*. The drummer's silky ghosting provides the hook on "Hand to Mouth," and check out the subtle second-line approach on "The Way You Move" for an example of how to play pop without resorting to the conventional kick/snare, kick/snare default. Burt's bio says he's a lifelong drummer, so it's no mistake that he got Adamo to write interesting parts and help move his music along. (peterjosephburtt.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

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BEN ALLISON
THE STARS LOOK VERY DIFFERENT TODAY
Quoting David Bowie for the title of a jazz album? Take that as a hint of the abundance of this recording's unexpected gifts.

Ben Allison doesn't do "stale." Consistently taking risks, the bassist/composer favors hybrids of jazz, funk, rock, and skewed folksiness. Even in his "out" moments, he pulls you in with the music's humane beauty. The bassist cites interests in science, technology, and cinema as inspirations for this outing, and his sonic landscapes are appropriately visionary. Steve Cardenas (guitar) and Brandon Seabrook (guitar, banjo) form a colorful confluence and also inject dashes of alt shredding. Drummer **Allison Miller** sculpts unique grooves that smartly serve as complementary textures by themselves. On "Neutron Star" she offers spooky, odd-time tom cascades, and on "The Ballad of Joe Buck" she plays a lilting, long-toned folk waltz. On "Kick It Man" she certainly *does*, soloing over an ostinato and building to arena power. And on the fun, quirky rave-up "Swiss Cheese D," she drives it funk-rocking home. But grooves aside, Miller wisely realizes that *sound* is the key to Ben Allison's concept. (Sonic Camera) **Jeff Potter**



PROJECT THEM
PROJECT THEM
Adam Nussbaum is the kind of elemental drummer who kicks soloists to their A game.

Ace vibraphonist Mark Sherman always hoped to reconnect with his high school pal Bob Franceschini, the tenor saxophonist now known for his work with Mike Stern and the Yellowjackets. Their reunion is a winning acoustic jazz set supported by the first-rate force of **Adam Nussbaum** on drums, Martin Gjakonovski on bass, and a keyboard seat shared by Mitchel Forman and Paolo Di Sabatino. After test-driving their material on European tours, the unit touched down in Italy to record this set of well-crafted, upbeat originals. Nussbaum is—as always—a surging force. His hard, open swing on "Submissive Dominants" is unflagging, and the swing/half-time funk hybrid he conjures on "Sleight of Hand" is a kick, topped by a scorched-earth solo chorus. A most happy reunion. (Miles High) **Jeff Potter**

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★★★★★
MASTODON
LIVE AT BRIXTON
DIGITAL VIDEO

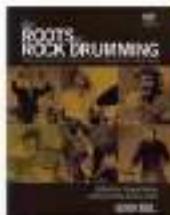
LEVEL: ALL \$19.99
 On February 11, 2012, Mastodon played a sold-out show at London's O2

Academy Brixton. It was the band's largest headlining concert to date, with the nearly 5,000 in attendance privy to a metal event for the ages. Luckily, the group had the foresight to capture it all on film, and now it's being released as a digital-only product.

True to its extinct namesake, Mastodon takes the stage with a massive sonic footprint, stampeding through a twenty-three-song set list with no banter between tunes or copious amounts of dead air. This old-school-punk approach of quick transitions makes for nearly a hundred minutes of pure, face-melting live music.

Drummer **Brann Dailor** leads the charge, executing his perpetual-motion style with scary precision. Dailor's hand combinations and smooth singles are the foundation of his playing, à la Nicko McBrain or Phil Collins, which is less customary in metal than the usual bombardment of double bass. His hands never stop! A constant stream of singles and doubles flows naturally, and Dailor often punctuates the guitar lines with quick accents between the snare and cymbals.

Playing coast-to-coast fills past the barline is another staple of Dailor's style that contributes to Mastodon's signature sound. Even during the band's more "laid back" grooves, on tunes like "Curl of the Burl" and "Black Tongue," Dailor's left hand is ghosting 16th or 32nd notes during grooves. But that's not to say that his feet aren't getting a workout. Brann uses a lighter touch during steady kick patterns to form an almost subliminal bottom layer, and he boosts his attack on shorter bursts to cut through the mix. In any case, his busy playing is very dynamic and works perfectly within the context of the music. Dailor is one of a select few drummers whose style fits their band so well that it's seemingly irreplaceable. (Warner Bros.) **David Ciauro**



★★★★★
THE ROOTS OF ROCK DRUMMING: INTERVIEWS WITH THE DRUMMERS WHO SHAPED ROCK 'N' ROLL MUSIC EDITED BY DANIEL GLASS AND STEVE SMITH
BOOK/DVD LEVEL: ALL \$29.99

This retrospective, which features a 255-page softcover black-and-white book accompanied by a nearly three-hour DVD, aims to shine a light on the drummers present for the birth of rock music. In the interviews, conducted by drummer/historians Daniel Glass and Steve Smith, rare insight is provided by rock 'n' roll originators including Bobby Morris (Louis Prima), Jerry Allison (Buddy Holly), Dick Richards (Bill Haley), D.J. Fontana (Elvis Presley), and Earl Palmer (Little Richard); British legends like Bobby Graham and Clem Cattini; and "stylists" such as Idris Muhammad and Sam Lay. In addition, drumming greats Steve Gadd, Jim Keltner, Carmine Appice, and Jaimoe, who built their own stellar careers on the work of players like these, offer further commentary on the roots of the style.

The package is not without its flaws. Redundant questions could have been tightened up. And as the publishers explain in the book's foreword, licensing costs prohibited the inclusion of video footage showing these important musicians creating the template for the next several generations of rock drummers. As it is, the abridged interviews on the DVD, which the print chapters were transcribed from, though charming, don't really offer a tangible added value. (The full interviews are viewable at hudsonmusic.com.) Still, there's much to learn here, and drummers who know John Bonham but not Earl Palmer, Levon Helm but not J.M. Van Eaton, owe it to themselves to get schooled on where many of our heroes' concepts—and subsequently many of our *own* best ideas—come from. (Hudson Music) **Bob Girouard**



★★★★★
PORTNOY, SHEEHAN, MACALPINE, SHERINIAN
LIVE IN TOKYO
DVD LEVEL: ALL \$19.98

If you want notes and chops and all things over the top, then you've come to the right place, because this live DVD (also available on Blu-ray and an audio CD) documents a 2012 performance in front of the ever-faithful throngs in Japan from a supergroup that's out for blood. Here **Mike Portnoy** tackles material from his bandmates' respective careers and then some, and it's cool to hear him rip on a nice variety of prog and fusion tunes. (Dig his offbeat splash pattern on Billy Cobham's "Stratus.") As expected, Mike delivers the goods on double bass, and there are plenty of close-ups to study every fill he whips out, though some of the video's quick cuts can be frustrating for those hoping to get a clear, extended shot of the master at work. No vocals and no bull—just killer playing and lots of good, clean fun. (Eagle Rock) **Ilya Stembkovsky**

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—**Matt Halpern** of Periphery

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PASIC 2013

3 Days, 16 Clinics, Tons of Inspiration

The Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) returned to its home base in Indianapolis, Indiana, this past November 13 through 16. Thousands of attendees were treated to a range of clinics, master classes, workshops, and performances by world-class artists on a variety of topics, including world music, symphonic percussion, drum corps, music education, and drumset.

The drumset portion of PASIC kicked off with a fantastic clinic by jazz great Ralph Peterson, who discussed subjects that included drum tuning and the importance of musical phrasing on the kit. His extended solo featured several recognizable musical themes, such as the classic Thelonious Monk composition "Monk's Dream." Up next was Latin drumming expert Chuck Silverman, who took the stage in a more intimate master-class space. His presentation, "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning Latin Rhythms," ran the gamut from discussing ways to combine rudimental practice with typical Afro-Cuban and Brazilian patterns to a quick synopsis of need-to-know grooves.

Back in the main clinic ballroom, the famed L.A.-based educator/studio musician Ralph Humphrey presented ideas for more creative practice methods that directly relate to things you might play on a gig. The second master class of the day was conducted by Latin drummer/percussionist Walfredo Reyes Sr. and *MD* columnists David Stanoch and Mark Powers. They introduced ideas contained in a new method book, *The 2 in 1 Drummer*, which the three of them cowrote with the recently deceased percussionist Elliot Fine, coauthor of the classic book *4-Way Coordination*.

Up next on the main clinic stage was another *MD* columnist, Donny Gruendler, who spent his allotted hour breaking down his hybrid electronic/acoustic drumset and the way he uses it to play a variety of

Kotche



Ameen



Reyes

DJ-based music, including dubstep and its various subgenres. The final master class of day one was given by Hudson Music's Joe Bergamini, who emphasized the importance of being well rounded in all areas of your career in order to succeed in today's competitive music industry. Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith closed out the day with his trademark risqué humor and deep, stadium-filling groove.

Online educator Mike Johnston jump-started day two by inviting attendees to come into his clinic room a half hour early to warm up with him, and then he did what he does best—breaking down time signatures into easily digestible bits of information and playing with an unmatched level of enthusiasm and joy. The first master class that day was conducted by big band specialist and *Modern Drummer* columnist Steve Fidyk, who covered all aspects of sight-reading, from helpful hints to general philosophies. And he brought students up on stage to play through charts for additional critique.

Latin drummer Robby Ameen and metal drummer Jason Bittner were the final two clinicians on the second day, and each gave invaluable insight into his respective area of expertise. Ameen played to a few original tracks that demonstrated his versatility in various other genres, while his extended solo focused on clave. Bittner played a few new tracks from upcoming albums and discussed how practicing things outside of heavy metal, like jazz and Latin music, have informed the ideas he explores with his band Shadows Fall and other projects.

The final day of PASIC got off to a great start with jazz legend Peter Erskine demonstrating ways to practice more effectively using his new iOS play-along app. Then the ever-energetic Rich Redmond broke down the Nashville studio scene by explaining the city's commonly used number system for charts, and he described the way he approaches recording drums and percussion overdubs. Redmond also played along to several tracks that he originally recorded with country superstar Jason Aldean. The second clinic of the day was given by jump-swing and early rock 'n' roll drummer Daniel Glass, who had to squeeze in his appearance at PASIC between gigs with Brian Setzer but played a rousing solo nonetheless.

The final three hours of the drumset portion of PASIC 2013 included a highly anticipated appearance by fusion great Dave Weckl, who had the crowd jumping to their feet at hour's end; a great workshop on melodic drumming with jazz educator Ed Soph; and an inspiring clinic by Wilco drummer Glenn Kotche, who explained his "total percussion" approach to the drumset, played a few of his unique compositions, and took the audience through all of the content of his new book, *A Beat a Week*, in a single nine-minute solo performance with backing tracks.

PASIC 2014 is back in Indianapolis this coming November 19 through 22. For more information, visit pas.org. To check out exclusive backstage interviews and onstage performance clips, visit modern drummer.com.

Text by Michael Dawson • Photos by Warren LaFever





Percussive Art



Our latest outfit comes from Heath Towson of Asheville, North Carolina. "I started a small store on Etsy called Reclaimed Percussion where I take old drums from auctions and stores and turn them into pieces of art," Towson explains. "I see the drumset as a new medium for expressing artwork. I am constantly searching for inspiration outside the music world, and I would find after a trip to the local art museum that I had new ideas about my playing for a show the next day. I couldn't really explain where it came from—I thought it might be some kind of chemical reaction."

"These drums are a tribute to Brian Blade's setups with a 15" bass drum," Towson continues. "The bass is a 15" Ludwig tenor drum from the '60s. The toms are old Leedys, I believe from the '30s or '40s, that used to have tacked-on bottom heads. The snare drum is covered in vintage postcard images of Asheville and is built from a steam-bent maple Vaughncraft shell. Because the rack tom is 11" in diameter with only five lugs, it was necessary for me to make a custom wood hoop."

"The drums are covered with some of my original artwork, poetry, and images and objects I find significant. The Cadillac hood ornament on the bass drum is a tribute to Travis Barker!"

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



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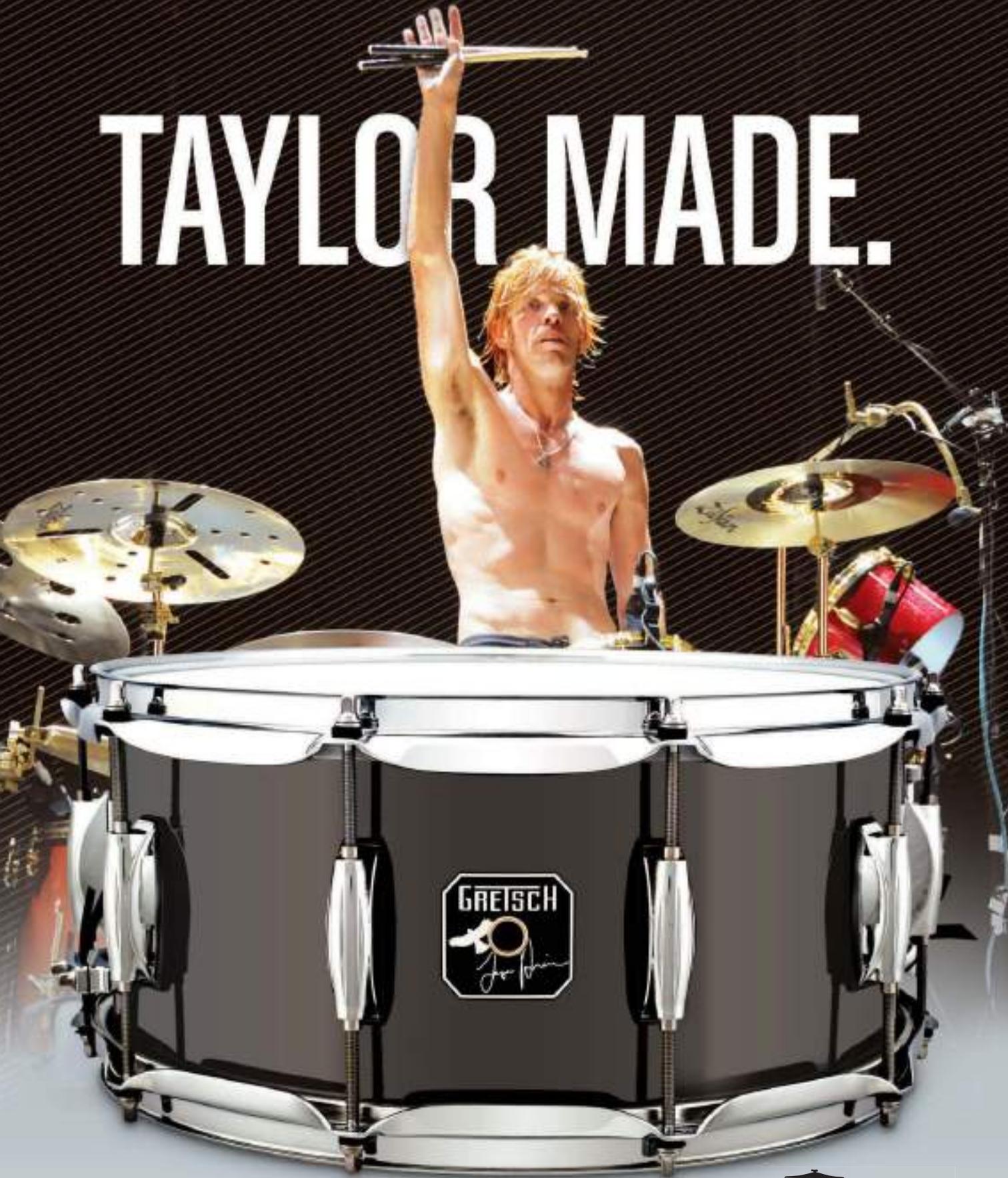


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