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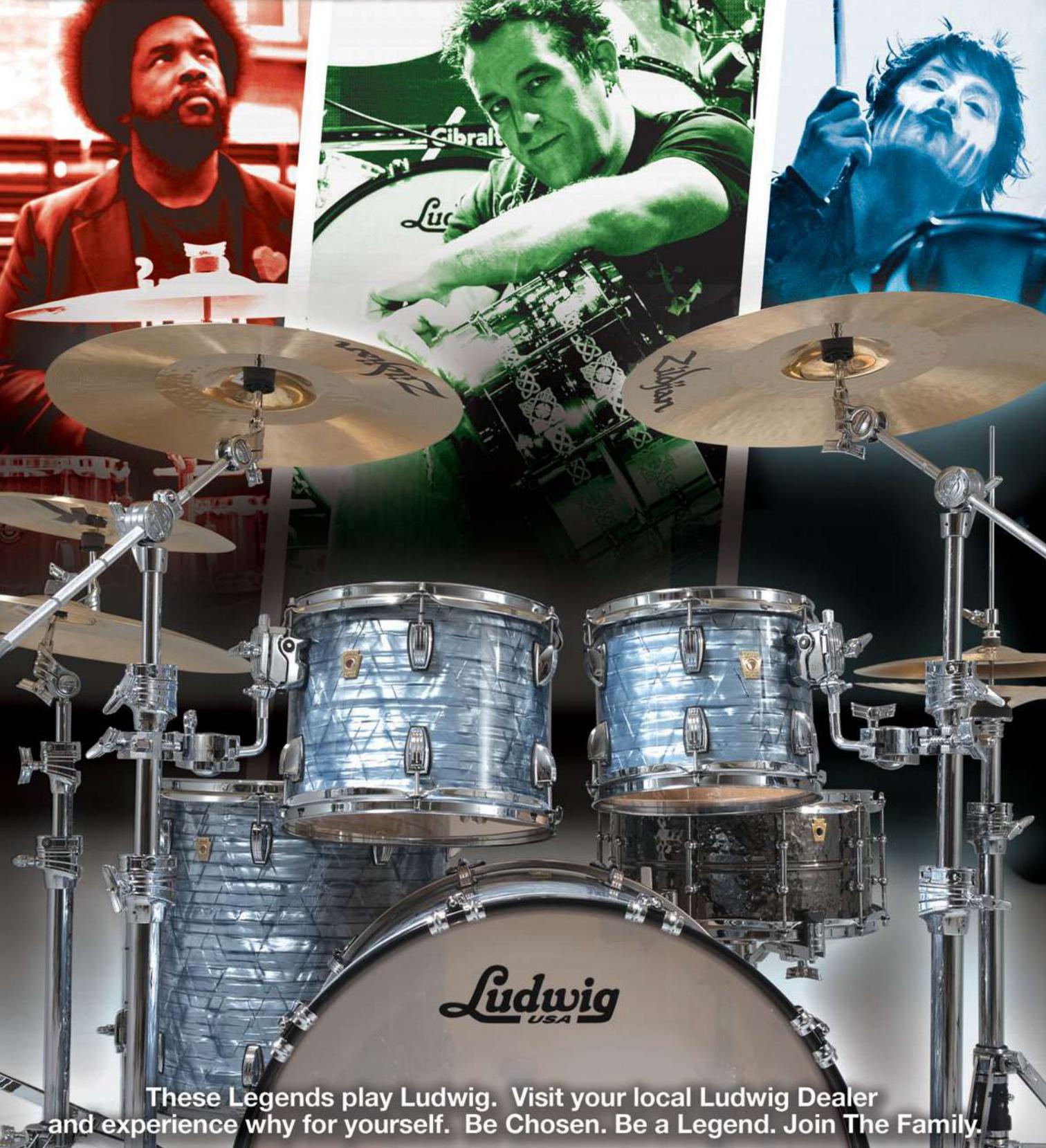
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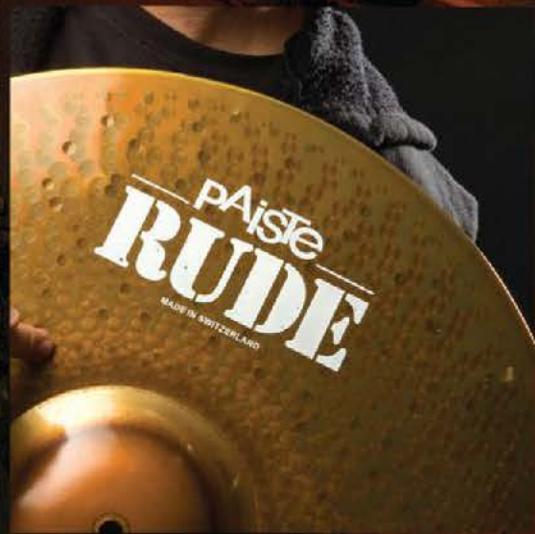
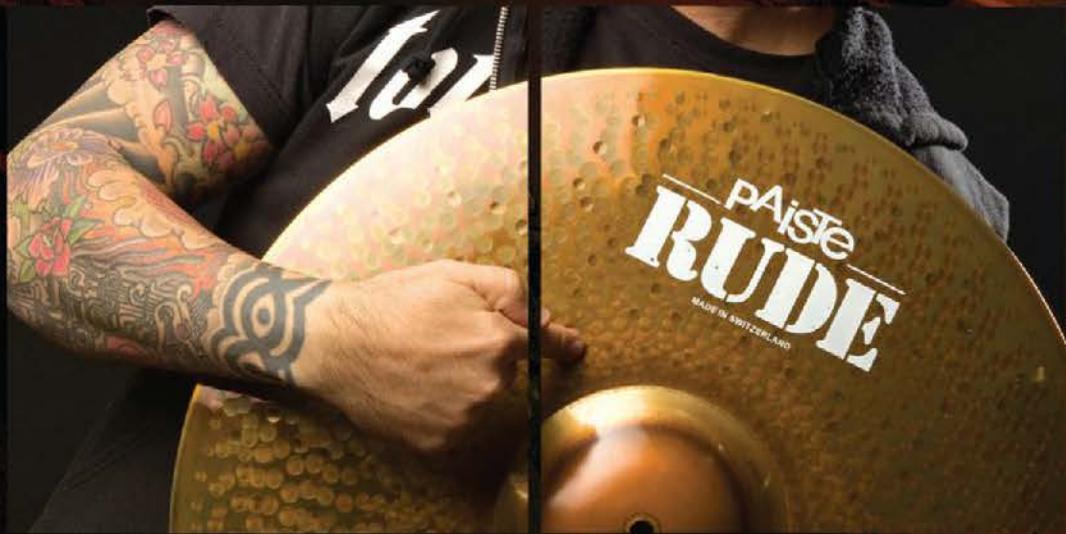
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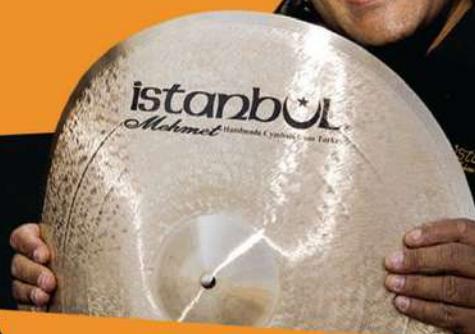
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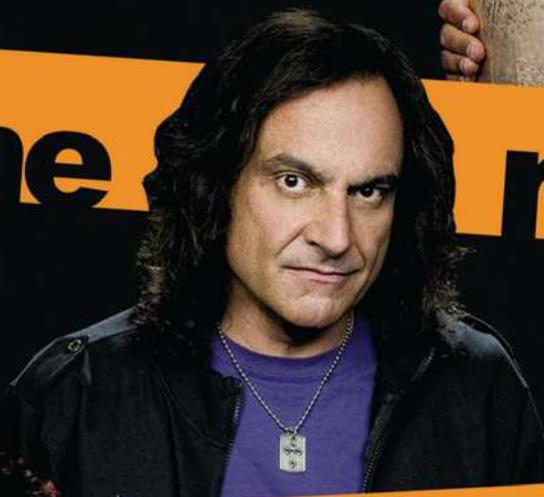
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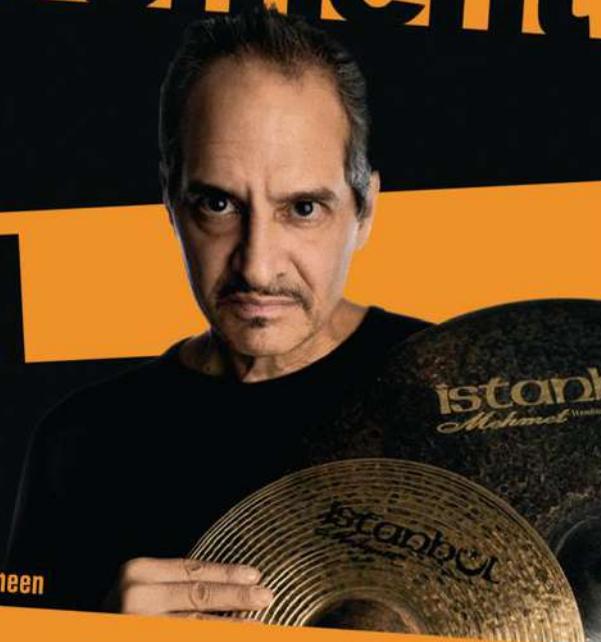


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On the Cover

50 JIM RILEY

by Ilya Stemkovsky

For more than a decade he's rocked the world's greatest concert venues with the superstars Rascal Flatts, in the process setting a standard for drumming in modern country music. But he's just as influential when he's home, guiding the careers of talented up-and-comers via his popular tutorials, well-attended clinics, and creative in-person lessons.

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- Gemini Syndrome's **Brian Steele Medina**

30 SHOP TALK **Gregg Keplinger** by Jason Sutter

When heavyweight drum stars like Soundgarden's Matt Cameron, Death Cab for Cutie's Jason McGerr, and studio and touring ace Matt Chamberlain get obsessive with a drum maker, you *know* there's something to the story.

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When it came out more than forty years ago, it blew open the doors for what was possible in jazz—and blew by those who preferred living in the past. Today, its double-drummer-fueled grooves still seem years ahead of their time.

36 PORTRAITS **Amadeus** by Billy Amendola

The drummer otherwise known as Antwan J. Thompson lays down killer beats for R&B royalty like Diddy, Chris Brown, and Trey Songz. See where a childhood geeking out on Steve Gadd, Dennis Chambers, and Vinnie Colaiuta can get you?

40 2014 READERS POLL RESULTS

This year's poll includes the typical mix of established icons and first-timer faves. Find out who's who in the hearts and minds of the world's most knowledgeable drumming fans.

62 STEVEN SCHICK by Will Romano

Not many drummers have the conviction to put all their eggs in the basket of a brand-new, esoteric musical movement. But we're talking about a guy who will walk hundreds of miles for love and dedicate hundreds of hours to learning a single piece of music. We should all be so courageous!

86 UP & COMING **Rachel Fuhrer** by Stephen Bidwell

"John Bonham is number one for me. Elvin Jones. Billy Cobham. I go through phases of pretty much everything." For sure, Ume's blistering indie rock is the better for its drummer's diverse tastes—and intense delivery.

Cover and contents photos by Rick Malkin

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Both Sides Now



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In and Out of Context

At the *MD* offices, as you might expect, you'll find some serious music obsessives on staff. Much of the talk around the lunchroom table has to do with albums new and old, gigs we're playing or checking out, and debates on all sorts of musical topics. One subject that's always good to chew on is the importance of historical context. In other words, how connected is a piece of music to its time and place? Can a recording ever exist separately from the circumstances under which it was born? Although we don't usually intend to get into this stuff as we're stuffing our faces, we find it coming up all the time in conversation. Personally, I see both sides of the argument as valid, and fun to consider.

Cultural and sonic trends cannot help but have an impact on musicians in the act of creation, even if the players are consciously—or unconsciously—acting *against* current fads. But, as listeners, we're not always aware of the year a record came out or where it falls within the artist's discography. Say you've just become acquainted with Pink Floyd, to choose an example. You heard "Have a Cigar" on satellite radio, and you're hungry for more. Do you pick up *Wish You Were Here*, the album the track is from? Do you go back to the group's first disc, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, so you can understand Floyd's origins, and then go forward from there? Or do you just start clicking through random tracks online without knowing when or where they were recorded? You could make a case for each.

An album like Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew*, which is this month's Encore, is another worthy case study. You would have a point if you said the 1970 recording just fell down to earth from outer space—a faraway planet where drummers come in pairs, jazz musicians don't exactly swing, and great improvisers channel their skills into maintaining a vibe more than moving through a cascade of ideas. Conversely, you could say that *Bitches Brew* was a logical extension of the slow-burning groove concepts Davis began exploring on his previous album, 1969's *In a Silent Way*. There's no wrong answer, just great music.

While you listen to music, do you ever consider the times in which it was made? When I heard Jeff Beck's 1968 solo debut, *Truth*, long after becoming a huge fan of Led Zeppelin, I was surprised to find that Mickey Waller's drum sound was remarkably similar to John Bonham's on Zeppelin's first album—also from '68, also tracked in London. Historical context showed me that Bonham's massive tones were in part a product of the time and place.

And when you discover an artist you like, whether it's through a performance or a recording, how do you tend to go from there? Do you head right back to the beginning, or do you allow life's inevitable messiness to lead you around more or less randomly? Maybe it's a combination, as it is for me. At times I've found it makes sense to begin at square one. For instance, I got the debut EP *Chronic Town* after discovering R.E.M.'s fifth album, *Document*, in junior high, and worked my way forward. And then there's the zigzag approach, as I've taken with the zigzagging music of people like Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart. I don't consult a discography; I just let my friends or my whims guide me toward what to check out next. With Beefheart, no matter what other gems turn up, I find that my favorite album is his final recording, *Ice Cream for Crow*, from 1982. Can I explain that? Yep—it's the first one I heard, and I couldn't believe my ears.



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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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JANUARY ISSUE

As an old-school type of guy I like to have the latest issue of *MD* in my hands to read. I appreciate that every issue comes to me in digital form, often a day or two earlier than my hard copy, but I still wait for my magazine to come in the mail.

The January 2014 issue was great. Everything from Michael Parillo's Editor's Overview explaining his appreciation for Abe Laboriel Jr. while sitting in the nosebleeds at the Barclays Center to Bernie Schallehn's advice on how to handle bandleaders and drumming

styles to Rascal Flatts drummer Jim Riley's interview with another Nashville heavyweight, Seth Rausch.

What I really liked about the Seth Rausch article was his admiration for the late Carlos Vega. I too am heavily influenced by Carlos; however, I hadn't heard his playing on the Matt Rollings CD *Balconies*. I ordered a copy from Amazon.com, which is now in heavy rotation. The CD shows another side of Carlos's playing that I'd never heard. Think Michel Camilo Trio, back when Dave Weckl was in the drum chair. What a gem of a find, and all because of the sidebar of Seth's

favorite recordings.

Finally, what a nice tribute to a true legend in the drumming world, Ed Shaughnessy. A beautifully written story by Rick Mattingly describing Ed's career, which spanned more than five decades. Keep up the great work, *MD*, and thanks for making this forty-seven-year-old drummer feel like a kid every time my issue arrives in the mail.

John Rogers

CHUCK SILVERMAN

I've been an avid subscriber to *Modern Drummer* for over thirty-five years and counting. I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed Chuck Silverman's article in the February 2014 issue, "Latin Rhythms in Pop Music, Part 2: Afro-Cuban." I would like to point out that the 6/8 half-time shuffle groove that Chuck credits to Adam Deitch was predated by Omar Hakim on his 1989 album, *Rhythm Deep*. This four-over-three groove is played in the bridge section of the closing track, "The Mystic's Glance."

David Novis

MELVIN DAVIS

I am a longtime subscriber and try to read every issue cover to cover. With the individual drummer articles, I've found that after a few paragraphs I start to develop a feeling of whether I would enjoy talking to that particular artist or not. No offense to anyone, but it seems that some folks come across better than others in print. So I started reading the Melvin Davis article (What Do You Know About...?, February 2014)...wow! What a great story of persistence and being true to yourself. Mr. Davis certainly deserves any success he gets from his music. Congrats, and thank you for sharing your story!

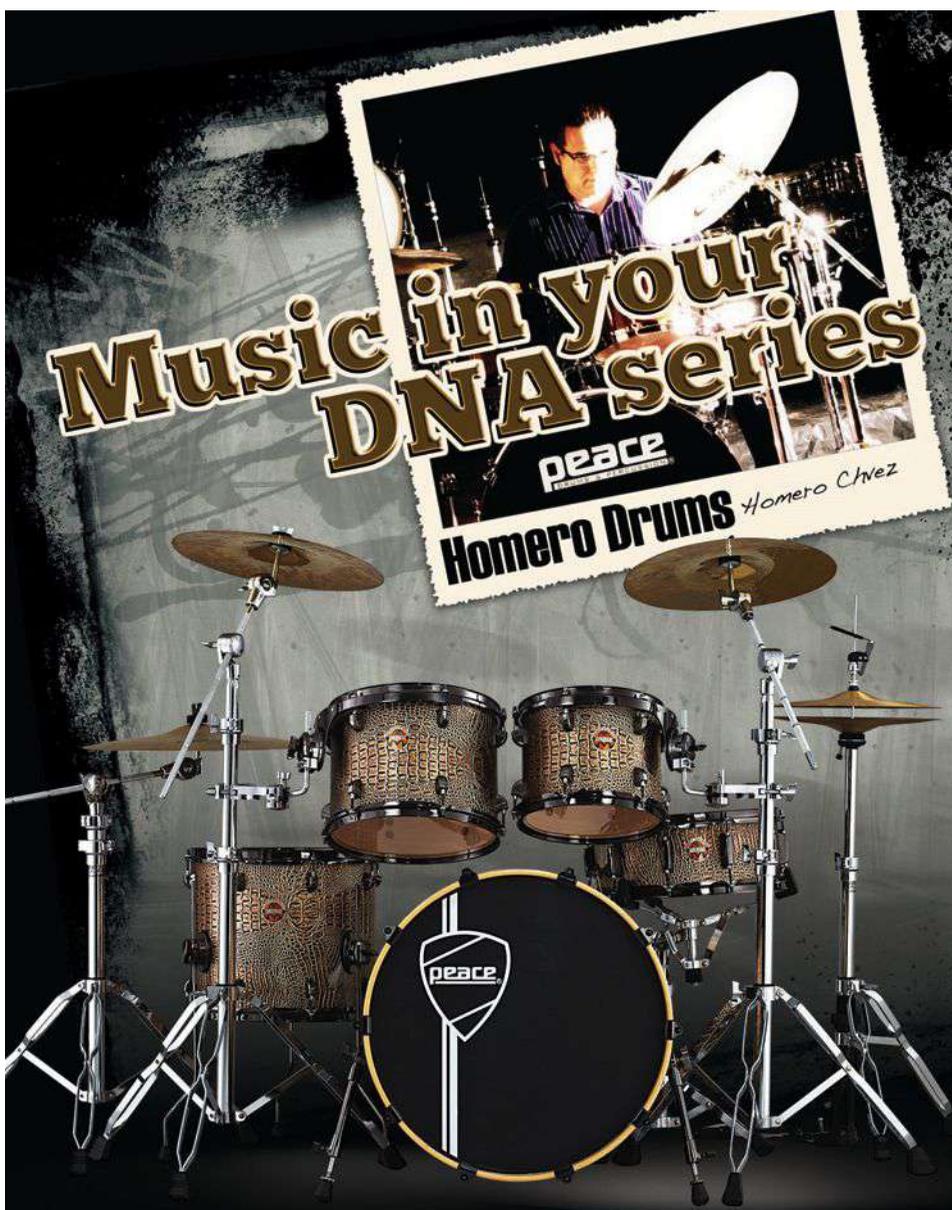
Tony Stephan

MIKE PORTNOY

I really enjoyed the recent interview with Mike Portnoy (October 2013). I think his humility and his aim to touch people while drumming are really notable and inspiring. Furthermore, reading the article brought me to the past September, when I met him during the Winery Dogs' European tour, one of the best experiences I ever had. So thank you very much, *MD*—greetings from Italy!

Alessio Poggio

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UPDATE



Logan Sorenson

Cage the Elephant's **JARED CHAMPION** Getting freaky with it

Cage the Elephant's third album of genre-crunching power pop, *Melophobia*, channels garage rock, punk, and '80s alternative rock with abandon. Drummer Jared Champion handles these sprawling rhythmic collisions like a thumping Keith Moon as often as he plays it straight in the pocket. "Rhythmically speaking, this album was pretty challenging," Champion says. "I wanted my drum and percussion parts to stand out but feel right for the song. 'Telescope' and 'Cigarette Daydreams' are standard 4/4 beats, but there are several songs on the album that have meter shifts. 'Spider Head' goes from 4/4 to 6/8 at the end, and

the pre-chorus to 'It's Just Forever' has a breakdown that's not in any particular time signature. It's totally based on feel, and the band just followed me. Same thing with the drum break in 'Teeth.'"

Champion, who plays a Gretsch USA Custom four-piece kit (14x24 kick, 6.5x14 snare, 8x12 rack tom, 16x16 floor tom) and Zildjian cymbals (14" A Custom hi-hats, 14" A Custom FX, 18" K Custom Dark crash, 19" Constantinople crash/ride, 20" Medium ride), was also unafraid to experiment with found sounds on *Melophobia*. "On one track," he explains, "I played a cardboard box as the kick drum and a marching snare case as the snare drum. I also played a toy

kit, a metal trash can, a hot dog pan, shakers, tambourines, and claps.

"'Teeth' was particularly interesting," Champion adds. "We ran ten-foot cardboard tubes to my snare and kick and placed mics in the other ends. We then ran those mics through a DigiTech Whammy pedal and plug-ins. The bass melody is actually coming from my kick and snare. The low notes are the bass drum, and the higher ones are my snare drum. Then we looped the last cymbal crash and threw some horns over the top. That's one of my favorite parts on the album."

Ken Micallef

Gemini Syndrome's

BRIAN STEELE MEDINA

Finding a balance between rocking and really, *really* rocking

With a background in drum corps and an equal love of '90s alternative rock, contemporary classical music, and hip-hop, Brian Steele Medina approaches Gemini Syndrome's pummeling rock with a unique brand of laser-like focus and execution. "From age four," he says, "I was the quintessential kid that pulled out all the pots and pans, went to town, and drove my mom crazy. I've always been a student and always learned from teachers. I studied with Mel Zelnick [Benny Goodman] for about six years, and he got me reading music and into *Syncopation*. Later I got into marching band, and that was the first time school was fun for me. We were very aware who was coming from drum corps, like Chad Sexton and Vinnie Paul, and we'd take the time to learn all their stuff because we knew there would be cool drumming in there.

"When you come out of drum corps," Medina continues, "you have crazy hand chops but no feet chops, so I was in a constant practice mode of having my feet

catch up to my hands, playing along to Pantera, Tool, and Primus and also working out of Gary Chester's *The New Breed*."

The dark, urgent songs of Gemini Syndrome's debut album, *Lux*, give Medina ample opportunity to exhibit his highly developed control at the kit—though wrenches do get thrown into the works. "Producer Kevin Churko, who's also a drummer, would have me do a take that I liked," Medina says, "then another where I went *crazy*. Then he'd ask if there was anything that I liked from those takes. He wanted that energy. It brought me out of my shell to the point where I wasn't holding anything back. I didn't want to overplay and be *that* guy, but I trusted him."

Watching Medina live, you immediately notice his interesting kit setup and visual flair. "Everything's completely flat, and I'm a heavy tom-groove-oriented drummer," he explains. "I have one tom to the left of my hi-hat, one above my snare, and two to my right. When I want to play my two lowest toms, I'm hitting on both sides, left



Ethan Edwards

and right. I'll also work in alternate stickings, stick tosses, and cymbal stops to make the show look interesting without taking away from any of the parts. It's my own personal challenge to take something that sounds basic on the recording and figure out a way to do it live so that the audience wonders, *How is that even happening?*"

Ilya Stemkovsky

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Steve Smith and **Selvaganesh** with **Zakir Hussain** and Masters of Percussion. "I'm thrilled to be one of the musicians on this tour," Smith tells *MD*. "It's an invitation to play percussion-based music at the highest level. Zakir has taught me much over the past ten years, and to be on an extended tour together will be the perfect situation to develop an even deeper musical rapport. I look forward to playing with, and learning from, Zakir, Selvaganesh, and the other fantastic musicians on the MOP tour!"

OUT NOW



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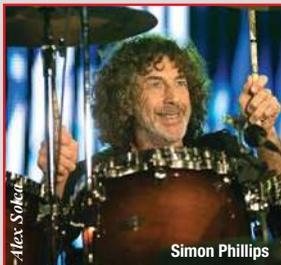


Tré Cool is now playing SJC Custom, which has released a limited-edition drumset and snare honoring the Green Day drummer. Only thirteen Tré Cool Bunny kits and matching snares will be available for purchase. "I knew Tré was a huge vintage drum collector," SJC's Mike Ciprari says, "so I wanted to design a kit that paid homage to a classic design yet had the Tré Cool flair to it." The drums were inspired by Ludwig's 1940 "top hat and cane" finish. SJC is also making twenty Dookie 20th Anniversary snare drums (shown at left at the 2014 NAMM Show) to celebrate Green Day's 1994 breakout album.

Maik Feldmann (Betontod), **Gerit Lamm** (Xandria), **Jón Geir Jóhannsson** (Skálmöld), **Paul Oliver** (O.D.S.), **Gareth Hunt** (Buffalo Summer), **Tim Bye** (Jake Emlyn, Tony Hadley), and **Christian Mardini** (Blacklite District) are playing Paiste cymbals.



NEWS



Simon Phillips

SIMON PHILLIPS LEAVES TOTO

Steely Dan/Mike Stern Drummer Keith Carlock Begins Live and Studio Work With the Band

Simon Phillips has announced his amicable exit from the group in which he admirably replaced the legendary Jeff Porcaro twenty-one years ago. "Being a member of this band was a wonderful experience," Phillips posted on his Facebook page on January 24, "and I have learned so much. I greatly appreciate how Luke, Dave, and Mike welcomed me at such a difficult time in the band's career after Jeff's passing. I want to thank Toto fans around the world for embracing me, for their genuine enthusiasm, and

their love and support." Carlock shared this on his own Facebook page: "I am absolutely thrilled to officially announce that I have been asked to take over the drum chair for Toto, and of course I gladly accepted! I am very excited to join this legendary band, VERY big shoes to fill, but I'm gonna do my thing and have fun!" The drummer, who added that a new Toto recording is in the works, will make his first appearances with the band in Japan in late April. Look for more with Carlock in an upcoming issue of *MD*.

DINAH GRETSCH, SHEILA E AMONG RECIPIENTS OF 2014 SHE ROCKS AWARD

Dinah Gretsch, executive vice president and CFO of the Gretsch Company, has been honored by the Women's International Music Network (WiMN) with the organization's 2014 She Rocks Award. As a leader in the music industry, Gretsch was recognized for her unique talents, accomplishments, and philanthropic works. The presentation took place at a ceremony on January 24 at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel in Anaheim, California, during the 2014 NAMM trade show. Other 2014 She Rocks honorees include percussion icon Sheila E, Hendrix Experience CEO Janie L. Hendrix, Guitar Institute of Technology program director Beth Marlis, West Music Company president and CEO Robin Walenta, Seymour Duncan custom pickup winder Maricela Juarez, singer-songwriter Gaby Moreno, and guitarist Malina Moye. "I'm very proud to recognize the legacy of these women," WiMN founder and She Rocks Awards host Laura B. Whitmore says. "By inspiring and encouraging fellow women in the industry, each one of these recipients embodies the spirit of the She Rocks Awards."



Dinah Gretsch



Alex Solica

Sheila E at the 2014 Imagine Party, hosted by the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus and the NAMM Foundation this past January 24, the same day the percussionist was honored at the She Rocks Awards



Sabian CEO Andy Zildjian and Crescent CEO Michael Vosbein

SABIAN ANNOUNCES ALLIANCE WITH CYMBAL MASTERS AND ACQUISITION OF BILLDIDIT INC.

To meet the demands for new cymbals by customers and artists, Cymbal Masters of Kennesaw, Georgia, will begin offering select models of its Crescent line in North America, handmade to its specifications by Sabian. "I'm very happy to be working with Cymbal Masters," Sabian CEO Andy Zildjian says. "I'm impressed with their passion for and knowledge of cymbals. This is an opportunity to expand our tradition of hand-hammering cymbals, originally brought to Sabian by Keroppe Zilcan." Crescent CEO Michael Vosbein adds, "This new relationship offers Crescent the

chance to expand our sound palette with production on two continents, taking advantage of the best craftsmanship in both the old and new worlds."

In other news, it's been announced that the drum hardware and accessories maker Billdidit, of Nova Scotia, Canada, is now part of the Sabian group of companies. According to Sabian, Billdidit hopes to spark innovation in the music products industry by offering one-stop shopping for design assistance, 3D printing, advanced CNC machining, and electroplating.



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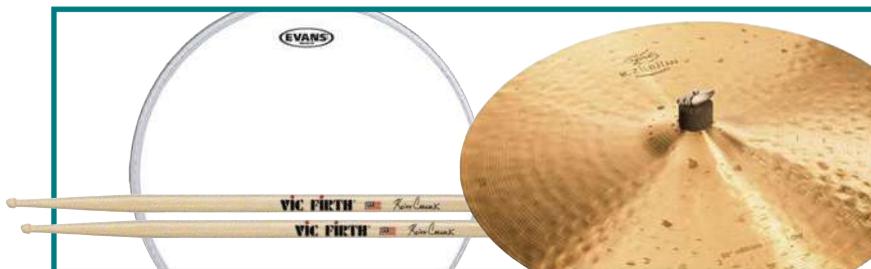
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This Month: **Toto's**

KEITH CARLOCK

The absolute essentials for me to achieve my sound are specific cymbals, sticks, and bass drum tuning. I love the open bass drum sound when I can get away with it in certain musical situations—no muffling, no hole in the front head. Just wide-open tone, like my toms. The Evans G1 Clear head on the batter side helps me achieve the perfect balance of low end, sustain, and sonic control. With that vibe underneath it all, I gravitate toward big, washy, and warm cymbals with lots of sustain. My Zildjian K series cymbals give me that, especially my beloved 20" and 22" K Constantinople Medium Low rides. I ride and crash on all my cymbals, so I find ones that have both qualities and also have some stick definition. And lastly, my Vic Firth Signature model sticks help me execute my ideas and get the sound that I hear on the cymbals and drums. They feel great in the hands due to the lacquer, and the special dimensions make playing my ideas a lot easier. And then, of course, playing from my heart and soul every time I sit down behind the drumkit helps me achieve my sound as well!



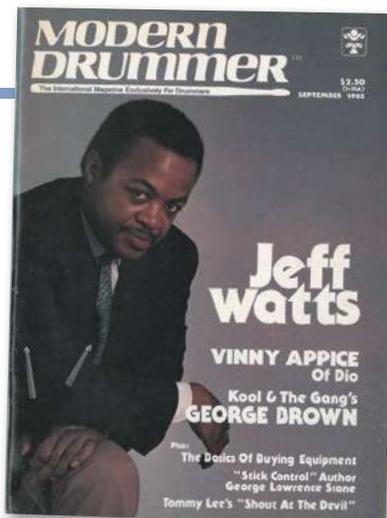
BACK *Through the* STACK

In September 1985, we asked the Wynton Marsalis Quintet's **Jeff Watts** to describe his use of nuance and shading.

It has to do with the displacement of a musical idea. If an idea is musical in one part of a tune, then it can be placed in another part of the continuum and still be musical. I try to learn fragments of music and inject them at different points. There are two ways to approach an abstract conception of things. You can learn all the possibilities of what to play and how to execute it. What I've been trying to do is take examples of different musical motifs, which may come out rhythmically, tonally, or thematically, and initiate them in different places—maybe half a beat earlier or in the middle of a phrase. I got this idea from listening to Brazilian music, where they have these fills that sound kind of inverted coming in on the other side of the beat. Whenever they come in, it's like at the top of the tune. So I'll hear figures from, say, a Count Basie tune, and I'll invert that and turn it around, and that'll create a theme. The band will play off that, and it'll create a fugal effect.

I also try to take things from different parts of the same tune—maybe an idea that was left over from the middle of someone's

solo—and I'll invert it and come up with something new. Something that reinforced this concept was a live tape of Thelonious Monk and Charlie Rouse playing "Well You Needn't." What Monk did as an accompaniment figure was play the B-section material under Charlie's solo on the A section; then, on the bridge, he would reharmonize the A-section theme under the solo. I looked upon that concept as something that was abstract yet simple. So with that displacement of ideas, I'll try to imply different parts of different spaces of the musical continuum yet allow everyone to have a clear idea of where they are at all times.



To read the entire Jeff Watts feature—and all the other great material from the September 1985 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.

Matt Greiner
AUGUST BURNS RED
Model SGRE

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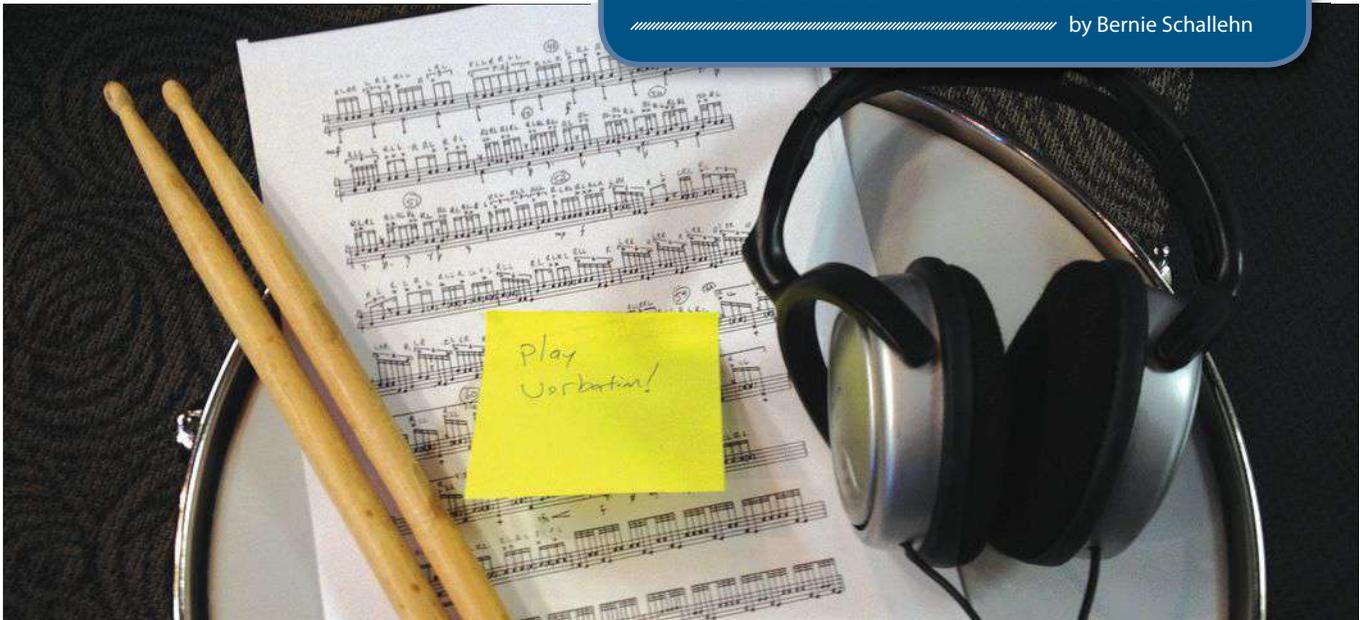
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Married to the Demo

A local recording studio owner throws me a good amount of work. Much of it comes from young solo artists who arrive with a demo they've made with their friends. Often the drumming on them is pretty bad. Here's my problem. Sometimes when I lay down a drum track that I think is right for the song, the artist ends up complaining that I didn't play it like the demo. I don't want my work going out into the world sounding "wrong," so I feel I'm in a no-win situation. Do I simply sacrifice my integrity, recut the track to sound like the demo, and collect my fee?
M.S.

Here's a story for you. A young screenwriter goes to Hollywood, and he's extremely lucky because he soon connects with a major studio head and sells him a script. A couple years pass, the movie is made, and it hits the theaters. When the screenwriter goes to the premiere, he's never been so disappointed in his entire life. The movie looks *nothing* like the script he wrote. Characters, settings, and plot lines have all been changed.

A few days later—in a rage—the screenwriter demands a meeting with the studio head. "You changed everything about my story!" he screams. "You destroyed my script!" Having been through this scenario many times before, the studio head just sits there calmly. Finally, he speaks: "Son, that script you sold us was indeed yours...up until the time when you cashed the check."

In your case, you're a hired gun. You get paid to track drums. *Some* of your clients aren't happy with your product because they've gotten so used to the drumming they've heard on their demo. Here's what you could do....

Sit with the artist and explain—in layman's terms—*why* you changed the drumming from what was tracked on the demo. (Don't slander the demo drummer, because he or she is probably the artist's friend.) See if you can find a happy medium between what you want to play and what the artist wants to hear. You've heard the complaint in a global sense—"It's not like the

demo"—but push for specifics. The request might be for more "crash and bash," more fills, or even more cowbell. You won't know unless you ask, and the changes might be very slight. You're forgetting that everything about this project is the artist's. You're merely one person hired to help make it happen. You're a cog in the machine.

If the two of you can agree on some changes, do your best to lay down a track that satisfies both parties. Should the artist not want to discuss anything, demanding that you play like the demo or else you'll be replaced, then suck it up and pocket your pay. You can't please everyone in this world, and it's a recipe for madness should you try.

I understand your concern about integrity regarding your work. You said that some of the artists you work with are married to their demos, but not all of them. Do some soul searching. Can you live with *some* tracks going out into the world if they aren't up to your standards? Also, your opinions and prejudices may be getting in the way of hearing certain demo drumming as acceptable for you to emulate. When I listen and isolate drum tracks on a song, I might find myself thinking, *Hmm...I would have put a cymbal crash there or That fill isn't needed.* But these are my opinions and not necessarily what *has* to be in the song.

We're all comfortable with what's familiar to us. These artists have probably listened to their demos endless times. It may sound like crap to you, but they're close to it. When changes for the finished product—like your drums—come in and disrupt that homeostasis, they can sound and feel foreign. Keep that in mind when someone complains about your drumming. In other words, don't take it personally.



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



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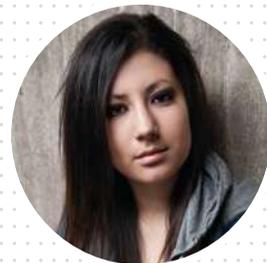
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ZILDJIAN

KEROPE SERIES CYMBALS

by Michael Dawson

Zildjian spent the past couple years developing a new line of cymbals with New York City studio drummer/composer Zach Danziger that would recall the worn-in look, soft feel, and warm tones of highly coveted models made by the company in the '50s and '60s, while also providing extra projection and durability for contemporary playing styles. This new

Authentic vintage vibe plus modern dependability makes for some of the most intriguing creations coming out of Zildjian's Sound Lab in Norwell, Massachusetts.

series, which is called Kerope in tribute to the former Zildjian president and master craftsman who established the thin and highly resonant K line in the late 1800s, comprises 14" and 15" hi-hats (\$479.95 and \$519.95) and 18", 19", 20", and 22"

crash/rides (\$349.95, \$389.95, \$409.95, and \$479.95). Each piece is handcrafted in the United States from proprietary Zildjian bronze and features a patina finish and a small K Kerope logo.

14" AND 15" HI-HATS

The two sets of Kerope hi-hats have an old-school look, and they elicited similar darker tones, but the pairs performed differently from one another. The 15" pair have a larger playing area, and they had a deeper, darker, and more complex stick sound with a low pitch and thick foot "chick." The stick articulation wasn't super-clean, but the cymbals offered a firmer feel than some

vintage hi-hats, which tend to have a more papery timbre. (The Kerope hi-hats were intentionally designed to project better in live situations.) I preferred these chunkier-sounding hats when paired up with some earthy-sounding drums and when struck more forcefully with the shoulder of the stick, à la R&B greats Al Jackson Jr. and Steve Jordan. Some jazz drummers might prefer these for their deeper and wider sound (think Brian Blade meets late-era Tony Williams) and their ability to remain expressive at lower dynamics.

The 14" Kerope hi-hats proved to be more versatile, with a smoother, crisper sound, whether I was playing classic Papa Jo Jones-style swing, funky Bernard Purdie-type "barks," sticky reggae shuffles, or intense indie-rock grooves. I compared these hats to my favorite set of A Zildjians from the '60s; they had a similar soft feel

and warm sizzle, but with a bit more “edginess.” Danziger’s reference for the Kerope hi-hats was a video of Steve Gadd playing with the funk/fusion band Stuff back in the ‘70s, and they’re pretty much spot on.

20" AND 22" MODELS

The 22" Kerope was the first cymbal that Danziger and Zildjian worked on, and it had a gorgeous, wide wash and a clean, low-pitched stick sound. I recently relearned Tony Williams’ solo on the Miles Davis track “Seven Steps to Heaven,” and this cymbal was the closest I could find to replicating that classic ride tone. It wasn’t as trashy as some of the company’s “old-K style” Constantinople models, and the bell has a lower profile, which gave it a more integrated sound that elicited a nice, warm wash. The crash of the 22" was big, dramatic, and lush.

The 20" Kerope was a little less washy

than the 22", and it had a trashier undertone, making the crash faster, more explosive, and grittier. The stick articulation was a bit clearer, but the sustain wasn’t as controlled as it is with some 20" rides. The two worked great as a pair, with the 22" better suited for heavier, washier riding, while the 20" provided more clarity from the tip of the stick.

18" AND 19" MODELS

These two cymbals functioned well as crashes and as rides, and they were my favorites in the series. The 18" had everything I look for in a large crash, from the warm and explosive attack to the even sustain and smooth decay. The big surprise was how well it functioned as a ride cymbal, with a clear, higher-pitched stick articulation and a breathy, controllable wash. I love post-bop great Joe Chambers’ clean but earthy ride sound

on classic Blue Note records, like Wayne Shorter’s *Adam’s Apple* and Joe Henderson’s *Mode for Joe*, and the 18" Kerope had a similar vibe.

The 19" Kerope had a wider and more complex crash than the 18", and the ride sound was bigger than I expected. For most of my acoustic gigs, where I’m playing everything from Sonny Rollins hard bop to Surfari surf rock and Jimi Hendrix jams, I’d be content using just the 19" and the 14" Kerope hi-hats, as they can cover a wide range of styles and textures and respond very well to changes in touch and dynamics. The same can be said of the other Keropes: These are highly musical cymbals designed to provide vintage-loving drummers with more dependable instruments for everyday use.

zildjian.com

PROMARK

SELECT BALANCE DRUMSTICKS

by Michael Dawson

After investing considerable time, effort, and money into redesigning its drumhead business with the Evans Level 360 line, D’Addario has since

Is it time to say goodbye to the seemingly random way we categorize drumstick sizes? With the streamlined Select Balance series, Promark thinks so.

focused on redeveloping its drumstick brand, Promark. The first step was analyzing each part of the manufacturing process to determine where changes needed to be made to improve the product. Since D’Addario owns its sawmill and sources its own wood, the company was able to tweak specific details in order to create what it claims to be “a high percentage of sticks with a parallel grain.”

The most notable change was that Promark abandoned traditional lathes for a new “centerless” grinding system based on a digitally controlled wheel. The company also invested in new weight- and tone-sorting equipment to improve the consistency between sticks and from pair to pair, and it’s implementing a reforestation initiative where it replaces every tree it cuts down with five new ones.

To launch its new and improved sticks, D’Addario developed the Promark Select Balance series, which comprises the five most popular diameters—.535" (7A), .550" and .565" (5A), .580" (55A), and .595" (5B)—with a shoulder taper that’s cut to create either more forward throw or enhanced rebound. All of the sticks are made from hickory and come with a versatile teardrop tip. The change in taper makes a significant difference in

the response of the sticks, with the Forward Balance versions having a heavier feel and more powerful sound, while the Rebound Balance sticks feel lighter and quicker.

In a blind playing test on a practice pad and a drumset, we were able to easily discern the two types. Although it’s not as significant a difference as there is between maple and hickory sticks (a lighter versus a more solid feel), having the two taper options does allow you to fine-tune your stick of choice. Or you can mix and match the two, like using the Rebound version in your ride hand for more dynamic control and the Forward version in your snare hand for stronger and more powerful backbeats. The list price is \$15.25 per pair.

promark.com





Lemon Scented Gum



Jarrah/Lemon Scented Gum

BRADY

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modern drummer.com

BARITONE SERIES SNARE DRUMS

by Michael Dawson

Brady snare drums are coveted by top studio and touring drummers for their unmatched power and thick, meaty tones. All of these limited instruments are handmade in the company's facility in Australia, and they're offered with traditional ply shells, one-piece

The trademark Brady "thwack" with an extended low-end response makes the Baritone series a serious force to be reckoned with.

solid shells, or block stave shells formed by gluing together vertical chunks of wood. Brady creates its drums from super-hard indigenous Australian timbers, which also contributes to the accentuated attack and focused sustain.

New for 2014 is the Baritone series, which was devised by drum builder and company founder Chris Brady in order to lower the fundamental note of the shell for drummers who prefer deeper snare tones. To do this, Brady carves in the center portion of the outer wall of the shell, between the lugs, lowering the overall mass and thickness, which translates into a lower natural pitch. Company rep Kelly Brady says that Baritone drums "behave as if they're thinner. It's like a cross between a block and a ply shell." It's an ingenious idea, so we were very curious to check out the results.

Brady sent us two Baritone snares: an 8x14 Lemon Scented Gum and a 7x13 Jarrah/Lemon Scented Gum. Each came with a Remo Coated CS batter head, ten tube lugs, 2.3 mm triple-flange steel hoops, and washers on the tension rods to help maintain tuning. The 8x14 was a beastly drum, and when tuned medium (85 on a DrumDial) it produced a deep, throaty sound with useful, musical overtones; a strong, smacking attack; and a crisp snare response. When I tuned the batter head up as high as it could go (90), the overall tonal characteristics remained fairly consistent (thick, deep, punchy, crisp), but the overtones became shorter and the attack tightened up for more "pop." As I explored the entire tuning range, I found that the drum sounded consistently great at any tension, which is perfect for studio drummers who often make slight tuning adjustments to match the pitch of the drum with the key of the song being recorded. If I *had* to choose a preferred tuning, however, I felt that this drum outperformed many others in the fatback low-mid range.

For tighter tensions, Brady's 7x13 Jarrah/Lemon Scented Gum is where it's at. The combination of the lower fundamental of the Baritone shell and the smaller diameter created an exceptional snare sound with a pleasing high-end attack that was always supported by fat, beefy low tones. So go ahead and crank it—it won't choke out. Or detune it all the way for an ultimate disco punch that also contains some crucial high-end clarity. For all-purpose use, medium tension provided the best blend of shell tone and stick "crack," while medium-tight brought out the most "bark." Both drums possessed supreme presence, regardless of how they were tuned.

bradydrums.com



AQUARIAN

MODERN VINTAGE II AND DEEP VINTAGE II DRUMHEADS

by Michael Dawson

Aquarian's Vintage series started with two single-ply coated models, the Modern Vintage and the American Vintage, the latter featuring an oversize hoop to accommodate the diameter inconsistencies that often plague older drum shells. Both are designed to make drums look and sound as if they're outfitted with calfskin heads. The series now

includes two double-ply models: Modern Vintage II and Deep Vintage II. Modern Vintage II heads are made using two plies of 7 mil film, while Deep Vintage II heads have two 10 mil plies.

Combining 2-ply punch and durability with exceptional warmth and depth, these old-style drumheads are bound to find a permanent home among those craving classic tones from more modern-sounding drums.

Neither of these Vintage series heads comes with the oversize American Vintage hoop, so the new models aren't meant to be a two-ply solution for older, out-of-round drums. Rather, they're a more durable, punchier, and deeper-sounding option for drummers looking to warm up the sound (i.e., fewer high overtones) of

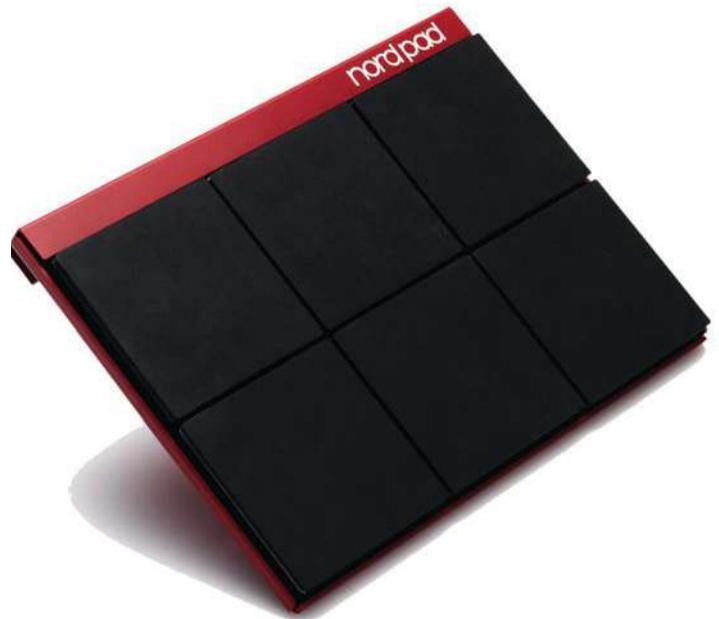
their modern-made drums. We checked out the new heads on some cherry-shell toms, which had come with single-ply coated heads on both sides. When tuned to their lowest possible pitches with the stock heads, the drums produced a warm, clear, sustaining sound, but the attack was a bit papery. After swapping out the batter with the Modern

attack. Some drummers might prefer that, especially when playing miked up; those who like punchy, kick-like tom tones might favor it as well. If you're more of a meat-and-potatoes drummer who milks the most sound out of each stroke, these heads might leave you feeling a bit naked. I was able to achieve a little more sustain and decay from the DVII's when I tuned them a touch higher. In fact, the sweet spot seemed to be about a quarter turn tighter than the MVII and the stock single-ply batter. For really tight bebop-style tones, the MVII offered the best combination of articulation and openness, but both models performed best in the low and medium-low tuning range.

The bass drum versions of the MVII and DVII come with a vertical felt strip adhered to the underside of the head, and each model provided a warm, classic sound, whether the kick was tuned low and open for an orchestral-type "puff" or slightly higher and muffled for a clean, Porcaro-like punch. The DVII produced a chestier thump, while the MVII had a longer sustain with airier overtones. aquariandrumheads.com

The difference between the Deep Vintage II and the stock heads was more drastic. Most notably, the decay of the DVII was significantly shorter, so there wasn't much sound lingering on after the initial





NORD DRUM 2 AND PAD

by David Ciauro

Since the '80s, the Swedish company Nord has been a trailblazer in the realm of digital percussion. Its latest offerings are the Nord Drum 2—a unique drum synthesizer with a vast library of sounds and ways to manipulate them—and the six-surface Nord Pad for triggering.

TECH SPECS

The Drum 2 (\$699) is a six-channel percussion synthesizer that divides the sound generation into three sections (Tone, Noise, and Click), allowing users to have specific control over tonal manipulation in real time.

The Tone section offers three modes of synthesis. The Resonant mode has a diverse range of tunable sounds, including drumheads, marimba, vibraphone, tines, and cymbals. The Subtractive mode

Compact and powerful, the Nord Drum 2 provides all the synthesized percussive sounds you could need, and then some.

consists of Sine, Saw, Square, and Pulse waveforms. Six FM algorithms make up the FM synthesis mode, where changing the timbre parameters adjusts the amount of modulation. The modulation frequency is controlled by the Spectra parameter. Other parameters include dynamic timbre, punch, decay, and pitch bend.

The Noise section features different filters, attack rates, decay, and resonance that allow you to sculpt each sound, from clean to pure noise or from smooth to very warped. The Click section is for enhancing the attack of each sound and comprises a decent offering of short click sounds and a level control for a coherent blend. The

useful Solo Edit feature allows you to hear only the section you're currently editing. The input signal path is routed first through the Tone, Noise, and Click sections, and then the Tone/Noise and Click levels are blended to your desire.

Channel effects allow you to then take each sound you designed to even more specific places by adding different distortions, EQ, and repeats (echo/delay). Once you've shaped and tweaked a sound, you can select an overall level and pan to your liking.

FUNCTIONALITY

The Drum 2 is intuitive to use on a novice level and increases in function and performance depending on your knowledge base. For example, my first task was simply using the module to trigger a

bass drum sound for my in-ear monitor mix on a gig. Without referencing the user manual, I ran my acoustic kick trigger into Channel 1 and scrolled through the presets until I found a sound that I liked. I was then able to quickly adjust the input sensitivity to match my dynamic level and lower the pitch slightly for a more punchy tone. I was impressed with how natural the sound was considering that it's synthetic. I actually preferred using the self-contained Nord Drum 2 with triggers at a live gig, as opposed to relying on the auxiliary return of my bass drum mic for monitoring.

Nord cleverly designated the factory presets so that Channel 1 houses the kick

sounds, Channel 2 the snare sounds, and Channels 3 to 6 the toms (in the banks that are more kit oriented, as opposed to percussion or sound effects).

EXPANDED FUNCTION

The Nord Pad (sold separately for \$499) has a streamlined design with no other function than being a playing surface for the module. It connects via a CAT6 (Ethernet) cable, and it doesn't clutter up space by needing an external power source. The six rubber pads are sturdy and nicely sized, and they proved to have a comfortable feel and excellent dynamic response.

You can update the operating system of the module on either a Windows PC or a Mac using a MIDI interface from norddrum.com. There's also a free Nord Drum 2 Manager application for transferring program banks. And iPad users can download a free sequencer applica-

tion, called Nord Beat, which has a user-friendly step sequencer interface.

CONCLUSION

The module being separate from the pads can be seen as a pro or a con depending on how you plan to use the devices. One pro is that you can buy each part separately, so if you don't want the pads, you don't have to pay for them. Plus the module takes up very little space by itself. The sound library is impressive, the module is user-friendly, and the pads—if you choose to add them—are quite responsive and sensitive.

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GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview by John Martinez • Photos by Ronn Dunnett

Styx's TODD SUCHERMAN

Drums: Pearl Masterworks (maple with interior and exterior plies of bubinga) in walnut burst finish with titanium rose gold-plated hardware

- A. 5x14 snare (20-ply)
- B. 7x6 tom (8-ply)
- C. 7x8 tom (8-ply)
- D. 8x10 tom (8-ply)
- E. 8x12 tom (8-ply)
- F. 14x14 floor tom (10-ply)
- G. 16x16 floor tom (10-ply)
- H. 14x20 gong drum (10-ply)
- I. 18x22 bass drum (10-ply)

"It's important to be in love with your drumset," Sucherman says, "because when you're on the road as much as I am, there are going to be times that you'll be missing home, tired, or whatever. But when it's time to sit behind this drumset, I feel like a little kid on Christmas morning, and then it's go time."

"I wanted to go with semi-rounded 45-degree bearing edges for this kit, which is in between the sharp and rounded bearing edges on my last two road kits."

"I've been fascinated with rose gold, as it's been very much en vogue in fine timepieces for the last several years. I've never seen it on a drumset before, and Pearl said they would investigate it. They came back with a rose gold with a little titanium added to the mixture so the luster would stay and wouldn't wear off over time."

Hardware: Pearl Icon rack, cymbal stands, and bass drum pedals; Carmichael throne top on Pearl base; Sonor Signature legless hi-hat stand; Dunnett R-Class clamps for microphones

"I saw the R-Class clamps at the NAMM Show, and it stuck

in my head that it would be pretty cool to get those as microphone holders and plate them to match the hardware.

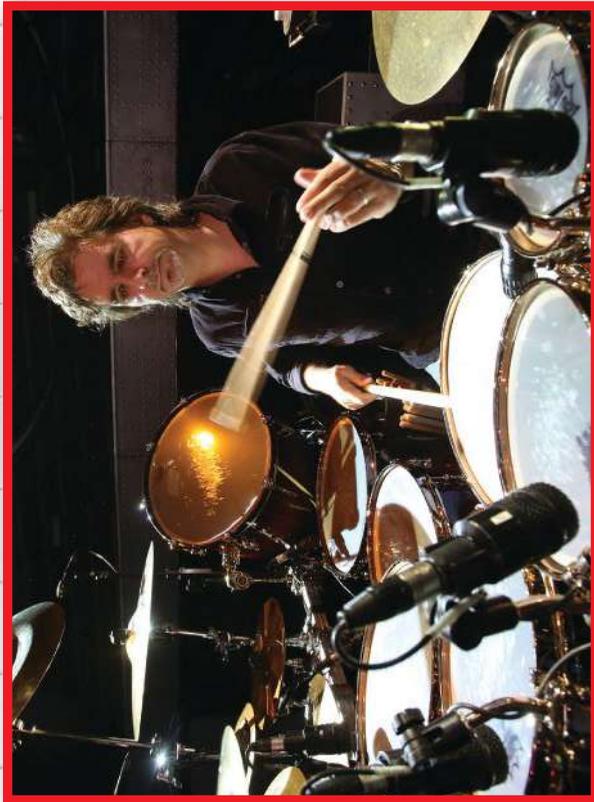
"I still love my old Sonor Signature hi-hat stand. It's the hi-hat I've played since I was a teenager, and it has the feel I'm used to."

Cymbals:

- 1. 14" AA Regular hi-hats
- 2. 19" AAX X-Treme China
- 3. 17" AAX Vault crash
- 4. 6" AA splash
- 5. 8" AAX splash
- 6. 19" AAX Vault crash
- 7. 10" AA splash
- 8. 22" Vault Precision ride
- 9. 13" AAX Stage hi-hats
- 10. 18" AAX Vault crash
- 11. 9" prototype bell
- 12. 10" Chopper
- 13. 22" AAX X-Treme China
- 14. 20" AAX Vault crash

"I've used the same configuration and models for many years, as they serve the music the band plays beautifully. I've been using the Precision ride since 1999, it's a beast and has a bell that can't be beat—completely musical and cutting. It's a pretty thick cymbal, but it does open up and wash if you lay into it."

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador snare batter and Hazy Ambassador bottom, Clear Ambassador tom batters and



bottoms, Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batters (with Danmar impact pads), and custom DrumArt front heads with bubinga graphics

"I tune the bottom heads slightly tighter than the top, so you get a really nice dip. I've been tuning the snare drum a little lower, and for the first time in seventeen years I have a quarter of a Moongel on it to add a little fatness."

"I have down pillows in the bass drums with black pillowcases, so they're not really seen through the portholes. But everything else is wide open and very lively. I'm going for that rich, musical, full sound."

Percussion: Sabian finger cymbal, Toca tambourine, TreeWorks chimes

Microphones: Audix D2 on rack toms, D4 on floor toms, i5 on snare, D6 in bass drums and gong drum, ADX51 on hi-hats, and SCX25A overheads

"These overheads are unbelievably rich, creamy, and natural. I would put them up against mics that cost three times the price. They're amazing."

Sticks: Promark SD330W Todd Sucherman signature model



GREGG KEPLINGER

A Sit-Down With One of the Industry's Best-Kept Secrets by Jason Sutter

In the business of music, there are many people who make most of their impact behind the scenes. Drummer/builder Gregg Keplinger is one of those catalysts. He's a trailblazer who heard things differently, and thus he set off to develop sounds that had not existed before. And he creates some of the best-sounding and most distinctive snare drums ever made. When asked how to describe his drums, Keplinger often says that they're "everything your favorite snare is, only ten times more."

As a collector and big fan of Keplinger's drums myself, I think that's a pretty great description: ten times louder, ten times more sensitive, ten times more versatile...you get the point. Keplingers are constructed by Gregg and come in 6-, 8-, and 10-lug options and in alloys such as brass, copper, steel, and stainless steel (his favorite and most popular). These pieces are sought after by some of the biggest names in drumming, including Matt Cameron (Soundgarden, Pearl Jam), Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters), Matt Chamberlain (studio),

and Jason McGerr (Death Cab for Cutie).

So why is it, then, that many of you reading this probably haven't seen or played a Keplinger? Well, since they're handmade, the drums are relatively scarce, and players rarely sell them once they get their hands on one. Only a few music stores carry these snares, and until recently the drums had no markings whatsoever that say *Keplinger*. So it's possible that you may have actually seen one and not known it. One thing is for sure: When you do hit a Keplinger snare for the first time, you'll never forget it.

Gregg is a fantastic jazz drummer steeped in the Elvin Jones school of playing. And he is such a presence on Seattle's music scene that I rarely have to put him on a guest list when I'm playing in town—there's always someone at the venue who knows him, and he just walks right through the door. I'm happy to call Gregg my friend, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to sit down with him and chat a little about his life and his drums.



SUTTER'S KEP COLLECTION Clockwise from bottom: 4x14, 8-lug Black Iron; 7x14, 10-lug Brass; 6.5x14, 10-lug Copper; 5.5x14, 8-lug Stainless Steel; 6.5x14, 6-lug Stainless Steel; 6.5x14, 10-lug Stainless Steel; 8x14, 10-lug Stainless Steel; and 7x14, 10-lug Black Iron

Jason: How long have you been making drums, and how did you get started?

Gregg: I've been making drums since the '70s. It all started when I was hanging around a music store and saw a steel 8-lug, 6.5"-deep '30s Ludwig. I had never seen that size drum with eight lugs, and it really knocked me out. But I couldn't afford it, so I started to think about how I could make a drum shell like that myself. Then one day I was driving in an industrial area in Seattle and passed Alaskan Copper, which sells pipes for factories and pipelines, and I slammed on the brakes and went, "There they are!" That's where it all started, and probably the first hundred I made were what I call Pipe drums. That was around '78.

Jason: What are some of the different alloy options, and how do they differ from drum to drum?

Gregg: My favorite material is stainless steel, and the drum I've had the most success with is a 5.5"-deep Stainless with eight lugs. A 5.5" depth was a rare size at the time. I believe the

5x14 Ludwig Supra-Phonic is the best drum ever made, so I wanted to make a 5.5" drum, because it would be unusual. I make regular steel, which I call Black Iron, because it has this black slag on it. I also make copper and brass.

As far as the sound, they are all sensitive, super-powerful, and very loud. The Stainless has a point to the note, and the Black Iron is dry and dusty. The brass is woofy and "airy." The copper is dry, woofy, and somewhat airy. They are all heavy, averaging about sixteen pounds, but the copper and brass are heavier. I can make any size. I've made 3x12, and I made a 4x10 that looked like a little motorboat with a Dunnett throw-off.

Jason: Who are some notable players that you've made drums for over the years?

Gregg: I've made a drum for Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead and for my friend from Santana, Mike Shrieve. And my hero, Elvin Jones, had a couple. I made one for Art Blakey, and my friend Matt Cameron has a number of them. Jason McGerr,

Soundgarden/Pearl Jam's **Matt Cameron** and Session Great **Matt Chamberlain** on Gregg Keplinger and His Drums

"When I bought my first Keplinger snare in 1986—the year I joined Soundgarden—I was able to finally compete with the extreme guitar levels at band practice," Matt Cameron says. "I remember being amazed by the sheer girth of the drum, the 'not fragile' stamp, and the overall vibe. It looked like it had been buried in the desert for years. I took it everywhere for ten-plus years of hard touring. Now retired, it has been replaced with another Keplinger.

"I use a 7"-deep Side Hatch live and in the studio. The Side Hatch is a Keplinger invention where small-size snare wires lay off-center on the snare head and the strainer is attached off-center on the shell. It gives the drum a wide-open and totally unique sound.

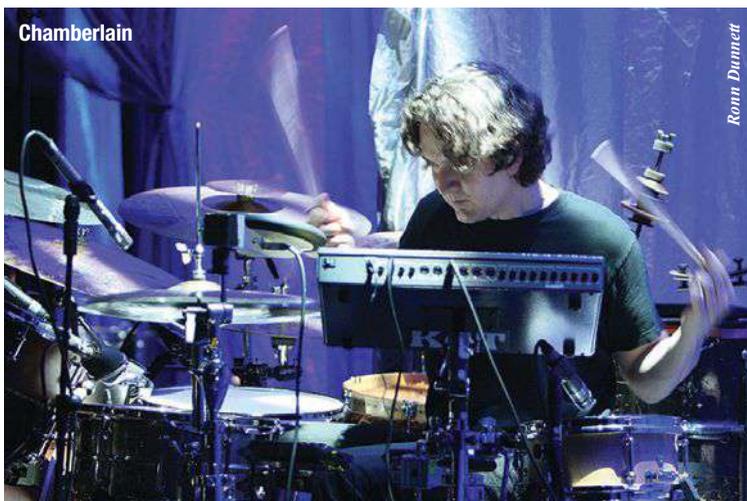
"Gregg is the drum guru of the Northwest, and he has been my studio tech/confidant since the late '80s. He taught me a lot about sounding unique and putting my own stamp on music. And he has always been a loyal friend and a huge part of my extended family."

Matt Chamberlain says, "My relationship with Keplinger goes back to when I first moved to Seattle in 1991. I was recording at the Avast! studio, and he had made some drums for Stuart Hallerman, who owns the studio, to have around for people to record with. I remember he brought in a 6.5" Stainless with wood hoops, and I flipped out. It had all the stuff I love about a snare—crack, body, sizzle—plus this really amazing open tone that sat right with just about any track I used it on. I eventually bought a couple Stainless from him.

"Over the years I've asked him to make me a few crazy drums, like the one that has the wires going off at an odd angle to the bottom head and with the lugs unevenly spaced. My favorites are the 10-lug Stainless and Black Iron in 6.5" depths. The live half of the Tori Amos release *To Venus and Back* features a Keplinger.

"Back when Gregg started making cymbals out of sheet metal, I ran into him at a local drum shop, and he said, 'Matt! I'm making cymbals. You're going to love them—they sound like shit!' [laughs] I use his metal creations all the time. I have this insane massive 22" cowbell he made that was inspired by the huge one that British drummer Tony Oxley uses.

"Gregg is also one of my favorite drummers. I've seen him play around Seattle in everything from out-jazz trios to singer-based music, and I always leave his gigs inspired."



Jeremy Taggart [Our Lady Peace], and Joey Waronker have some of my stuff. Buddy Rich played one. He didn't want it, but he was really cool about it. I was going to give the drum to him, but he had his thing with Slingerland at the time. Matt Chamberlain and the amazing drummer from Hella, Zach Hill, have some. Stone Gossard from Pearl Jam has them in his studio too. It's a huge honor to have a guy ask me for a drum, and that's part of the perk—getting to hang with them and talk gear.

Jason: Any good stories from hanging with the drummers that you've made drums for?

Gregg: My friend Mike Musberger of the Posies was tour managing for the Experience Hendrix Tour with Mitch Mitchell. He asked me if Mitch could use one of my drums, and he loved it. It was a 6x14, 10-lug Stainless Steel. I got to hang one-on-one with Mitch at the Paramount Theater before the show.

Tragically, Mitch passed away a few days later. Mike got me the drum back, eventually, but I still wish I had gotten that head signed.

Years ago, when I lived in New York, I walked up to Elvin at the [Village] Vanguard and said, "Hey, I make drums, and I'd like to show you one." He

took this heavy drum in one hand and played it for the rest of the night. It was a 5" Stainless Pipe with eight lugs. He dug it, and he asked me to make him one.

Jason: How long does it take to make a drum by hand?

Gregg: Depending on parts or materials, it usually takes under two months.

Jason: What are some of the crazier requests that you've been asked to make?

Gregg: Howard Gilbert, the Seattle Symphony drummer and a good friend, asked for a 24"-deep 15" snare, as well as a 16x16 snare. And I made a piccolo that was so thin I had to build the throw-off on a pulley system.

Matt Cameron has three of what he calls a Side Hatch drum. It has 10" snare wires that are mounted off-center. And I've made a few 6x14, 8-lug drums where I randomly placed the lugs and had to build the hoops with claws for the tension rods. Those were crazy.

I also built a drum for Joey Waronker that has a shell with four rods on the side with a piece of steel around the posts. When you hit the metal, and when the drum is miked, it has a bizarre sound.

Jason: You spent some time as a drum tech as well.

Gregg: My first tech job was with Metal Church. But my first "real" drum tech job was with Matt Cameron for Soundgarden's *Superunknown* album. He asked me to come down and help him set up his gear in the studio, because he had a lot of drums. I ended up doing the whole record, and I went out on the road for that tour. But as soon as the drums were finished in the studio, I ended up going in for heart

surgery. While I'm recovering, the whole band comes waltzing into the hospital to visit me, and Chris Cornell looks at the foot of the bed, sees the angiogram of my heart, and asks if they could use the photo of my heart for the inside of the *Superunknown* record cover, for "Black Hole Sun."

I've also teched a bit for Eleven and Jeremy Taggart with Our Lady Peace, and through that I got to tech for Elvin Jones a bit. I didn't tune his gear, because his wife, Keiko, did that. But I got to play his kit, and it was like playing the most crystal-clear-sounding drums ever.

Jason: You also make cymbals. Can you describe those?

Gregg: I use various gauges of stainless steel and sometimes brass. I hammer and heat them and make a bell, and then I hammer them more until they sound interesting. They are effects cymbals. Matt Chamberlain used one on *Letterman*,

and Matt Cameron used one on a Pearl Jam track. Joey Waronker and Zach Hill use them live. You have some, and Dony Wynn uses them as well.

Jason: What are some of the other percussion instruments you make?

Gregg: I make a Ching Ring that's a steel ring about 8" wide with five sets of tambourine jingles on it.

You can throw it on the hi-hats or on a cymbal. I make various shakers with different combinations of metals for effects. I heat them and hammer them. I've sold quite a few of those for sculptures or yard art as well.

Jason: Soundgarden's *Superunknown* album is pretty legendary for its giant drum sounds. Can you shed some light on which snares were used for the different tracks and on any tuning methods?

Gregg: That sound is the combination of Matt's tuning, the room, and the producer. I have a photo of the drumset with thirty-six mics on it; it's just over the top. He used a 5.5", 8-lug Stainless for most of the album, as well as a hammered 6", 10-lug Stainless. He also used an 8" Stainless on "Like Suicide," for the loud part at the end.

Jason: What do you think has been the most rewarding part of building drums?

Gregg: When someone likes what you've made, it's just a gas, you know? Getting to hang with all these cats and hearing all the stories that come with it is pretty amazing. Art Blakey dug a brass drum I made for him. When I went to give it to him, I was going to ask him to sign a contract to allow me to use his name as someone that plays my gear. He just shook my hand and said, "That's my signature. A deal is a deal." There are just so many cool experiences that come with all this. I love drummers, and I love hanging and talking drums. I learn from every drummer I meet, young or old, and I love contributing and being a part of this community. That's one of the coolest parts of all this—the hang.



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Miles Davis *Bitches Brew*

How heavy was it? More than forty years later, musicians are still mining it for ideas—and still arguing over its merits. And a double-drummer approach is at the center of each of its storming tracks.

Even before fans tore open the double LP's shrink-wrap, it was clear *something* was brewing. That cover! Bold and mind-blowing. The vinyl within confirmed the message: It's 1970, and Miles Davis has moved on to a new decade—get used to it. Detractors yearning for the “old Miles” cried traitor, while others embraced the groundbreaking release.

Often cited as the springboard to jazz-rock fusion, *Bitches Brew* was not the first record of that genre, but it did represent fusion's most influential,

Hot Stuff

MOVING AS ONE In a way, *Bitches Brew* is the ultimate non-chops album; if ever there was a record that prioritizes texture and transcendent group play over individualism, this is it. Not that drum-focused listening doesn't reveal Lenny White and Jack DeJohnette burning all over the double album. But more important, the duo set a standard for drummers listening intently and working together to navigate uncharted waters. Take the opening track, “Pharaoh's Dance.” You can hear DeJohnette and White in a constant state of reacting to and seemingly anticipating each other's ideas in real time, ferociously stirring the pot, lowering the heat just as it's about to boil over, sometimes dropping out altogether for a few bars, then getting right back to business with renewed vigor.

STERE-EREO The long, repeating notes from Davis's delay-soaked trumpet on *Bitches Brew* weave through DeJohnette and White's hard-panned drumsets (Lenny in the left channel and Jack in the right), adding to a general vibe that has been described by many as cosmic or psychedelic. Little snippets of White's upbeat punctuations to DeJohnette's mutated-Motown-8th-note groove on the title track, for instance, ensure that we never get too comfortable with this deceptively complex rhythmic approach.

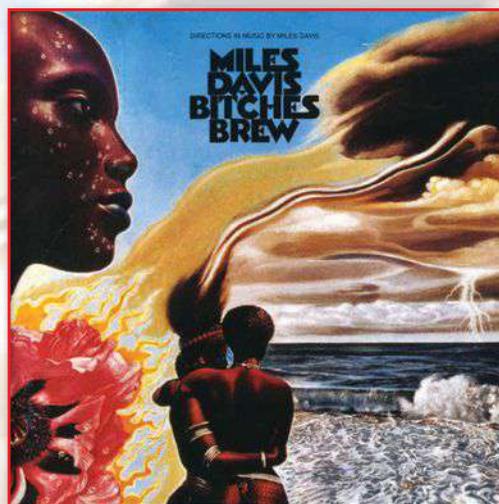
VOODOO DON Though the White/DeJohnette drumset tandem appears most often on *Bitches Brew*, “Miles Runs the Voodoo Down” features Don Alias taking over White's kit. The version of the song that the group had been playing live wasn't jelling in the studio after a couple takes, so Alias suggested incorporating a rhythm he'd been working on since hearing it in New Orleans street parades. The result, a funky broken-up groove, sets the slow, supremely badass tone for the rest of the fourteen-minute cut.

envelope-pushing, high-profile realization yet, an audacious manifesto. Love it or hate it, various rock elements were now officially part of the jazz vocabulary. Miles had spoken.

Despite the divisiveness, *Bitches Brew* actually sold quite well, largely due to its crossover success with a searching young rock audience. In retrospect, it's amusing that jazz purists accused Davis of selling out, since the disc remains defiantly noncommercial. Scholars have endlessly attempted to isolate and analyze the jazz elements versus the rock ones. But in a larger sense, it was the attitude, the whole *cosmic-ness* of *Bitches Brew* that touched a new audience. The era was a turbulent and consciousness-expanding crossroad, and Davis tapped into that nerve dead-on.

Placing electric instruments in a more prominent, muscular role, the trumpeter amassed multiple keyboards, basses, and drums. Long, trippy improvised mega-jams were conducted by Davis's spontaneous directives. Miles experimented with the studio as a creative tool; tape segments were spliced together, and effects such as tape loops and delays were added. Jamming together in a semicircle, the players found that their imaginations rocketed.

Because of the minimal harmonic/melodic movement, the drummers played an enormous role in shaping the music, sometimes maneuvering grooves to build progressively for twenty-minute-plus stretches. And backbeats anchored by electric bass grooves were now key. The core drivers on the kit were Jack DeJohnette and the “new kid” on the session, Lenny White. Davis instructed DeJohnette to create the central beat while White embellished. Yet the result is surprisingly shared and organic, a one-being sound with layered grooves, shifting coloration, and aggressive commentary. Pinning down and tightening the continuum was Don Alias on congas along with percussionist Juma Santos (credited as Jim Riley). Alias



switches to drumset on “Miles Runs the Voodoo Down.”

The rhythm team opens the album with a subdued, hypnotic quarter-note drive, recalling Davis's groundbreaking previous album, *In a Silent Way*. But as the disc progresses, they escalate to a new fever pitch in a free-jazz-meets-intergalactic-funk mode. The standard CD version also includes the bonus track “Feio” featuring Billy Cobham drumming along with DeJohnette, with Airtio on percussion, creating ominous, surging waves. The wall of multiple drummers remains one of the defining characteristics of the legendary sessions, providing the unworldly kinetic sound that Davis had imagined.

Time has clearly validated the record's importance and increased its audience. And fans devour lavish box sets featuring every minute of outtakes. Speaking of Miles' restless iconoclasm during a recent NPR interview, guitarist John Scofield reflected, “He couldn't help it; he was *addicted* to change.”

Jeff Potter

Bitches Brew (1970)

Pharaoh's Dance • Bitches Brew • Spanish Key • John McLaughlin • Miles Runs the Voodoo Down • Sanctuary

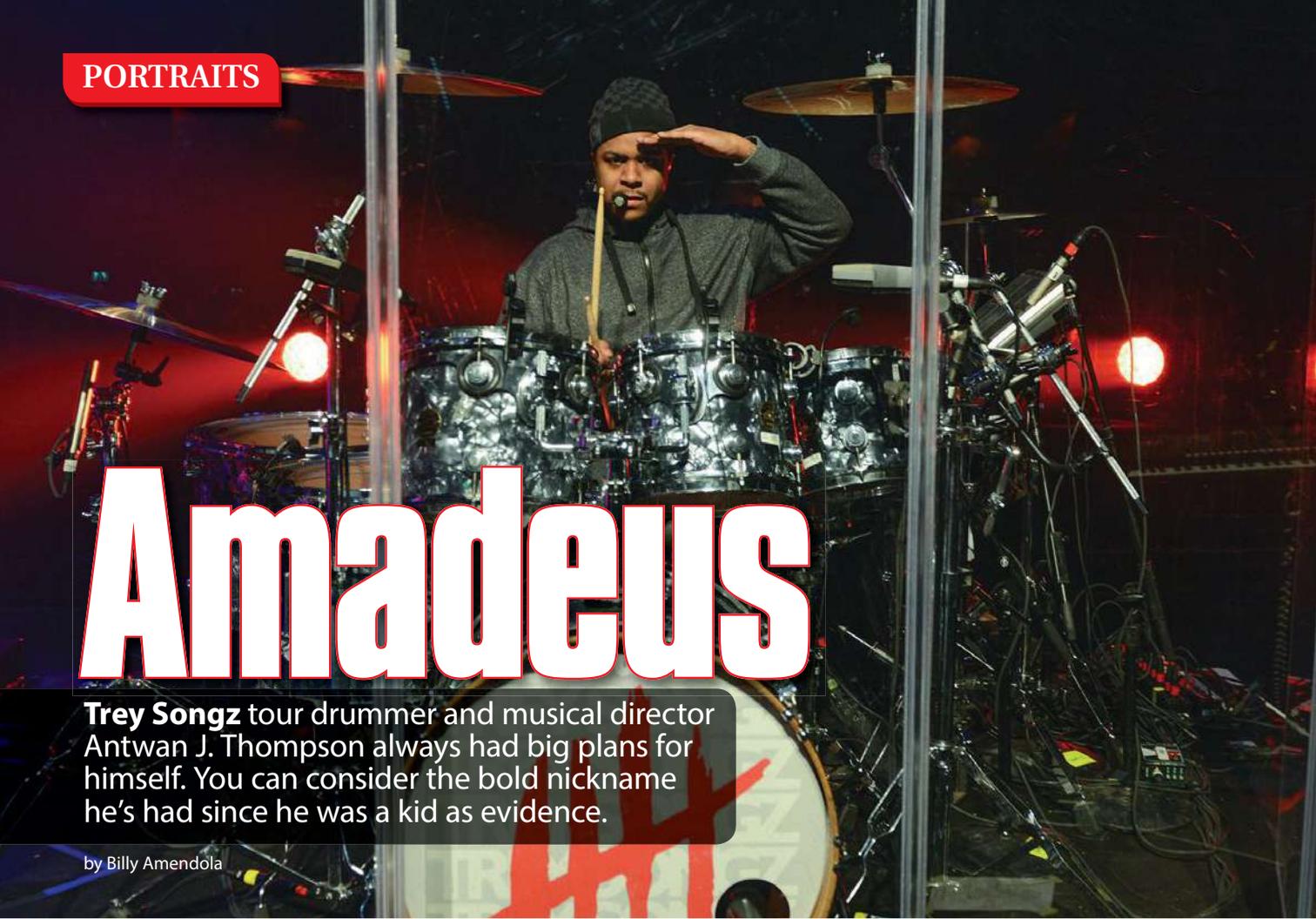
Miles Davis: trumpet
Jack DeJohnette: drums
Lenny White: drums
Don Alias: percussion, drums
Juma Santos: percussion
Wayne Shorter: soprano sax
Bennie Maupin: bass clarinet
Harvey Brooks: bass
Dave Holland: bass
Chick Corea: electric piano
Larry Young: electric piano
Joe Zawinul: organ, electric piano
John McLaughlin: guitar
 Produced by Teo Macero





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Amadeus

Trey Songz tour drummer and musical director Antwan J. Thompson always had big plans for himself. You can consider the bold nickname he's had since he was a kid as evidence.

by Billy Amendola

It's been quite a journey for thirty-three-year-old Antwan J. Thompson, aka Amadeus. Thompson's passion for music started when he was a youngster growing up in the Bronx, New York, where he took drum lessons at his elementary school and later played drums and piano in school

Wow, Talib Kweli, Busta Rhymes, CeeLo, Lil Wayne, Chris Brown, and Jennifer Lopez. He's been featured multiple times on BET's *Rap City* and *106 & Park* shows. In 2008 Thompson signed on as a member of the Hitmen, the production team for Sean "Diddy" Combs. Soon after that, he acted

MD: Let's talk about how you got started playing drums.

Amadeus: I had the opportunity to attend Catholic school, and it was part of the curriculum to learn a musical instrument. I was home sick on the day I was to choose which instrument I wanted to learn, so I

was forced to choose between the violin and percussion. They were the only two classes that had spots available. As a young boy I didn't feel it was

"A fan came up to me after a show and said, 'What happened to "Missin' You"? It didn't sound right.' After that I realized that it was important to only add colors when necessary."

cool to learn the violin, so I chose percussion. I didn't know what "percussion" meant, but I went with it anyway and eventually studied drums, xylophone, congas—basically anything that had to do with rhythm.

bands and at church. Soon he was known as Amadeus and began making waves in the community. "I remember seeing the movie *Amadeus* in school," Thompson recalls, "and feeling that we were similar in many ways. I'll admit that at first I didn't really like the name. But when I heard people call me Amadeus, it had a ring to it that felt *epic*. And as time went on I learned it means 'loves God.' I'm big on spirituality, so it all made sense."

Today Thompson can say that he's contributed as a producer, songwriter, and musician to gold and platinum records by, among others, Trey Songz, Foxy Brown, 50 Cent and Fabolous, Justin Bieber, Bow

as a guest judge on Diddy's MTV show *Making His Band*, doing double duty as musical director for the rap mogul's Dirty Money band.

More recently, Amadeus produced two songs on a Chris Brown mixtape called *X-Files*, music for ESPN's *Monday Night Football*, and the title track of Jennifer Lopez's latest album, *Same Girl*, which was cowritten by Brown. Currently he's working on Brown's album *X* and on Tiffany Mynon's *The Angel of R&B* EP and album.

We caught up with the soft-spoken multi-talent during a break from a world tour with Trey Songz.

The more I took the class, the more I felt it was natural to me. I would catch on fast and be able to play the rhythm patterns the teacher played, exactly how he played them. And then before I knew it, I fell in love with the drums, always wanting to play, whether it was on the actual drumset or the lunchroom table. This was in the fourth grade, and after about two years drumming became a passion and I

searched for it everywhere.

MD: What players influenced you early on?

Amadeus: One Sunday morning my mom took me to Faith Temple COTLG church, in the northern part of the Bronx, and I heard a drummer by the name of Steven White play. My life changed that day. I never heard drums played like that before. I thought my teacher was good, but I learned he had nothing on the dude I was listening to that day. [laughs] So I said to myself that night, *If I practice, I can sound like that!*

After that, I was full speed ahead with being a musician, and I never looked back. Wanting to learn more about my craft, I began to research all types of drummers who would have an influence on me, like Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd, Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, Virgil Donati, and Chris Dave.

MD: When and how did you get into producing?

Amadeus: After about five years of learning and studying drums I decided to give production a shot. The minister of music at my church had just purchased a brand-new Roland XP-50 keyboard, and when I saw it I was amazed and asked if I could borrow it. To my surprise he said yes. So I borrowed the keyboard for months at a time, returning it to him on rehearsal nights and Sundays for church, and I stayed in the house not wanting to do *anything* but make music. The more I created music, the more it became a passion, and once I realized that I could make it my career, I did just that. Eventually I graduated to an Akai MPC2000XL, which is a very useful drum sampler, and by using that to the best of my ability I was able to create some amazing music that allowed me to produce so many artists.

MD: How did you get into drum programming?

Amadeus: I started at the age of fifteen, programming and sequencing songs on that Roland XP-50. It had a drum bank with hundreds of sounds. I wanted to pursue a career in producing hip-hop and R&B, and unlike rock and gospel, which used live instrumentation, hip-hop producers pretty much used keyboards, drum samplers, turntables, and vinyl to create music. Since I wanted to have that same style and sound, I learned not only how to create music but to program it using different pieces of equipment.

MD: What other gear besides the MPC2000XL did you use?

Amadeus: The Roland JP-8000 and Korg

microKorg [analog modeling synths], the M-Audio Radium MIDI keyboard, Pro Tools 10 [DAW], the Digidesign Digi 002 rack and Avalon VT-737sp [interfaces], and Stanton's CMP.800 CD player, SA.3 mixer, and T.92 turntable. As a drummer, it's not as hard as you think playing with a machine or loops, because you have a click count, either in your in-ears or monitor, which pretty much keeps you in time. Constantly hearing a loud woodblock sound counting 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, it's really difficult to lose the timing or count. I was comfortable playing to a machine the first time I tried it.

MD: What led you to hook up with Trey Songz and become his musical director?

Amadeus: At the time I was working on an album for a very successful hip-hop artist

MUSIC THAT ROCKS AMADEUS

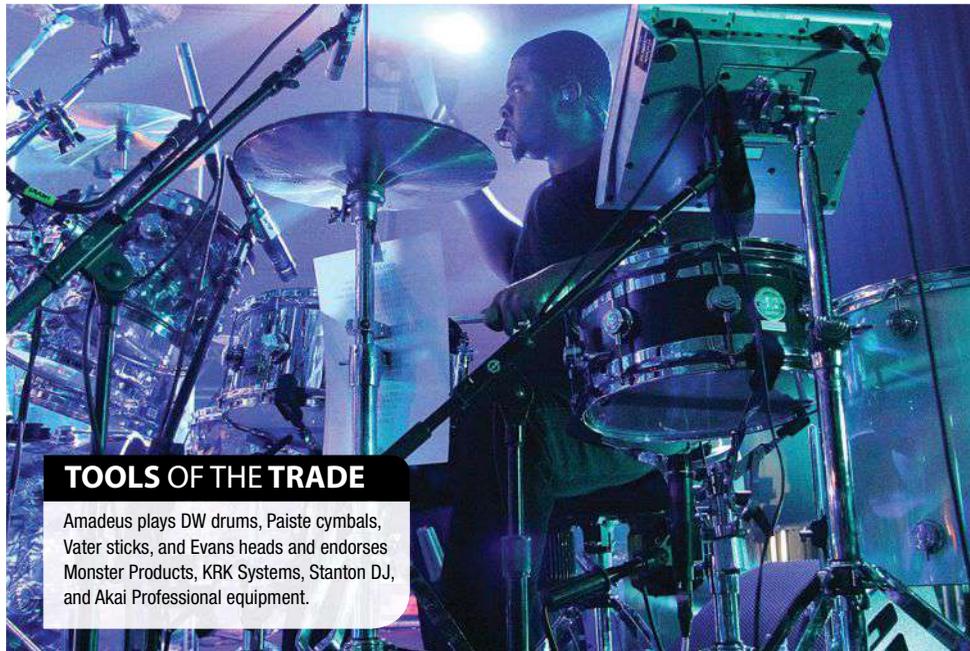
Kim Burrell Try Me Again /// Dave Weckl Hard-Wired /// Gene Lake Cycles (especially the track "Steppin' Up") /// Mint Condition Definition of a Band /// Mutemath "Typical"



Murphy, asking, "Are you ready to put the band together for Trey?" "Absolutely!" That was seven years ago, and since then we've toured all around the world with me as his music director and drummer.

MD: How would you describe your playing style?

Amadeus: I'm blessed to be versatile, but I would say that gospel, R&B/hip-hop, and pop are my strongest genres. In gospel music I feel you're able to open up more on the kit with various licks, fills, and band cuts. I do so much more playing in that



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Amadeus plays DW drums, Paiste cymbals, Vater sticks, and Evans heads and endorses Monster Products, KRK Systems, Stanton DJ, and Akai Professional equipment.

that was signed to Warner Bros. Records, Mike Jones. We created a song in the studio called "I Know," and Mike said to me, "We need to feature a male R&B artist on this song." So we bounced ideas off of each other and agreed that Trey Songz would be perfect. Trey being signed to Atlantic Records made life easy, because the record labels were both under the same umbrella. So we flew Trey to Houston and recorded and mixed the record. In the process of finishing the song, I noticed a drumset in the corner of the studio, and I mentioned to Mike and Trey that I played the drums. No one believed me, so I said to Trey, "One day you'll need a band, especially with the direction you're going musically."

About a year later I got a phone call from Trey's former manager Delante

genre. In R&B/hip-hop, I pretty much play the pocket, making sure that I basically re-create the feel of the original track from the album.

I remember when I first started touring and playing for Trey, a fan came up to me after a show and said, "What happened to the song 'Missin' You'? It didn't sound right." We'd rearranged some pretty nice band cuts and flipped the bridge, and to us in the band it was hot, but the song had become unrecognizable to the audience. After that conversation with that fan, I realized it was important to only add colors when necessary. Sometimes less is more.

MD: What's next for you?

Amadeus: Trey Songz is currently working on a new album, so we'll be hitting the road, touring the world.





25TH ANNIVERSARY

DRUM-OFF

HITTIN' IT SINCE '88

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Guitar Center's Drum-Off—the world's premier drum competition—culminated with a finals event featuring the top five undiscovered drummers in the country, as well as performances from icons and rising talent in the drum world. Dawud Aasiya-Bey of Lake Elsinore, Calif.—better known as D-M.I.L.E.—took the win, closing out the battle that started with over 5,000 drummers.

The star-studded lineup of competition judges included top touring and session drummers, including Nisan Stewart, Dave Elitch, Brooks Wackerman, Adrian Young, Peter Erskine, Aaron

Spears, Thomas Lang, Chris Johnson, Cora Coleman-Dunham, Trevor Lawrence Jr., Eric Hernandez, John Tempesta and Keith Harris.

Hosted by Stephen Perkins, this year's Drum-Off featured exclusive musical performances by one of today's most innovative talents, Chris Dave, Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers), Ray Luzier (Korn), and Steve Ferrone (Average White Band, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) with special guest Questlove. Ferrone was then honored for his incredible career and contributions to the music world with an induction into Guitar Center's RockWalk.



Chad Smith



Questlove



Chris Dave



Steve Ferrone



Steve Ferrone & Questlove



Drum-Off Contestants



Ray Luzier

FOR PHOTOS AND VIDEOS FROM THE EVENT, VISIT GUITARCENTER.COM/DRUM-OFF





DRUM-OFF CHAMPION
D-M.I.L.E.

Introducing...

Modern Drummer's 2014 Readers Poll Winners

HALL OF FAME

Carmine Appice

The iconic heavy hitter's thunder hasn't quieted one decibel since he blasted out of Long Island with Vanilla Fudge in 1965.

Past Hall of Fame Winners

2013: Bernard Purdie
2012: Phil Collins
2011: Jim Chapin
2010: Hal Blaine
2009: Mitch Mitchell
2008: Ginger Baker
2007: Jack DeJohnette
2006: Charlie Watts
2005: Stewart Copeland
2004: Mike Portnoy
2003: Simon Phillips
2002: Steve Smith
2001: Dennis Chambers
2000: Dave Weckl
1999: Roy Haynes
1998: Ringo Starr
1997: Terry Bozzio
1996: Vinnie Colaiuta
1995: Elvin Jones
1994: Larrie Londin
1993: Jeff Porcaro
1992: Max Roach
1991: Art Blakey
1990: Bill Bruford
1989: Carl Palmer
1988: Joe Morello
1987: Billy Cobham
1986: Tony Williams
1985: Louie Bellson
1984: Steve Gadd
1983: Neil Peart
1982: Keith Moon
1981: John Bonham
1980: Buddy Rich
1979: Gene Krupa

Mike Portnoy

The past year found him producing music with Adrenaline Mob, Transatlantic, Flying Colors, the Winery Dogs, and Portnoy/Sheehan/MacAlpine/Sherinian, resulting in his topping both the MVP and prog categories of the 2014 poll. How Mike's gig calendar doesn't collapse under its own weight is anyone's guess.



Alex Salca

MVP

2. Dave Grohl
3. Vinnie Colaiuta
4. Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson
5. Antonio Sanchez

PROG

2. Mike Mangini
3. Marco Minnemann
4. Todd Sucherman
5. Matt Garstka



MAINSTREAM ROCK Joey Kramer



Rob Sturanton

As new generations experience the sweet emotion of an Aerosmith concert for the first time, the band's perennially popular drummer not so quietly improves with age.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 2. Ronnie Vannucci | 4. Darren King |
| 3. Jason Sutter | 5. Robin Diaz |



POP Carter Beauford

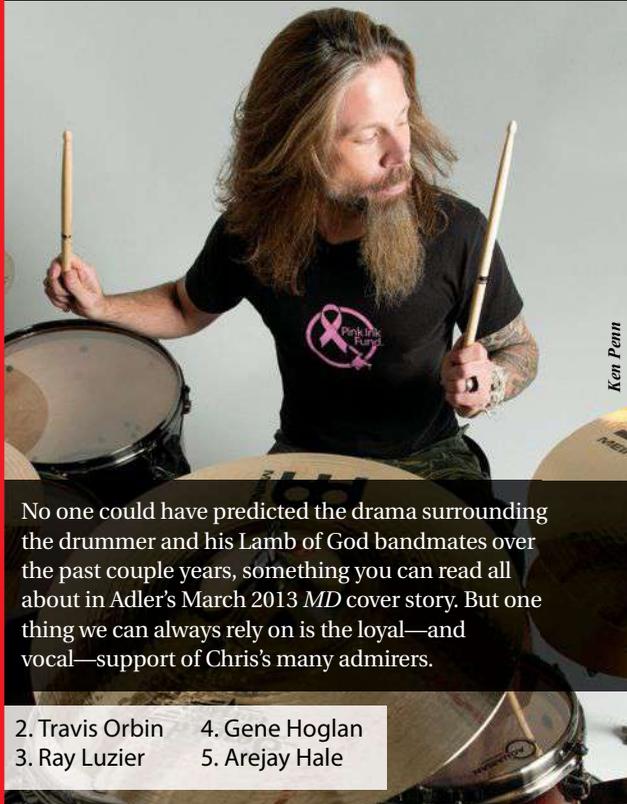


Rakun

From the intro to Carter's July 2013 *MD* cover story: "The beats and fills he's been able to play within the essentially pop format of the Dave Matthews Band are ones that most of us would never attempt in a three- or four-minute song, let alone think of in the first place."

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 2. George "Spanky" McCurdy | 4. Eric Hernandez |
| 3. Mark Schulman | 5. Brian Frasier-Moore |

METAL **Chris Adler**

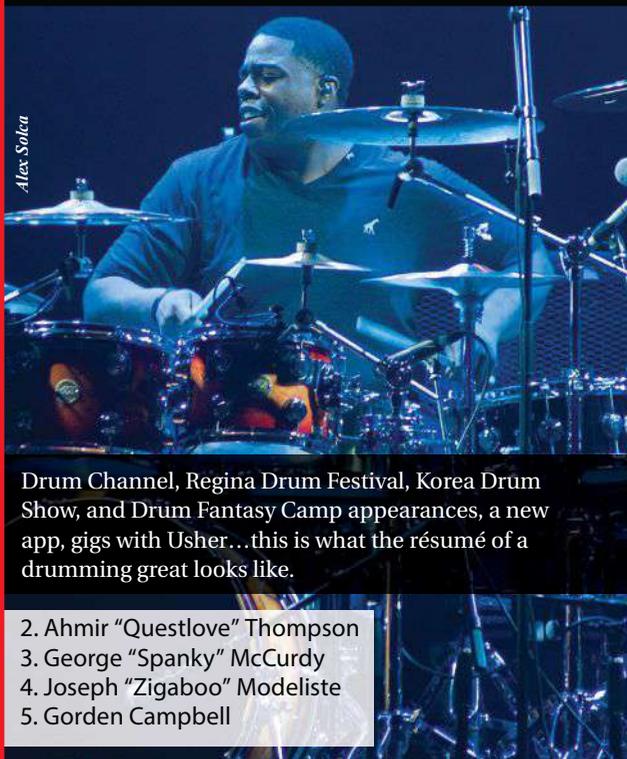


Ken Penn

No one could have predicted the drama surrounding the drummer and his Lamb of God bandmates over the past couple years, something you can read all about in Adler's March 2013 *MD* cover story. But one thing we can always rely on is the loyal—and vocal—support of Chris's many admirers.

- 2. Travis Orbin 4. Gene Hoglan
- 3. Ray Luzier 5. Arejay Hale

R&B **Aaron Spears**



Alex Solca

Drum Channel, Regina Drum Festival, Korea Drum Show, and Drum Fantasy Camp appearances, a new app, gigs with Usher...this is what the résumé of a drumming great looks like.

- 2. Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson
- 3. George "Spanky" McCurdy
- 4. Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste
- 5. Gorden Campbell

Vinnie Colaiuta

Once again, he's acknowledged by *MD* readers for his dominance as both a shredster and a consummate studio pro.



Alex Solca

FUSION

- 2. Billy Cobham
- 3. Chris Dave
- 4. Thomas Pridgen
- 5. Robert "Sput" Searight

STUDIO

- 2. Matt Chamberlain
- 3. Dylan Wissing
- 4. Greg Morrow
- 5. Victor Indrizzo



Terri Lyne Carrington
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '83
JAZZ - Nominee

Joe McCarthy
EDUCATIONAL DVD - Nominee
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '06

"Spanky" McCurdy
DTX ARTIST SINCE '14
EDUCATIONAL DVD - Nominee
R&B - Nominee
POP - Nominee

Antonio Sanchez
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '01
MVP - Nominee
JAZZ - Nominee
RECORDED PERFORMANCE - Nominee

Ray Luzier
DTX ARTIST SINCE '11
METAL - Nominee

Aaron Spears
R&B - WINNER
DTX ARTIST SINCE '13

Pedrito Martinez
PERCUSSIONIST - WINNER
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '12

Kendrick Scott
JAZZ - Nominee
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '02

Gorden Campbell
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '07
EDUCATIONAL DVD - Nominee
R&B - Nominee

Billy Cobham
FUSION - Nominee
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '98

Mike Johnston
CLINICIAN/EDUCATOR - Nominee
DTX ARTIST SINCE '11

Carter Beauford
POP - WINNER
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '90

Thomas Priddgen
FUSION - Nominee
RECORDED PERFORMANCE - Nominee
DTX ARTIST SINCE '11

Tommy Igoe
JAZZ - WINNER
YAMAHA ARTIST SINCE '11

The Chosen Ones Choose Yamaha.

Yamaha and DTX Drums are privileged to be associated with these tremendous artists. We are honored that this year's Readers Poll nominees choose to play Yamaha.

Congratulations from all of us to all of you.

ALTERNATIVE Jean-Paul Gaster



Paul La Roca

Who says alternative rock is all about nerdy beats and hipster bedroom Pro Toolers? Clutch's ever-popular drummer consistently proves there's plenty of room in the genre for soul, sweat, and super-sexy grooves.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2. Joey Waronker | 4. Deantoni Parks |
| 3. Thomas Hedlund | 5. Jon Wurster |

COUNTRY Jim Riley



Rick Matkin

This is the fourth year in a row that the Rascal Flatts drummer/bandleader has topped the country category. You can read all about Jim's latest exploits—along with his rich backstory—starting on page 50 of this issue.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2. Rich Redmond | 4. Sean Fuller |
| 3. Chuck Tilley | 5. Chris McHugh |

JAZZ Tommy Igoe

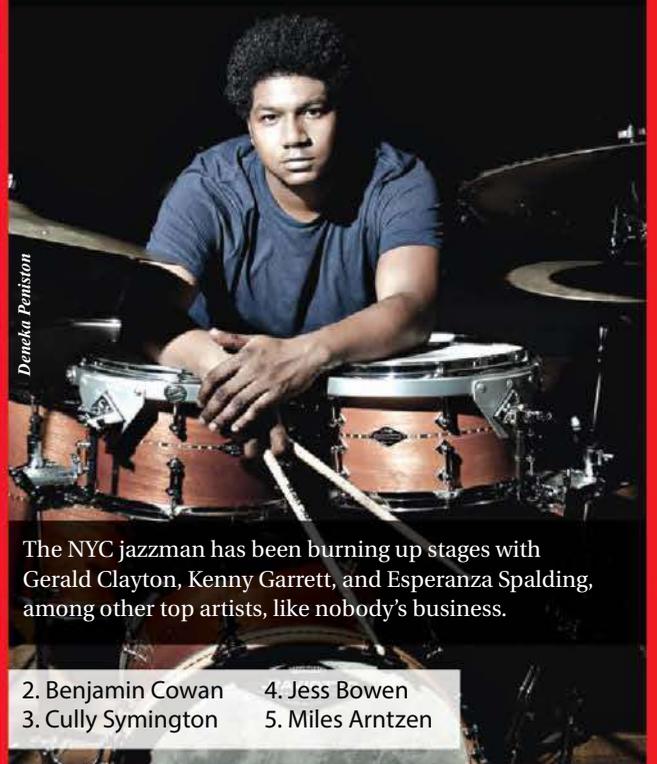


Emily Sevin

Last April's *MD* cover star has more drive and ambition than most any drummer you're likely to meet. In 2013 his contemporary big band performed across the U.S. to packed houses—and these days that's no small feat.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Antonio Sanchez | 4. Mark Guiliana |
| 3. Kendrick Scott | 5. Terri Lyne Carrington |

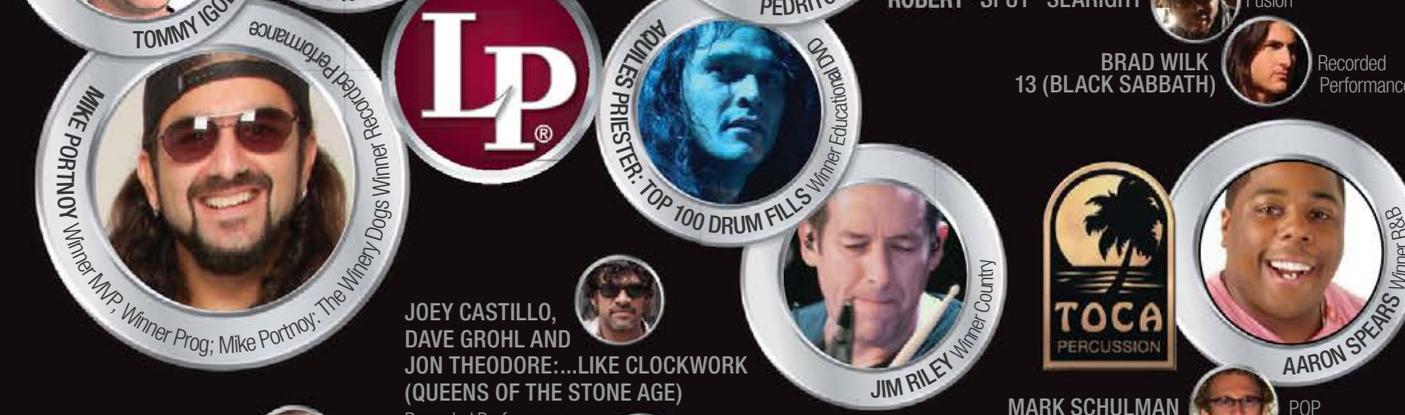
UP & COMING Justin Brown



Doneka Peniston

The NYC jazzman has been burning up stages with Gerald Clayton, Kenny Garrett, and Esperanza Spalding, among other top artists, like nobody's business.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 2. Benjamin Cowan | 4. Jess Bowen |
| 3. Cully Symington | 5. Miles Arntzen |



JOEY CASTILLO, DAVE GROHL AND JON THEODORE: ...LIKE CLOCKWORK (QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE)
Recorded Performance

JOE MCCARTHY: AFRO-CUBAN BIG BAND PLAY ALONG SERIES, VOLUME II
Educational DVD

ANTONIO SANCHEZ
MVP, Jazz, New Life
Recorded Performance

MAURO REFOSCO
Percussionist

GIL SHARONE
Clinician/Educator

ROBERT "SPUT" SEARIGHT
Fusion

RONNIE VANNUCCI
Mainstream Rock

BRIAN FRASIER-MOORE
POP

AREJAY HALE
Metal

GEORGE "SPANKY" MCCURDY
POP, R&B, Off Time/On Time
Educational DVD

TODD SUCHERMAN
Prog

MARK SCHULMAN
POP

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SEAN FULLER
COUNTRY

GEORGE "SPANKY" MCCURDY
POP, R&B, Educational DVD

MARK SCHULMAN
POP

ROBERT "SPUT" SEARIGHT
Fusion

PERCUSSIONIST
Pedrito Martinez



Says noted drummer Daniel Freedman about this year's number-one percussionist, "I've never met anyone who combines modern elevated technique with incredibly deep roots like he does." Neither, it seems, have many *MD* readers.

- 2. Pete Lockett
- 3. Taku Hirano
- 4. Arturo Stable
- 5. Mauro Refosco

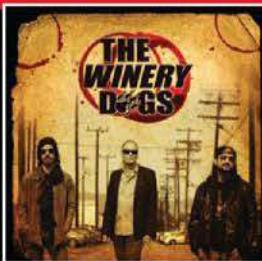
CLINICIAN/EDUCATOR
Matt Halpern



For a drummer who's associated with a band as active and cutting-edge as Periphery, it's impressive how much he's able to accomplish in the educational arena. Whether it's teaching home-based lessons or hitting the clinic trail—like he did on last year's Common Thread tour with Mike Johnston and JP Bouvet—Halpern always has drummers' best interests in mind.

- 2. Mike Johnston
- 3. Rod Morgenstein
- 4. Gil Sharone
- 5. Rich Redmond

RECORDED PERFORMANCE
Mike Portnoy
The Winery Dogs



- 2. Joey Castillo, Dave Grohl, and Jon Theodore, ...*Like Clockwork* (Queens of the Stone Age)
- 3. Brad Wilk, *13* (Black Sabbath)
- 4. Antonio Sanchez, *New Life*
- 5. Thomas Pridgen, *Pinnick Gales Pridgen*

EDUCATIONAL DVD
Aquiles Priester
Top 100 Drum Fills



- 2. Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste, *The Originator of New Orleans Funky Drumming*
- 3. George "Spanky" McCurdy, *Off Time/On Time*
- 4. Gorden Campbell, *Secrets of the Working Drummer*
- 5. Joe McCarthy, *Afro-Cuban Big Band Play-Along Series, Volume II*

EDUCATIONAL BOOK
Joe Bergamini
Neil Peart: Taking Center Stage



- 2. Roy Burns, *Solo Secrets of the Left Hand and Bass Drum*
- 3. Hector Morales, *The Afro-Peruvian Percussion Ensemble*
- 4. Swiss Chris, *Modern Drumset Stickings*
- 5. Claus Hessler, *Daily Drumset Workout*



MIKE PORTNOY TRIPLE CROWN

**MODERN
DRUMMER
2014!**
READERS POLL

👑 #1 MVP 👑 #1 PROG 👑 #1 RECORDED PERFORMANCE



George "Spanky" McCurdy
Lady GaGa
**#2 POP #3 R&B
#3 EDUCATIONAL DVD**



Matt Garstka
Animals As Leaders
#5 PROG



Joe Bergamini
4Front / Broadway
#1 EDUCATIONAL BOOK
NEIL PEART: TAKING CENTER STAGE

**CONGRATULATIONS
MIKE, SPANKY, MATT & JOE.
YOU MAKE US PROUD!**

TAMA would like to thank everyone who voted in the 2014 MODERN DRUMMER Readers Poll.





D



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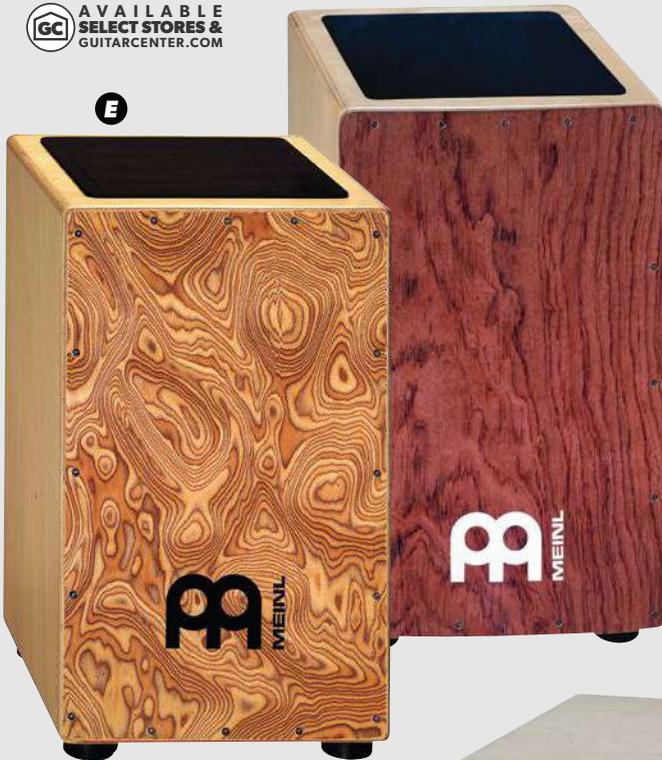


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A



B



C



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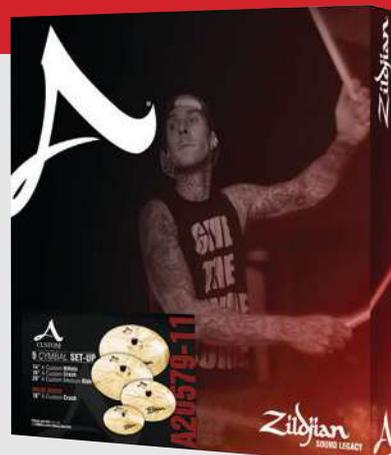
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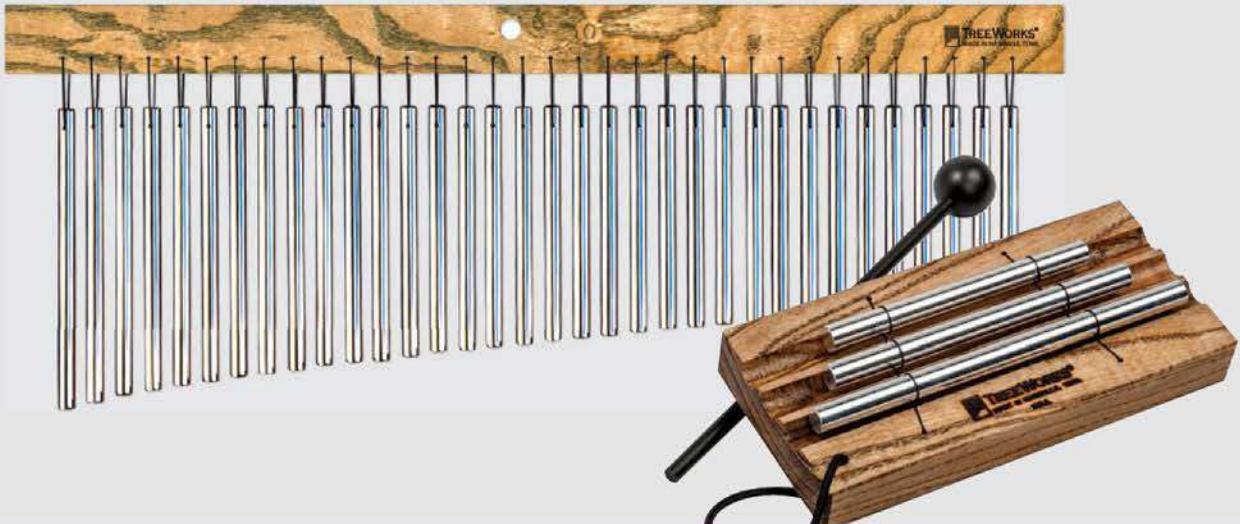
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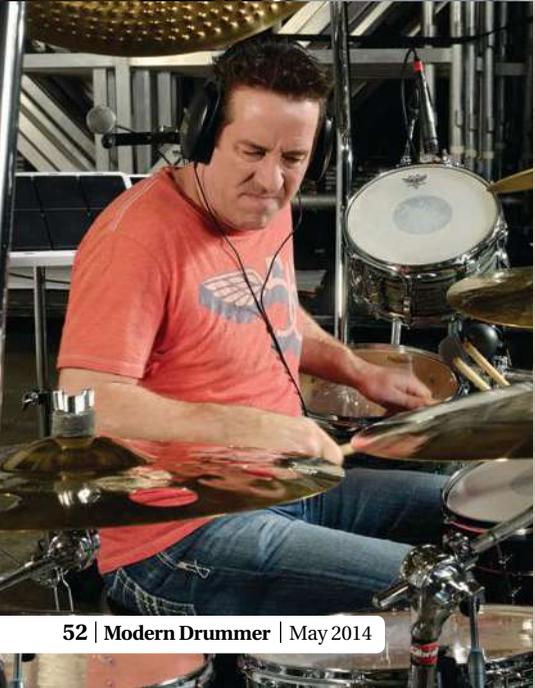
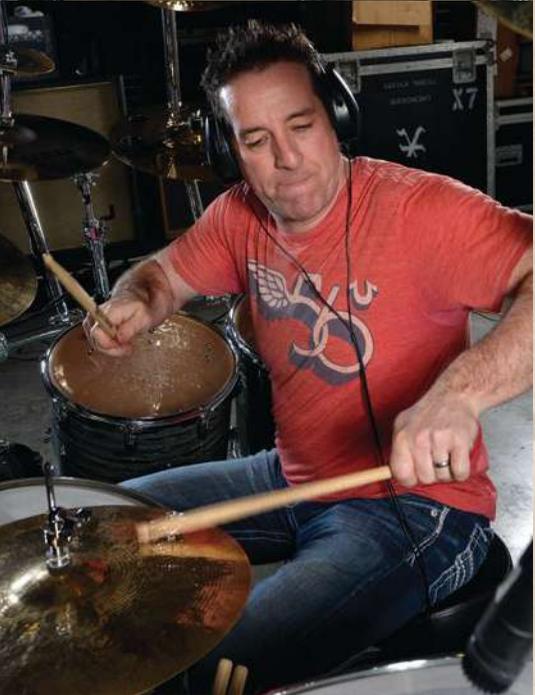
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Story by Ilya Stemkovsky • Photos by Rick Malkin

Jim

Riley

With spiky hair, lasers, and guitars that go to 11, Rascal Flatts isn't your daddy's country band, and Jim Riley *sure* isn't your middle-of-the-road sideman of yesteryear.



7

Jim Riley is not your typical country drummer. Like the wildly popular Nashville-based group Rascal Flatts, which has been his musical home base for fourteen years, Riley is a little bit more. More volume, more chops, more rock.

“The role of the country drummer has changed,” Riley says. “As country has evolved, it’s become the arena rock of our generation. Rascal Flatts, Taylor Swift, Jason Aldean, Eric Church—the bands are heavy, the music is loud, and it doesn’t remind people of the country music that once was.” Sure, Riley will lay down the most authentic train beat (see *Drum Country*, page 66), but he’s also asked to program loops and sing background vocals with Rascal Flatts, which is fronted by Gary LeVox, Jay DeMarcus, and Joe Don Rooney. He’s even involved, in his role as musical director, with writing the band’s in-concert intro music.

YouTube Riley and you’ll get a taste of what makes him so different, and so effective. Clinics where he’s throwing down wicked double bass? Check. Seventies-style drum solos in the middle of the Flatts show? Check. A double-bill *Crossroads* TV performance with Journey where Riley shares simultaneous drum duties with Deen Castronovo on Journey classics and Rascal Flatts numbers? Double check.

Riley epitomizes a new type of drummer who rocks arenas at night and teaches students of all ages by day. Jim’s instructional methods are similarly new-school; his Nashville-based multi-kit home teaching space, Drum Dojo, features the full integration of modern online technology.

Still, this *Modern Drummer* Festival alum and multiple Readers Poll winner (and contributing writer) knows it always comes back to basics, regardless of a student’s skill level. “Drum students want to learn the most complicated things,” Riley, a University of North Texas grad, says. “But the simple stuff is sometimes the most important.” Riley’s efforts to address drummers’ core needs include the book *Song Charting Made Easy: A Play-Along Guide to the Nashville Number System* and its upcoming follow-up, *Survival Guide for the Modern Drummer*. *MD* caught up with Riley during some rare downtime in his busy schedule.

MD: Rascal Flatts paved the way for “new country,” which today is as much about rock beats and leather as it is about fiddles and pedal steel guitar. What are your thoughts on the monster you’ve created?

Jim: There was a critic who described Rascal Flatts as sounding “not like country, but like Night Ranger with a fiddle.” He meant it negatively, but we all thought it was awesome and funny.

MD: You’ve been with the group for fourteen years now. Did you imagine when you started that you’d have such a great gig for so long?

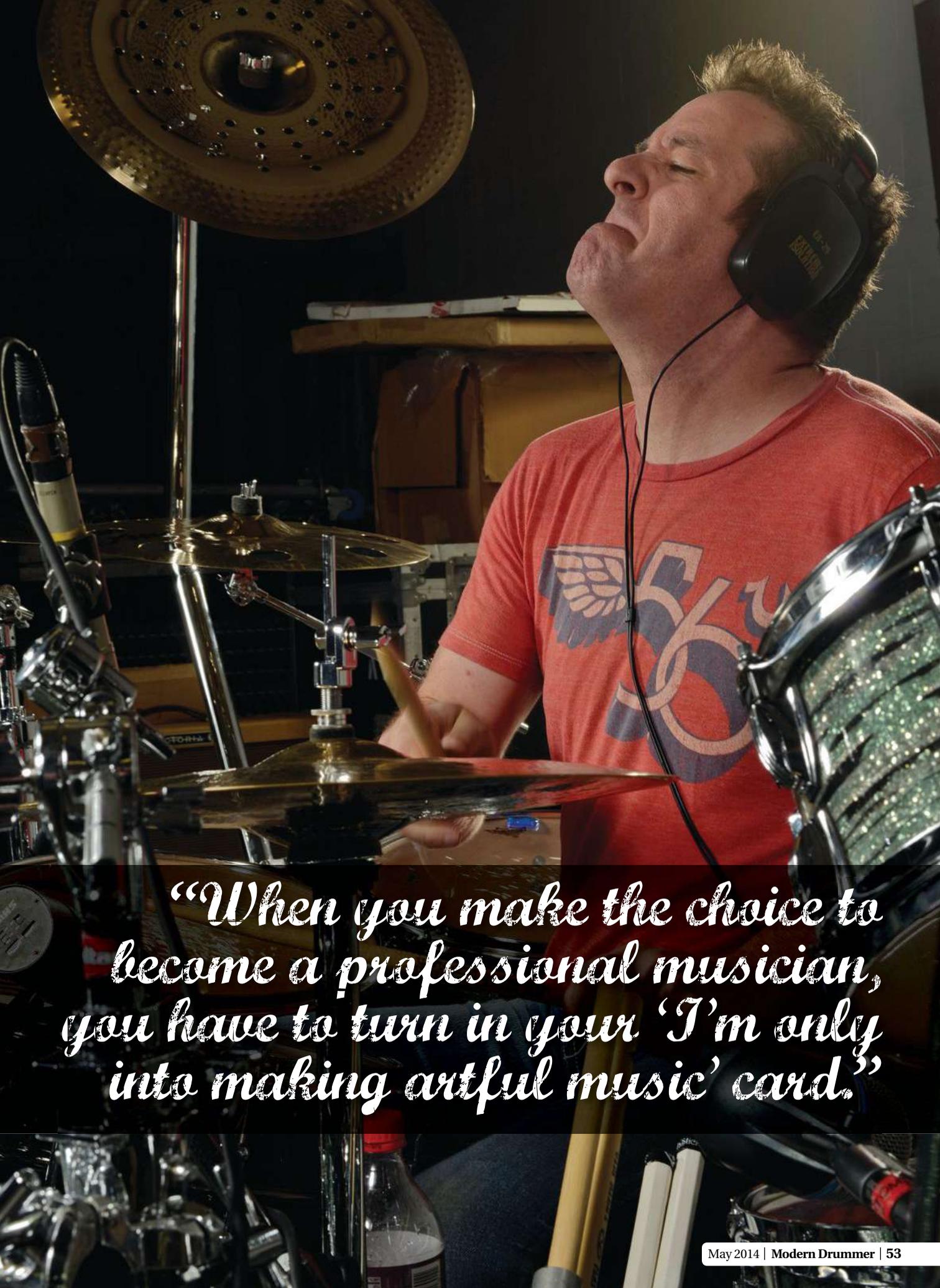
Jim: You know, I really did. When the guys hired me, they told me that they wanted me to be their drummer for their whole career. That was an exciting prospect. I believed in their talents and the direction of the band. I always envisioned us doing this for a long time.

Even though the guys’ first singles

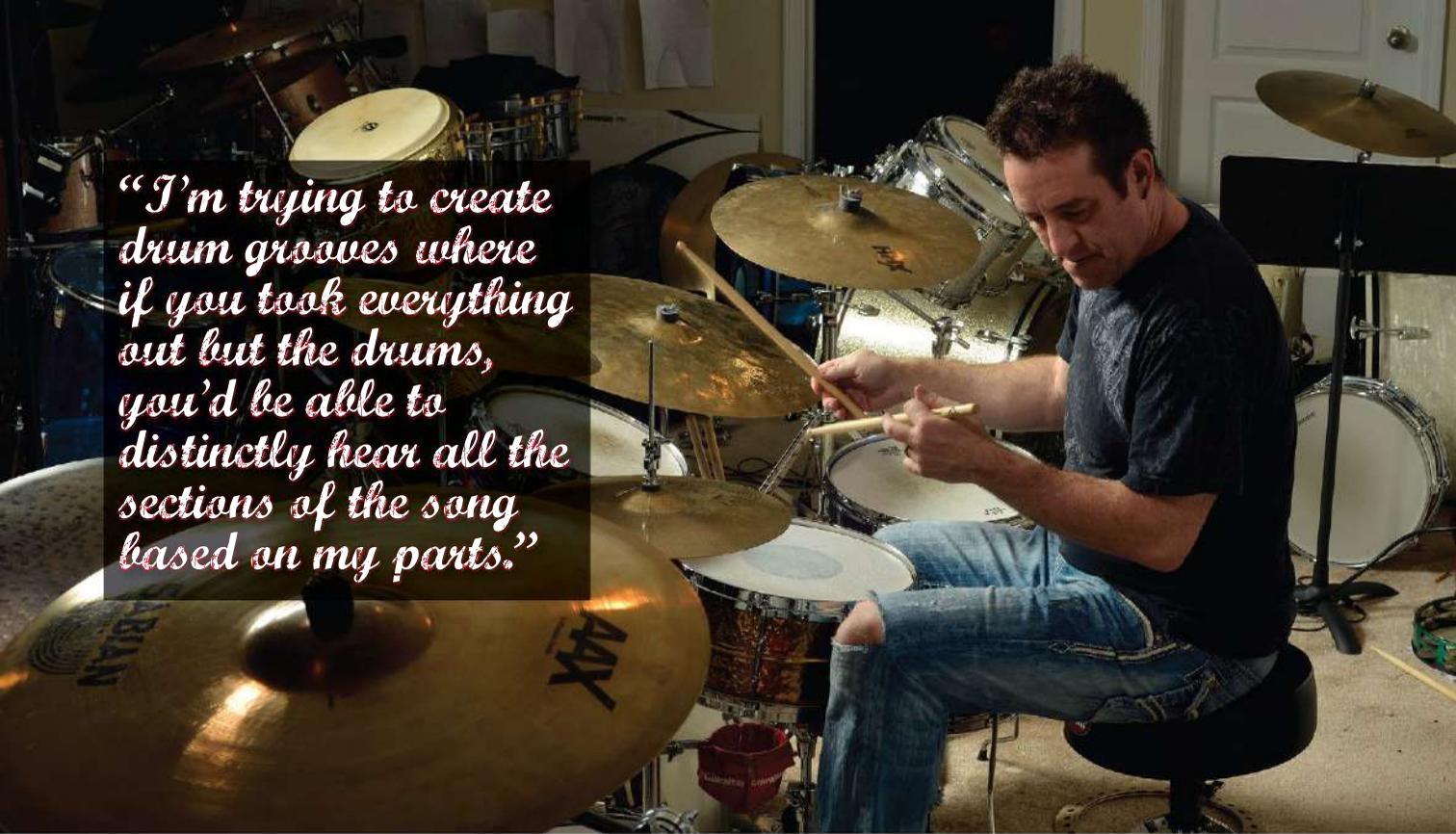
were very successful, live we had humble beginnings. During our first year on the road, we weren’t on a big tour; we were playing clubs, early slots on festivals, county fairs. We only had one hit song, so we played some really fun covers and opened up some of the album songs with extended fusion jams. We were really raw, but we had amazing energy, and we were out to show the world what we were all about.

MD: The live show became increasingly sophisticated.

Jim: When the third single came out with a prominent loop, they asked if I could run that loop live, which at the time was on an ADAT machine. As the band continued to gain in popularity, the sophistication of the live show continued to progress as well. Soon we were syncing the live performance with video elements, as well as the lights and lasers and pyro. This all



“When you make the choice to become a professional musician, you have to turn in your ‘I’m only into making artful music’ card.”



“I’m trying to create drum grooves where if you took everything out but the drums, you’d be able to distinctly hear all the sections of the song based on my parts.”

became a dance between seventy touring personnel, and it had to be programmed down to the millisecond. We’d gone from clubs to selling out Madison Square Garden and the Staples Center, but it was a six-year growth curve that I was grateful to have.

MD: All this synchronization means you have to play to a click all night. How do you feel about that?

Jim: I love it. It takes away all of the “This song felt fast” and “That song was dragging” talk that can happen on a gig with no click.

MD: Some drummers talk about playing behind the click for the verse

and ahead of it for the chorus. What are your thoughts on that?

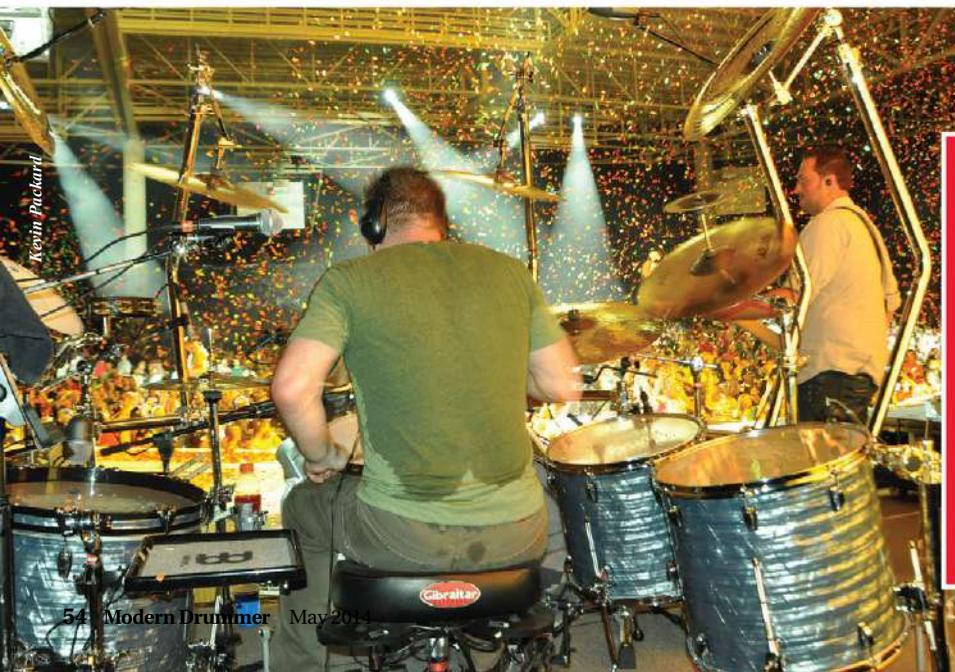
Jim: I never believed in that idea. To me, you’re either playing with the click or you’re not. If you’re playing behind the click, you’re still playing at the same tempo—it’s just happening a few milliseconds later. Sure, you gain a momentary bit of momentum going from the verse to the chorus, but then you have to put the brakes on to maintain your original tempo.

In the professional world that I came up in, I’ve regularly had to play with quantized loops and percussion that are snapped to the grid, so it’s my job to

make the time feel great in the center of the beat. And that can be a challenge.

MD: What’s your approach to keeping the songs fresh?

Jim: Well, we can’t really change what our hit songs are, but I can slightly change the way I approach them. I’ve been fortunate to work with bosses that realize the music will get stale if it stands still, so I’ve always had free rein to play the songs the way I feel them. If they hear something they don’t like, they’ll reel me in, but I’ve never been asked to reproduce exactly what’s on the record. Instead we try to take the signature licks and preserve them while letting the songs continue to breathe and find new life with our audience. It’s allowed us to reinvent some old songs and come up with arrangements



“Jim has been the backbone of our rhythm section from day one. His level of intensity and passion each night is unequalled. It is such a wonderful feeling as an artist to know that someone is behind you, anchoring every musical aspect of the show. As a bass player, I never have a doubt where the pocket is. And I can always rely on Jim to be there for every move we make. Whether sticking to the strict regimen of our show or sitting in at a local club somewhere, Jim is truly one of the very best at his craft.”
—Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts

that in certain cases have worked even better than the original. A great song is very flexible and can be shaped in a number of ways—if you're willing to take some chances.

MD: What does your role as musical director entail?

Jim: Rascal Flatts is in charge of their musical vision. I'm the person in charge of making that vision a reality. Over the years, under their direction, I've hired all the sidemen in the band, and I make sure we've got all the parts covered and that the band is prepared and rehearsed. For the last three tours I've written some sort of musical introduction for the show.

I've helped come up with some different arrangements for songs and created intros and endings to songs that are different from the record.

For our 2011 tour I wrote a tribal drum feature for the three guys and me as the intro to the show. They had a blast playing drums and did a great job. To this day I could walk up to them and count it off, and they'd remember every note. Over the years the MD position has expanded for me to include being a mix consultant for a variety of live things, like the Journey *Crossroads* show we did last year, which was a blast. Double drumming with Deen Castronovo on all those



Jim's Setup

Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple in mint green glass glitter finish

- A. 6.5x14 Black Beauty snare
- B. 11x14 floor tom
- C. 6x12 snare
- D. 8x10 tom
- E. 9x12 tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- G. 16x18 floor tom
- H. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 15" Artisan hi-hats
- 2. 20" Paragon China
- 3. 19" AAX X-Plosion crash
- 4. 18" AAX X-Plosion crash
- 5. 22" Medium Heavy Artisan ride
- 6. 20" AAX X-Plosion crash
- 7. 7" Radia cup chime
- 8. 21" Holy China
- 9. 18" O-Zone

Hardware: Gibraltar Road series "spider" rack, Ludwig Atlas double bass drum pedal

Sticks: Vater 5B wood-tip sticks, Splashsticks, retractable wire brushes, and Monster brushes

Heads: Remo Coated CS X snare batters and Ambassador bottoms, Clear Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Ambassador front head with custom graphics by Remo

Percussion: LP Ridge Rider cowbell

Electronics: Roland Octapad, MacBook Pro laptop running Ableton Live, Akai MPD18 pad/controller, Digidesign digi003R digital interface, two Clark Synthesis Tactile sound units

Mics: Shure SM7B on top of snare and SM57 on bottom, Beta 98s on toms, Beta 91s inside bass drums and Beta 52s outside, KSM137 overheads, and SM58s for vocals and talkback

Accessories: QwikStix stick holder and beverage holder, PureSound snare wires

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JIM RILEY
Rascal Flatts

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VH5BW



RACHEL FUHRER
Ume

L 16" 40.64cm • D .570" 1.45cm

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ANTWAN "AMADEUS" THOMPSON
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JIM RILEY

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JIM RILEY

classic Journey songs was really fun.

MD: Your drumset has evolved over the years.

Jim: When I started with Rascal Flatts in 2000 I made a conscious decision to make my setup as ergonomically suitable as possible. So here's what I did. I put a throne on an empty drum rug and adjusted it to a height where I just felt comfortable sitting. Then I added the snare drum and put it at a height and angle that gave me full access to the drum and allowed me to comfortably play rimshots. Next came the bass drum. Now, as I sat there I noticed that my feet in their natural resting position don't point straight forward—they angle out like a V from my body. So the first curveball on my kit was that the bass drum was not straight on, but was angled out and away from the snare. So I did the same thing when I positioned the hi-hat.

I chose a four-piece setup because I wanted to have really good access to the ride, and I felt it was the smallest setup where I didn't feel like I was sacrificing anything as far as voicings around the kit. Besides, that first year we kept all the gear in the belly of the bus, and I had to set up my own gear. So I wasn't about to set up a giant kit and break it down by myself.

MD: So when did you make the transition to a bigger setup?

Jim: At some point when we were playing bigger shows the guys said, "Why don't you bring out a bigger kit?" So I did, but every setup I used, no matter how big, had at its center all of the principles of a four-piece kit.

MD: Speaking about setting up drums, tell us about your relationship with your drum tech, Craig Krolicki.

Jim: Craig started with us in 2006, but I've known him since we both moved to town in 1997. Craig had some success as a player early on, but as the business changed he saw some of the gigs he was doing drying up, and not a lot of work was coming up in its place. When he came out with us, he'd never teched before, but to his credit he worked really hard to learn the craft. My kit changes yearly, and he has to memorize each one and execute its setup with

precision every night. We don't do soundchecks, so I rely on Craig to have the drums set up, tuned, and sound-checked so that when I walk up on stage everything is good to go.

MD: You use headphones live rather than in-ear monitors. How come?

Jim: I first started using the headphones during my clinics—I do a lot of them in the afternoons—because I'm constantly switching between playing and talking. When I would go and play the show with in-ears, I'd miss the headphones a bit. So about four years ago I decided to use the headphones on the show, and I'm still doing it.

MD: A moment ago you referred to the recent changes in the music business. What's your take on the state of the industry in Nashville today, especially as it pertains to drummers?

Jim: When I moved to Nashville in 1997, people were saying, "Man, you missed it," because in the early '90s country was huge. I felt like country had picked up the listeners that were disinterested in the Seattle grunge sound that was dominating the pop airwaves. So when Garth Brooks kicked open the door for country, business in Nashville was booming. The top session guys from that era were playing sessions six days a week, sometimes at double and triple scale. Every label was opening another imprint, and there were a ton of artists coming out. More artists means more songs, which means more demos being cut and ultimately more drummers on the road. It was a player's market.

But Napster and iTunes changed the music business radically. People were buying singles, not albums—if they were buying music at all—and that meant there was a whole lot less money going into the business. This meant fewer labels, fewer artists, and a whole lot less work for drummers in Nashville. This was the climate when I arrived in Nashville, but somehow I was able to adapt and create a niche for myself.

So today when I talk to a young drummer—and now I'm the one who's been in town for a long time—I try to be encouraging and not tell them they missed it. They didn't grow up in the album-driven world that I did. This is all

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JIM RILEY

they know, so, just like I did, they have to adapt. This has led to what I would call hybrid careers. Even some of the biggest session guys in Nashville are looking to take a road gig to supplement their successful studio career.

MD: Let's talk about the recording of the upcoming Rascal Flatts album.

Jim: I've had various opportunities to record with Rascal Flatts over the years. But when the band decided to use producer Howard Benson, I really didn't have any idea that I would get the call. Howard came out to see some shows, and he thought it would be good to try to capture in the studio what he

was hearing live. I don't think Howard knew exactly what to expect from Rascal Flatts or from me in the studio. Since he'd never worked with us, he booked two days at Sunset Sound in L.A. as a way for him and the band to get better acquainted.

Howard's staff had hired a drum tech for the session, because he wasn't sure what my ability to get my own sound was. So I went in the room, played a bit, and asked the engineer if he minded if I retuned the drums a bit, which was fine.

MD: Did you have a say in which drums you'd be playing on?

Jim: No. It was equipment that Howard was comfortable with and that he'd used on a lot of records he'd produced. All I brought with me was a stick bag. I tuned the drums a bit lower than they were and played for the engineer. He seemed happy, so we waited for Howard and the Flatts to show up. Once the guys got there, they started listening to some prospective songs until one jumped out at them. Then Jay looked at me and said, "Okay, chart it."

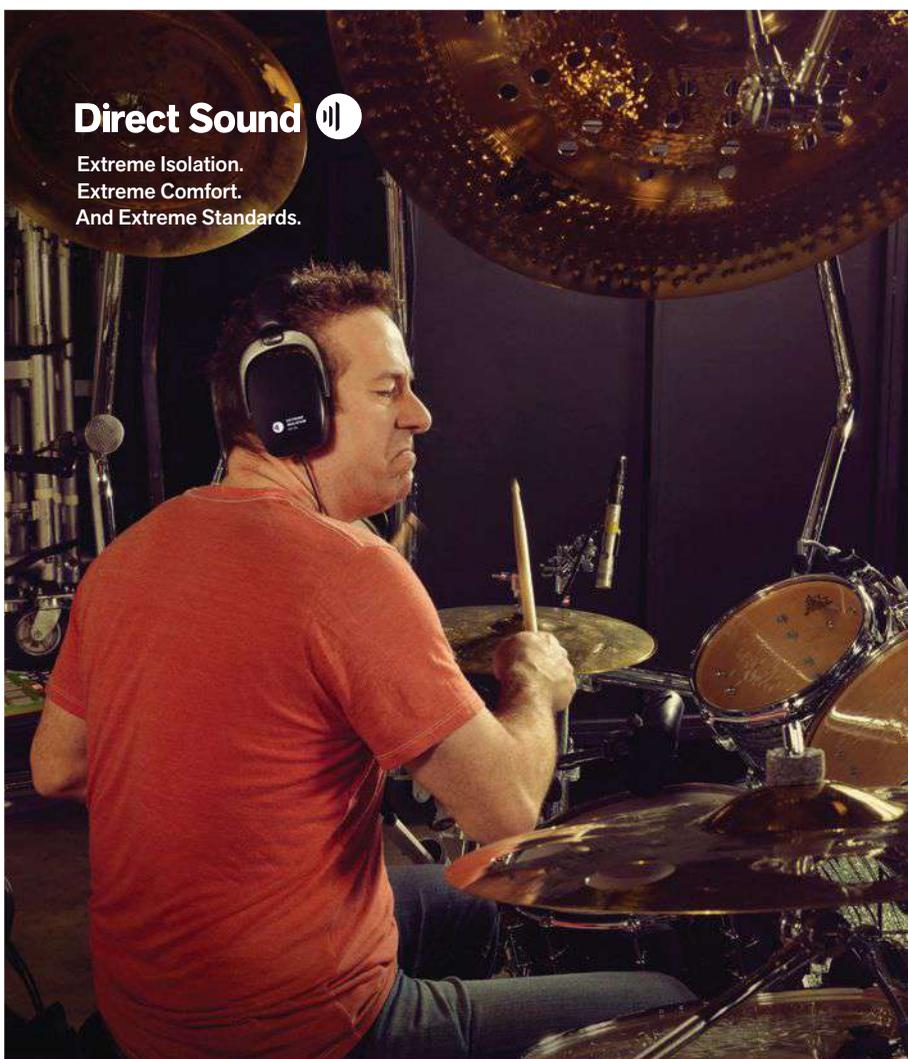
MD: Did you make a chart using the Nashville number system, like in your book?

Jim: I did. Then we laid it down in about two takes. I think we surprised Howard with how quick we were. By the middle of the second day, we'd recorded five songs, which is a reasonable tempo. Some songs we had in just a few takes, and on others we spent quite a bit of time experimenting with the arrangements. There was one where the guys were satisfied with the first take, but I asked if I could do another run-through by myself so they would have more choices when editing, in case the direction of the song changed slightly as the recording evolved. It's good to have options on the Pro Tools playlist. In pop music, a lot of magic happens after the red light goes off.

Anyway, everything went great with Howard in L.A., so he called me to do an additional track when he came to record in Nashville. I brought my own drums on that one.

MD: Can you talk more about the Nashville number system?

Jim: The Nashville number system is such an important tool. As a working drummer, I was always looking for a charting system that was reliable, but everything I came across was a sort of chicken-scratch version that I couldn't really hand to anyone else. If I was preparing a sub, I'd give them the chicken scratch and they'd say, "Thanks but no thanks," and they'd end up writing their own charts. When I came across the Nashville number system, it looked a lot like the figured bass and Roman-numeral analysis that I'd studied in college. The biggest advantage is that I could write one chart and give it to the entire band.



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-Jim Riley, drummer, Rascal Flatts

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MD: How did you end up writing a book about the system?

Jim: The genesis of *Song Charting Made Easy* was actually *Modern Drummer* magazine. I wrote a two-part article on the system in 2007 and turned that piece in to my publisher at Hal Leonard. I had lofty goals writing that book. I really wanted to change the world—you know, change the way that musicians thought about music. The Nashville number system revolutionized the Nashville recording process and helped turn Nashville into the recording mecca that it is. I think it should be taught in every music program in America.

MD: How does the system affect the part you play?

Jim: With a number-system chart, you can see the entire form of the song laid out for you on one page. You see the verse, the chorus, the bridge, and the solo, so you can plan the most appropriate thing to play in each section. I'm trying to create drum grooves where if you took everything out but the drums, you'd be able to distinctly hear all the sections of the song based on my parts and the voicings in my right hand.

You start to think about how each part of a song functions. What is a verse? A verse is a part of a song where the singer is telling a story. The best thing to do is stay out of their way and let them. So I'll play a closed hi-hat and fewer fills.

When you get to the chorus, that's the refrain—that's the repeat, the part of the song that they're going to hear again. I have to elevate the energy there. So I may open up the hi-hat and play more fills to move the song along.

I may see a bridge and a solo coming up, so if I move to the ride cymbal on the bridge, where am I going to go on the solo? If the bridge is a real elevation from the chorus, I might play a crash cymbal, or if it's a real departure for the rest of the song and the energy has changed, then I may choose to play floor tom on the bridge and ride cymbal on the solo. It's not so much that the music dictates what you should play, because sometimes there's more than one right answer. The important thing is that you ask the right question, which is: What does the music require from me? The answer to that is what makes us all the

unique players that we are.

MD: What do you feel are the qualities that make a player most desirable to a prospective employer?

Jim: A great attitude toward the music and the other musicians is a great start. It's very annoying to play music with people who feel like a genre is beneath them. If you dig into any style of music, you can find redeeming qualities.

When you make the choice to become a professional musician, you have to turn in your "I'm only into making artful music" card. You must be willing and prepared to play all styles. That's what I'm addressing with my new book, *Survival Guide for the Modern Drummer*. I'm trying to help players be ready for virtually any style of music that they may encounter in the real world.

Another concept that I preach throughout my teaching is quality of sound, whether it's how to strike a timpani or how not to play on the nodes of the accidental bars of the marimba. When it comes to pop drumming, I'm a big proponent of playing rimshots on the snare drum. It creates a distinctive sound and leaves enough room underneath to play ghost notes that can contribute to the groove. Something else I often tell players is to play their toms louder during fills. In most cases fills are supposed to elevate the energy level, and it's important to keep that energy up all the way through the fill.

MD: Do you bury the bass drum beater in the head or let it bounce off?

Jim: For pop music I bury the beater. The biggest reason I do that is for consistency. Some players who don't bury the beater tend to inadvertently play extra notes in between the notes they're trying to play. I was one of those players, and for me burying the beater has given me a much more consistent sound.

MD: You play with such conviction. Can you talk about that?

Jim: I feel like I'm the luckiest guy on earth to be able to do what I do for a living, because I love what I do. The people that have hired me to play with them are letting me into their musical world, and they do this because they understand that I really care about the music. It's one thing to be a great player

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JIM RILEY

but another thing to be really passionate about the music you're playing.

And it doesn't just apply at the highest levels on the biggest gigs. I try to play every gig I ever play with that same passion and conviction. The people that hire me deserve that. When I would be playing in an empty club with two people sitting at the bar, I would always think, *What if one of those guys is the person who offers me that gig of a lifetime?* Think about it that way, and you'll realize that you should play every gig like it's the most important one you'll ever play.

MD: Teaching seems to be a big part of your life.

Jim: It's something I've always done and always loved. The process of constantly breaking down for my students what's most important actually makes me a better player. I'm grateful for the gifts that I have and all I've been able to accomplish with music so far, and I really enjoy helping other musicians get to that level as well.

MD: Tell us a little about your Drum Dojo lessons.

Jim: I have a great schedule with Rascal Flatts, where we basically play weekends. That leaves the early part of my week free to teach. I've created an environment where instead of teaching half-hour lessons, which is the norm for middle school—and high school—age kids, I teach one-hour group lessons. With an hour I can teach snare drum, keyboard, and drumset all in the same lesson and keep my rate affordable for kids. It's a very rewarding program, and all of the students so far that have stuck with me through their senior year have gone on to study music in college.

MD: Has technology changed the way you teach?

Jim: My iPod is the nerve center of my teaching. I have a cue system where everyone is wearing headphones and can hear my instruction over the microphone. I use the iPod to play classic recordings as well as music-minus-one-style tracks. Even my metronome is on the iPod. I also encourage the kids to bring their iPhone with them so they can record a one- or two-minute micro-lesson on what we've

covered, as well as on what they should be practicing. I have them text-message me videos of them working on things, and I'll give them feedback.

MD: You taught a drum line this year.

Jim: I did. It was intimidating at first, because I hadn't written drum-line parts for twenty years. But as I got into it, it all came back to me.

MD: Did you march?

Jim: I marched with the Velvet Knights in 1989, and I did five years in the North Texas drum line. It was a great experience because it takes your hands to a level that you may not have known even existed. It also helped me with listening, which is a huge part of a successful drum line.

MD: Tell us about your clinic program.

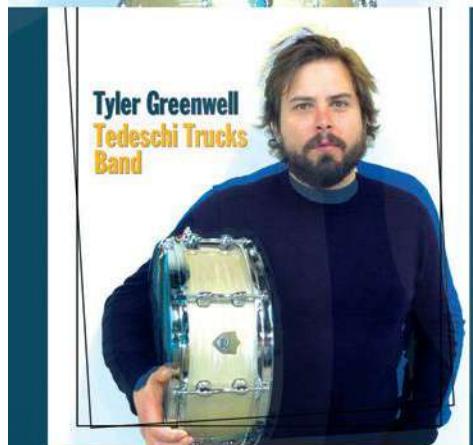
Jim: I'm not a superhuman-type drummer; the concepts I work with are very simple. The clinics are interactive, and I'll bring people up on stage. That doesn't always go as planned, and you have to think on your feet. But as the attendees watch the player that has gone up on stage, they see themselves up there and they tend to pay attention. The main thing is for me to make sure a person is leaving with something that improves them as a player that day. Sometimes young players are looking for complicated things, but I'll say, "Hey, young fella, if you play this simple fill, people will look at you like you really get the music." It's put upon me to combine my ability to play and teach, and help other people try to attain the same type of happiness in their career as I've had in mine.

MD: When you were younger, did you envision yourself even playing country music?

Jim: When I was a kid I would go to concerts like David Lee Roth, AC/DC, or even Stevie Wonder and say, "I wanna do that." But the musical landscape changes and the gigs you aspire to aren't there or are already taken. As I was looking for a career in music, I saw Nashville as an extremely livable city with amazing musicians, and I thought that those were the kind of people I wanted to be around. My dream was always to make great music with great musicians, and that's what I've found in Nashville.



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Steven Schick

So strong was his teenage attraction to modern percussion music that he outright defied his parents in order to dive headfirst into the budding genre. As a recent retrospective concert makes clear, today his name is nearly synonymous with the craft.

Story by Will Romano • Photos by Bill Dean

In some cultures the concept of the doppelgänger is interpreted as an omen of bad luck. Occultists, mystics, and armchair psychiatrists all view visions and dreams of twins as signs of spiritual discord or epic struggles between the forces of good and evil. For Steven Schick, distinguished professor of music at the University of California, San Diego, and one of the solo percussion field's most revered interpreters, meeting his cosmic counterpart was a haunting experience he hasn't easily forgotten.

"I don't think I've told this to anyone," Schick says, "but when I was playing some concerts in Paris in June [2013], I met my twin crossing the street." The drummer's

mirror image was middle aged, wore intellectual-type glasses, and carried a sweater over his shoulder and a newspaper under his arm. He was American, as far as Schick could surmise, and seemingly the product of some alternate reality. "It would appear we were very similar but followed

different life paths," Schick says.

Schick's father, an Iowa farmer, never wanted the musician's life for his son. In fact, he expressly forbade it, provoking the rebellious youngster to double down, flunk

out of science classes on his way to sabotaging a future in medicine, and pursue the career of his dreams—the art of solo percussion.

"That guy crossing the street is me if, at age eighteen, I had not gone into music," Schick says. "It was so bizarre to see how

"I see yoga as inseparable from practicing. They are one and the same. My goal is to play this music into my seventies and eighties, the way pianists do."

much difference music has made to my whole worldview, about whom I've fallen in love with, about what I listen to." For Schick this chance encounter wasn't a harbinger of doom but a reminder of the

religious-like “conversion” he experienced, decades ago, when he was first introduced to solo percussion.

“I was like Paul the Apostle on the road to Damascus,” Steven says. “I was as fervent as you can imagine. I couldn’t stop talking about solo percussion or thinking about it. I was consumed by it.”

Arguably, in the last twenty years the world of solo percussion has grown exponentially and drifted ever so slightly into mainstream culture, thanks, in part, to Schick, who’s commissioned and premiered more than 150 new pieces, as well as collaborated with the Bang on a Can All-Stars and juggled job descriptions from performer to educator to symphony conductor. Charting the trajectory of the field without Schick’s presence would be sheer speculation. One thing is certain, however: The solo percussion genre would certainly have fared worse had Schick continued his medical studies.

Sure, many modern drummers are familiar with Iannis Xenakis’s lively and mildly ethnic compositions; Harry Partch’s philosophical “corporeality” and wholesale rejection of Western tuning; the roaring silence of John Cage’s “27” 10.554” for a Percussionist”; the siren blasts of Edgard Varèse’s “Ionisation”; Karlheinz Stockhausen’s 1959 masterwork, “Nr. 9 Zyklus”; and Evelyn Glennie’s extensive output. But for the better part of the twentieth century, unaccompanied percussion was hardly a thriving field.

“I think that there were many years in which I may have been the only person, particularly in America, playing solo percussion pieces,” Schick says. “I’m not saying that this genre would have disappeared without me, but if you attended an American classical music concert in the mid-1980s, you didn’t find very



many people playing this music.”

Although Schick remains a member of a rare breed, he’s far from extinct. In fact, these days aspiring percussionists and composers alike seem more willing than ever to receive his rhythmic revelations. Case in point: Schick performed and hosted a pair of concerts (titled “Origins”

and “Responses”) and a panel discussion in early 2014 at Columbia University’s Miller Theatre in New York City. The events were designed to celebrate the pioneering percussionist’s sixtieth birthday and to present a loose historical chronology of the development of solo percussion music, which included a mix of early avant-garde

and modern works by Xenakis, Stockhausen, John Luther Adams, and David Lang, among others, and world premieres of compositions by Nathan Davis and Lei Liang.

The concerts’ subtext, however, alluded to Schick’s symbiotic relationship with the genre at large. The percussion trailblazer predates the oldest piece performed for the program, and both he and the style of performance he continues to champion have evolved roughly within the same time frame, each being shaped by the cultural and musical revolutions marking the last six decades.

The innovative twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century pieces in Schick’s repertoire are products of radical departures

Courtesy of CF Peters

“Intellectually demanding? I would say Ferneyhough’s ‘Bone Alphabet.’ It took me about 1,200 hours to learn.”

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STEVEN SCHICK

from traditional approaches to writing notation and are brought to life via unconventional choices in instrumentation, fluid physicality on stage, an experimental spirit, and accelerated learning methods. Yet despite the level of precision and dynamism inherent to Schick's rhythmic facility, there's something undeniably accessible, witty, and ultimately animalistic about the percussionist's work. It's these very same primal aspects that, perhaps, distinguish Schick's field of expertise from other disciplines of contemporary and classical music study.

MD was recently honored with the opportunity to speak at length with Schick about his life and career and the field of solo percussion.

MD: Do you think the profile of the solo percussion field has been raised in the last couple of decades?

Steven: It used to be that you had to convince people it was worth listening to. I mean this in a general way, but you did this in a sort of vaudevillian approach: "Look what that crazy guy can do," and that was at least one step closer to something interesting. That is not quite what we want, but I think it feels like it's equalizing with respect to the way that people listen to other instruments.

MD: Can you give an example?

Steven: One day I was playing in Washington, D.C., at the National Gallery of Art, and I got an email from somebody who, at that point, was with the Marine Corps band and wanted coaching on one of the pieces I commissioned. I thought, *Okay, this thing that I thought was as far to the fringe as it could have been twenty-five years ago has clearly moved to the mainstream.* In addition, you find every university percussion program, or nearly every one, dealing seriously with this kind of music.

MD: Talk about your performances at Columbia University earlier this year.

Steven: One of the reasons for the event is that I'm turning sixty this year. In fact, the oldest and first serious piece, in my opinion, that was written for solo percussion is younger than I am. I was five when the first piece on that program was written. I came along a generation after the very first of those percussionists.

MD: What were some of the most mentally and physically challenging pieces to perform?

Steven: Michael Gordon's piece "XY" is probably the most physically challenging. It's fifteen minutes of just full-out drumming in constantly shifting

polyrhythms. One hand is [playing] in six, and the other is in five. "XY" means one hand is getting louder while the other hand is getting softer. There's this constant phase crossing of one polyrhythm against another.

Intellectually demanding? I would say Brian Ferneyhough's "Bone Alphabet," which is the uncontested winner in that category and calls for seven undefined sound sources; adjacent instruments should not be of the same material. It was written for me, but it took me about 1,200 hours to learn and memorize the piece of nine or ten minutes in duration.

MD: How long did it take you to generate the technique required to perform these pieces?

Steven: Well, that's a fantastic question. When I began being interested in solo contemporary music, which started with my being interested in solos—although that is certainly not the only thing I do—the genesis of the whole genre was recent enough that there wasn't an established technique. Looking at a piece like "Bone Alphabet" [first performed in 1992] that has this incredible density of rhythms, you need four sticks going at once to perform it. There wasn't a codified set of techniques. You had to make it up.

MD: Stockhausen's "Zyklus" was scored with no true beginning or ending. Some refer to it as a "circular" piece.

Steven: All of those pieces in the "Origins" program have a level of freedom given to the interpreter that percussionists weren't used to. There's also this weird thing that happens where you study the piece and you start realizing that certain decisions that seem theoretically possible just don't work. What "Zyklus" allows you is the freedom to start where you'd like. There are moments in which Stockhausen writes absolutely everything specifically, but it's a little bit like the Alan Shepard suborbital flight: It's a taste of what it would be like to launch yourself out into free space and never come back. "Zyklus" is also the first serious piece of solo percussion I saw performed.

MD: There seemed to be a narrative thread running through "Origins" and "Responses."

Steven: The thing about "Origins" is that it's music that comes from the late 1950s through the early 1970s. "Responses" was my personal responses to *those* pieces. I'm glad to hear you say that about the narrative. It's true. I didn't commission the pieces in the first concert, but I stood behind them. I hope this doesn't sound maudlin: I defied my parents to become a

musician. I took this unbelievable step off the cliff when I did that, and the vehicle that I was riding in at that moment was those early pieces. In a way, they were more personal.

MD: What does a piece such as "Psappha" mean to you?

Steven: You've asked me about two of the pieces which, I mean, completely and utterly changed my life. The first case was Stockhausen's "Zyklus," and the other is Xenakis's "Psappha," which I've played upwards of 800 times over the last thirty years. If there's a true magnetic north for my career as an interpreter, it's "Psappha."

MD: Let's talk about your setup. You'll likely say that the choice of drums depends on the piece you're playing or what the piece calls for.

Steven: You get both. Many of the pieces are scored specifically, and others are of free instrumentation. For instance, I bought a bottle of Glenfiddich whisky in the mid-1990s, and it has traveled everywhere with me.

MD: You were an established solo percussionist when you joined the Bang on a Can All-Stars in the early 1990s. How did you transition from your solo work to a group setting?

Steven: I was an avid drumset player when I was nineteen, but when the group was founded I was in my late thirties and hadn't played drumkit in a long time. I was, in essence, uniting these two aspects of my life, which I really kept separated.

MD: What can you tell us about your earliest experiences with music?

Steven: My three great loves growing up were sailing, rock music, and classical music. I was never going to be a musician. My father essentially forbade it. "No son of mine," that kind of thing. My dad was a farmer, you know? I grew up in Iowa. I was in a pre-med program in school until the discovery of this music that was in its infancy. It compelled me to say, "I'm getting in on the ground floor." I transferred from a small private school to the University of Iowa. By the sheerest of luck I discovered a hotbed of interesting music in Iowa City, which was one of the leading areas of the country in the early 1970s, from that standpoint.

MD: You stress the physicality of playing in your first book, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams*. How do you keep yourself in shape?

Steven: For quite a long period of time, something approaching twenty-five years, I've had a consistent yoga practice. I always see that as inseparable from practicing

itself. I don't think, *Oh, I'm going to exercise, and then I'm going to practice*. They are one and the same. My goal is to play this music into my seventies and eighties, the way pianists do. I also walk, mostly by myself. In fact, I walked from San Diego to San Francisco several years ago, by myself.

MD: You walked from San Diego to San Francisco?

Steven: I proposed to my wife, who was living in San Francisco at the time, and I walked up for that purpose. It was about six and a half weeks of walking—twenty miles a day. One funny story was when I met this woman who stopped me and said, "What are you doing?" I was out in the middle of nowhere, and she told me that she was a psychiatrist and that, you know, "I can help you." Basically, "You must be nuts!"

On the musical side, I've always thought that noises we hear outdoors are not very different from the noises we make on stage. The work of composer John Luther Adams, who I've worked with, is informed by natural sounds. As an art of noises, the world of percussion is very similar to just taking a walk and trying to figure out where you are simply by hearing what's around you. I'll be writing about that experience in my next book.

MD: If it's not too personal, what happened with your first marriage?

Steven: Tolstoy was right: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." It's a little hard to describe. I feel personal about that. We were married for twenty-five years. I'm still on very friendly terms with my first wife, and when I think about these pieces, I learned them when I was with her. I owe her and give her an enormous amount of credit.

MD: Are any pieces difficult to perform because of the memories they evoke?

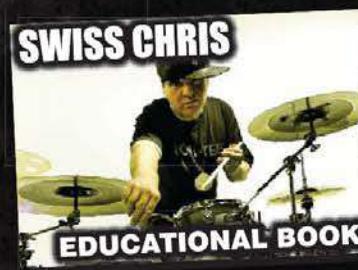
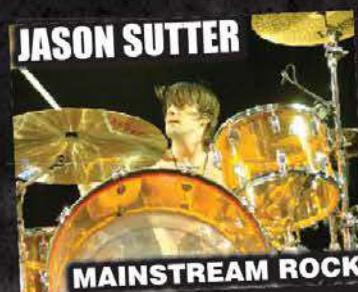
Steven: I think the pieces I play are like amber in the way amber traps all these natural things that have tried to go through it. Still, I never really identified so strongly with a piece of music that I thought, *I can't play it because it evokes a painful memory*. I can't say that "Psappha" is "our song," although when I met Brenda [Steven's second wife], and this was after a long period of living alone, the first thing she heard me play was a James Tenney piece.

She was a lawyer and worked in land conservation. She didn't have a musical background at all. She came to me with tears in her eyes and said, "This is the most beautiful piece of music." It was just a noise that started soft and got louder and got soft again, and I thought, *This is the girl for me*.



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REGAL TIP
by Calato



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TRAIN BEAT VARIATIONS

A Dozen Ways to Play One of the Most Essential Drumset Grooves

by Jim Riley

MUSIC KEY	
open	R.C. bell
H.H.	♩
S.D.	♩
B.D.	♩
H.H. w/ foot	♩
	Rimshot

The train beat is a must-have in your bag of tricks. While it's most commonly used in country and bluegrass settings, with very little digging you can find examples of it in a multitude of genres, from rock to pop to metal.

Although all of these patterns can be played with sticks, I think you'll enjoy experimenting with some additional implements, like brushes and rods. The trickiest aspect of the basic train beat is the fact that the backbeat, which we are normally accustomed to playing with the left hand, is played by the right hand (or vice versa if you're a lefty).

For all of these patterns, make sure to play the accents strong while keeping the inner beats relatively low. For the notation, I'm using an X on the snare to represent an accent. This can be played in the middle of the drum, but my recommendation is to play it as a rimshot.

Here's the most basic train beat.

1

R L R L R L R L

For most drummers, that's the only train beat they know, but there are many variations that you can draw upon depending on the tempo and feel of a given song. One way to add interest to your part is to use a four-bar pattern. Here's one based on the previous example.

2

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

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

To give more dimension to your groove, you can add a drag.

3

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

This variation, which uses a triplet, can add some nice "slop" to grooves at medium and slow tempos.

4

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

As the music calls for it, you can use a more syncopated bass drum rhythm under the steady hand pattern.

5

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

These next variations are based on rudiments and are quite useful. The first uses a double-stroke sticking and is great for up-tempo songs. The trickiest part of executing this groove is getting comfortable with playing an accented note followed by an unaccented note with the same hand.

6

R R L L R R L L

This next version makes use of a paradiddle to give the groove a great feel at medium to fast tempos.

7

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

This pattern is just one grace note away from being a flam tap. It works really nicely at medium and fast tempos.

8

R R r L L R R r L L

For slower tempos, try using the following groove. I like to play the right hand off-center and the left hand in the middle of the drum. The key is making the left-hand backbeat a flam, as notated.

9

R R r L R R R r L R

In the '70s there were some country albums recorded with two drummers, one playing the train beat and one playing in a half-time feel. This next groove mimics that effect by using the hi-hat to imply the half-time feel with a foot splash, which can be accomplished by playing the middle of the hi-hat footboard with your heel.

10

R R rL R R R rL R

This next pattern lets you maintain the continuity of the train beat on the snare with the left hand, while adding the color of the ride cymbal with the right. Note that while both hands are playing 8th notes, the accent patterns are different. The snare accents are on the backbeats, while the ride cymbal accents imply a half-time feel.

11

L L L L L L L L

This is a train beat I use on ballads that have a subdivided 16th-note feel. I like using a brush-type implement, like the Vater Monster Brush, for this groove.

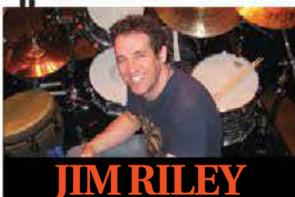
♩ = 80 - 100

12

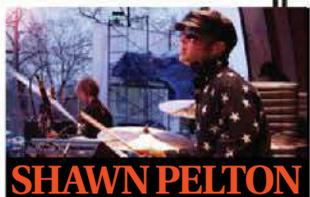
R L R R L L R L R L R R L L R L

All of these beats can be played as written or with a swing feel, as the music dictates. These variations are taken from my upcoming book, *Survival Guide for the Modern Drummer*.

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OPEN-HANDED PLAYING

Discovering Rhythms Inside the Paradiddle

by Claus Hessler

MUSIC KEY	
H.H.	X
S.D.	● (●)
B.D.	■
	Ghost note

Besides being one of the most popular rudiments, the single paradiddle is a good example to illustrate the overlap between linear and rudimental drumming, and it's great for working on an open-handed approach (right hand on the snare and left hand on the hi-hat, or vice versa if you're left-handed).

The following sixteen building blocks are all derived from paradiddle stickings. The first and third columns substitute one part of the sticking with the bass drum.

A L L L R R R L R R
B L L L R R R L R R
C L L L R R R L R R
D L L L R R R L R R
E L L L R R R L R R
F L L L R R R L R R
G L L L R R R L R R
H L L L R R R L R R
I L L L R R R L R R
J L L L R R R L R R
K L L L R R R L R R
L L L L R R R L R R
M L L L R R R L R R
N L L L R R R L R R
O L L L R R R L R R
P L L L R R R L R R

The next steps are to come up with combinations of those building blocks and to add some dynamics. To do this, use patterns from the first and third columns of the building blocks for counts 1 and 3 of a 4/4 groove, and patterns from the second or fourth column for counts 2 and 4. Almost any combination sounds interesting. Here are two options.

1 > A > F > O > H
L L L R L L R L L R R L

2 > I > J > C > P
L L L R R L R L L R R L

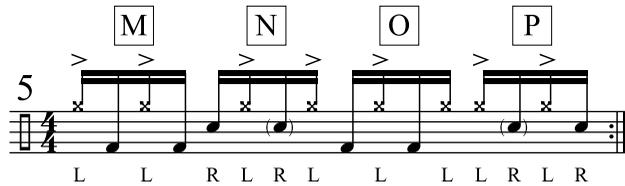
Inverted paradiddle variations can be combined in ways to imply the different Afro-Cuban clave rhythms. Here's one that outlines a 3-2 son clave.

3 > E > F > G > H
L L R L L R L L L R R L

Here's one that outlines a 2-3 son clave.

4 > I > J > K > L
L L L R R L R L L R R L

This combination has hi-hat accents that imply a Brazilian partido alto pattern.



Start slowly, play with a click, and maintain the open-handed position. At first, combine just two blocks: A and B, C and D, E and F, and so forth. Then expand the patterns by combining four building blocks of your choice. Use the generated patterns as grooves or as one-bar fills. You should also experiment with dynamics by applying ghost notes and accents. Create some patterns of your own and write them down. And be sure to use both straight and shuffled 16th-note feels. For more on the topic, check out the book *Open-Handed Playing, Vol. II: A Step Beyond* (Alfred Music Publishing), which I wrote in collaboration with Dom Famularo. Feel free to contact me through claushessler.com if you have any questions. Enjoy the journey!



Claus Hessler is an active clinician in Europe, Asia, and the United States. He has written three books: *Open-Handed Playing, Vol. I*; *Open-Handed Playing, Vol. II: A Step Beyond*; and *Daily Drumset Workout*. For more, visit claushessler.com.



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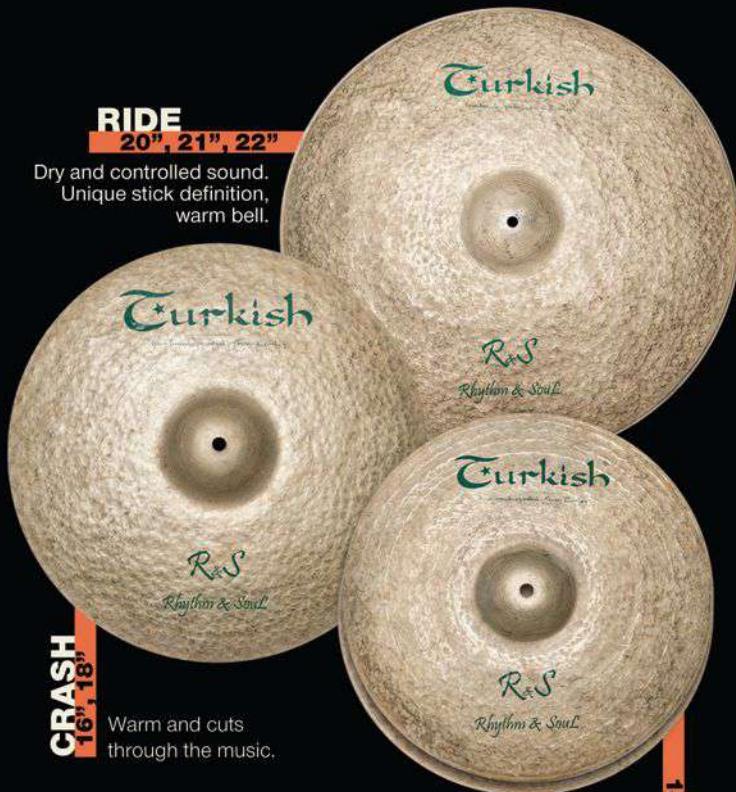
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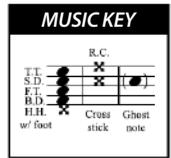
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SAMBA STARTER

Unlocking a World of Options

by Adam Osmianski



With the growing popularity of world-music programs in American universities and the continued popularity of Brazilian music in the jazz community, it's surprising how limited drummers' vocabularies seem to be when it comes to the rhythms of the samba. When asked to play a samba, most often you'll hear something like this:



Not that there's anything wrong with that pattern; it's a perfectly good groove. It's just that too often that single variation is viewed as the "correct" way to play samba. But is there a correct way to swing? Is there a correct way to rock? Isn't it more about capturing a feel? It's also important to note that samba isn't just one rhythm; it's more of a family of musical styles. The word *samba* is really as broad as the word *jazz*.

You can trace the history of what we now refer to as the jazz samba (seen in Example 1) to the Brazilian drummer Edison Machado. When he was just seventeen years old, Machado accidentally created a new way of playing the rhythms of the samba batucada ("batucada" refers to an ensemble of percussionists playing together) that would pave the way for grooves played with artists like Antonio Carlos Jobim and João Gilberto. One night in 1949, while playing caixa (snare) in a samba band, Machado broke his drumhead. So as not to interrupt the groove, he immediately started playing on a ride cymbal with his right hand, while he used his left hand to add syncopated accents on a tom. It was at that moment that samba no prato ("samba on the cymbals") was born. A few years later, Machado, now playing drumset, released *Edison Machado é Samba Novo*, which many consider to be the most important instrumental album to come out of Brazil.

That said, there are some rhythms of the traditional samba batucada that we can apply to the drumset to help us create a convincing samba groove, but the most important part is to capture the right *feel*. Here are two of Machado's samba patterns from his record.



Now compare those to the different rhythms of a traditional samba batucada.

4

Pandeiro

ad lib rhythms and tones

Tamborim

Chocalho

ad lib; low tones on backbeats

Agogo Bells



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ad lib

Samba Whistles

Surdo

As you can see, a traditional samba batucada has a number of instruments played by different people, so it's physically impossible for us to re-create it entirely on the drumset. Don't look at that as a problem. Instead, think of all the freedom you now have to come up with your own personal take on it. Choose the parts of the batucada that you think are most appropriate for the music you're playing and that will best capture the feel you're looking for.

There are many players who took the aforementioned freedom to a whole new level. Marcio Bahia played with Hermeto Pascoal in the 1980s, and he plays with a quintet led by bandolim player Hamilton de Holanda. Bahia often uses a tamborim (a small, timbale-like batucada instrument) in his drumset playing. And he has a fresh approach in the way he uses brushes, as well as with his cymbal and snare patterns. Here are just a few of the many ways Bahia plays samba.

6

Brushes:

7

8

Again, the most important part of playing a samba with authenticity is the feel. The examples explained here are meant to give you some fresh ideas to explore, but the only way to truly capture the feel is to listen to the music. Here's a list of some great albums that feature drumset samba.

Edison Machado Edison Machado é Samba Novo (Edison Machado) /// **Elis Regina and Antonio Carlos Jobim** Elis & Tom (Paulinho Braga) /// **Som Três** Som/3 (Antonio "Toninho" Pinheiro) /// **Airto Moreira** Seeds on the Ground (Airto Moreira) /// **Arismar Do Espírito Santo** Foto do Satélite (Alex Buck, Edu Ribeiro) /// **Fabio Torres, Paulo Paulelli, and Edu Ribeiro** Corrente (Edu Ribeiro) /// **Flávio Chamis** Especiaria (Tutty Moreno) /// **Marco Pereira and Hamilton de Holanda** Luz das Cordas (Marcio Bahia) /// **Hamilton de Holanda** Brazilianos (Marcio Bahia) /// **Gabriel Grossi** Diz que Fui por Aí (Marcio Bahia) /// **Nosso Trio** Vento Bravo (Kiko Freitas) /// **Hamleto Stamato Trio** Speed Samba Jazz 1, 2, and 3 (Wilson Meireles)

Adam Osmianski is a freelance drummer from Pittsburgh. For more, visit adamosmianski.com.





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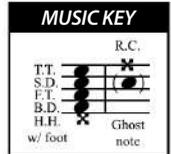
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SHIFTING SANDS

Rhythmic Transition Examples

by Steve Fidyk



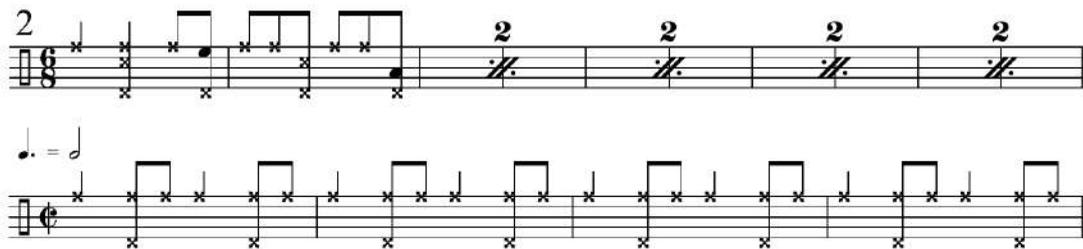
Transitioning from one time signature, tempo, or musical style to another is a very common technique in modern jazz. These shifts are often referred to as metric modulations, where a specific note value from the current tempo becomes the quarter-note pulse in a new tempo. Tony Williams, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Ari Hoenig are masters of this concept.

In order for a transition to work out smoothly, it's important for you to be as articulate and clear as possible with your rhythms. As you approach the shift, you need to provide a foundation that makes the band comfortable, without disrupting the flow of the time.

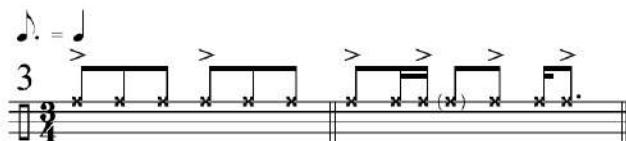
Our first example illustrates a transition from a medium swing feel in 4/4 to a double-time swing superimposed over the existing time. This is a signature beat of the legendary Philly Joe Jones, and you can hear the groove in action on the tune “Blue Train” by John Coltrane. As you practice the beat, focus your attention on the hi-hat, keeping its sound and rhythmic placement as consistent as possible. The hi-hat is the core element that carries the double-time feel.



Our second example comes from the great Art Blakey, on the Jazz Messengers' recording of “Caravan.” Blakey toggles between 6/8 Afro-Cuban and double-time swing in such a way that the dotted-quarter-note pulse in 6/8 becomes the half note in the double-time feel. The transitions take place at the end of each A section of the form, and the bridge stays in double-time swing.



The next example features the work of Tony Williams on the Miles Davis recording of “Footprints,” from the album *Miles Smiles*. Williams superimposes 4/4 over the existing 3/4 time signature with his ride cymbal, which creates a 4:3 polyrhythm in support of the melody.



What follows are five additional transition examples to practice. Work through them slowly, with a metronome, until you have control of each metric shift. Be patient, and have fun.

Ballad Transition to Swing

In this example, the quarter note becomes the half note.



Bossa Nova to Samba

Again, the quarter note becomes the half note.



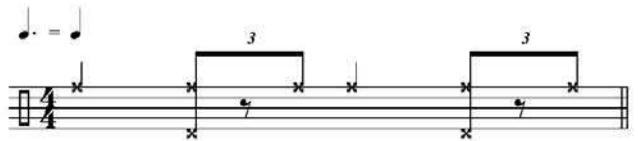
Ballad to Waltz

In this transition, the quarter note becomes the dotted half note.



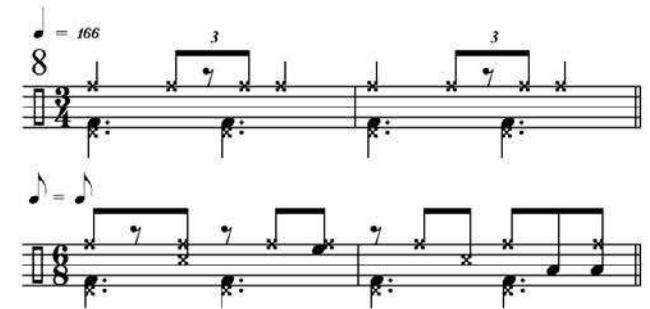
7/4 to Swing

Here, the dotted quarter note becomes the quarter note.



Waltz to Afro-Cuban 6/8

In this last example, the 8th note remains consistent through the shift.



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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DUBSTEP DRUMMING

Part 1: The Basics

by Donny Gruendler

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Dubstep is a genre of electronic dance music known for its head-nodding beats, dark atmosphere, and ear-shaking bass. It draws on many other genres, including Jamaican dub, hip-hop, jungle, drum 'n' bass, and 2-step, while fusing them into a unique blend. Dubstep originated in the U.K. and has become a popular form of production for mainstream radio, TV spots, and club mixes. Its main drumming hallmarks are rigid half-time beats, straight 16th to sextuplet hi-hat permutations, and wobble bass, all of which play off hard-edged synth melodies.

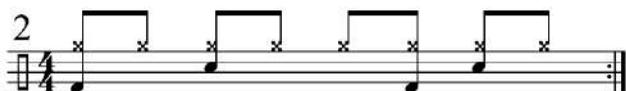
Many drummers are now being asked to create dubstep grooves live, whether on an acoustic kit or on a hybrid setup incorporating acoustic drums and electronics. This two-part article will help you understand what's expected of you when someone asks you to play dubstep, including the standard grooves, winding hi-hat patterns, and DJ-style delay effects.

THE 2-STEP

Dubstep rhythms range between 138 and 142 beats per minute. They are syncopated and often make great use of glitchy stuttering patterns. In its early stages, dubstep was more percussive, with influences from 2-step drum patterns, which typically feature a kick on the first and third beats and syncopated rhythms applied to other elements of the kit, including the hi-hat, snare, woodblocks, and tambourine. These rhythms can be phrased as either straight or swung. Tracks with half-note kicks are perceived as being slower than the traditional four-on-the-floor beat used in house and techno music. This example is the basis for all 2-step patterns.



Placing the kick drum on the “&” of beat 3 is a common variation.



THE DUBSTEP BEAT

Unlike the 2-step, which emphasizes beats 1 and 3 on the kick, a dubstep pattern emphasizes only the 1. This gives the impression of an even slower tempo, and it's paired with a snare or handclap on beat 3 to form a half-time groove. The remaining elements (hi-hat, shakers, etc.) stay in the normal meter, which creates a double-time feel. This 8th-note example is the basis for all dubstep patterns.



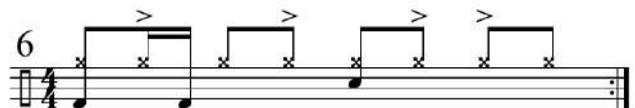
To create a syncopated thump, 16th-note kick drum patterns can be added.



This can be augmented with accents on the hi-hat. Here's the original pattern with some accents added.



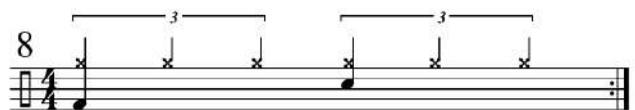
Here's the same accent pattern over the 16th-note kick drum phrasing.



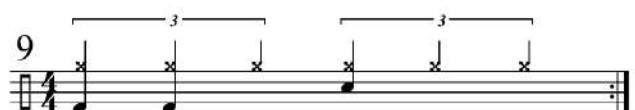
You can also play 16th notes (with or without accents) on the hi-hat.



For a rhythmic departure, quarter-note triplets can be employed. Here's that with the kick on beat 1 and the snare on beat 3.



Here's a variation with an additional kick placed in the triplet.



WOBBLE BASS

The most common melodic characteristic of dubstep is the wobble bass line. This extended bass note is manipulated digitally with a low-frequency oscillator that controls additional parameters of a synthesizer, including volume, distortion, and filters. These permutations are then altered to create combinations of quarter-, 8th-, 16th-, and 32nd-note rhythms in straight and triplet subdivisions.

10



SONG STRUCTURE

Dubstep usually features an intro, which establishes the sonic textures and motif. Characteristics often include a sparse or incrementally built drum groove, an arpeggiated synth pattern or textural pad, and a vocal breakdown.

The second section is the bass drop. This is what made dubstep popular, and it's where the wobble bass is most

prevalent. Typically, the drum groove will drop out, or the existing intro track will start to fade into the background. After a brief pause, the bass drop overwhelming the track continues throughout the rest of the section. The drop is also often placed alongside a sonically heavier drum groove.

The third section, called the riff, often features a repeating modulated bass part. Whereas most bass drops will include at least three different musical notes, the riff section relies on repeating the intro motif, alongside new elements. Rather than the bass drops' "wub, wub" sound, bass in the riff will sound more like "yob, yob."

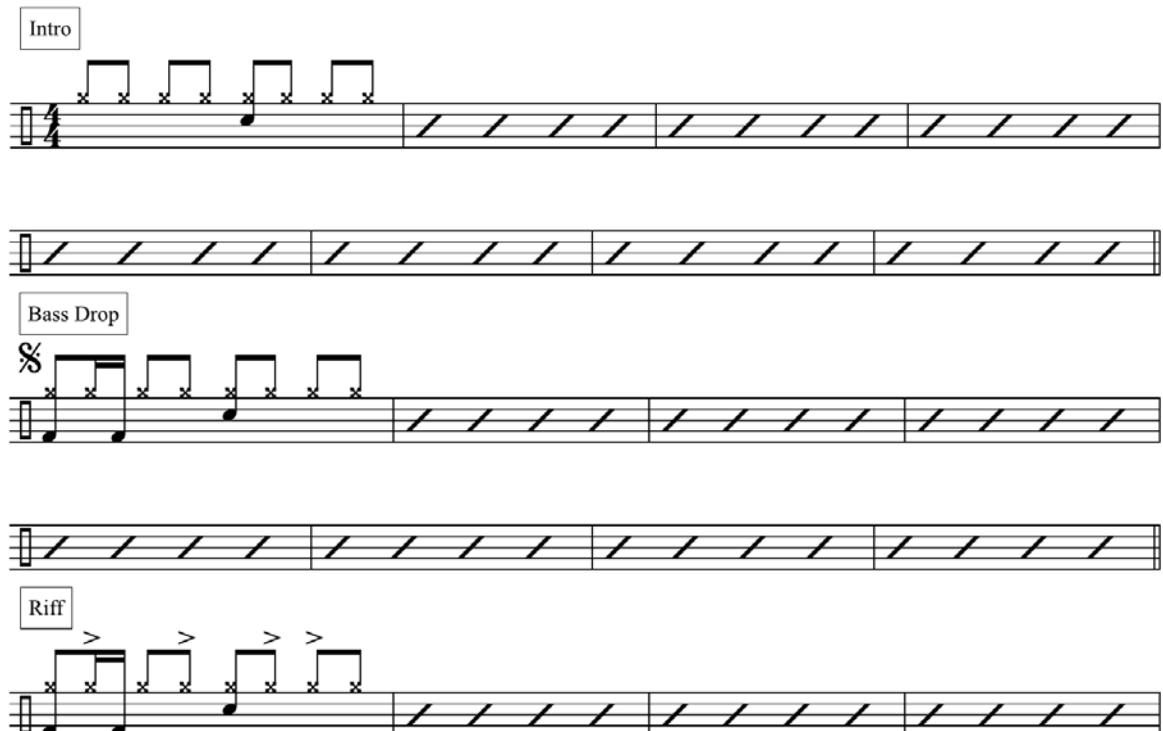
The final section, the outro, is usually a repetitive vamp where the tune either fades out or comes to a crashing halt. Many dubstep artists also return to a normal 2-and-4 backbeat, which implies a double-time feel over the original half-time melodies and motifs.

THE REWIND/RELOAD

This is a standard technique often used by DJs when a song seems to be especially popular on the dance floor. The DJ will spin back the record, by hand without lifting the stylus, in order to play the track again from the bass drop.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Using all of the elements discussed, I've created a basic dubstep tune for you to download and use for play-along practice (available at modernrdrummer.com). Note that a D.S. al coda is used to repeat the bass drop and riff, which then leads into the last intro reprise and outro.





Intro Reprise

to Coda



Outro

D.S. al Coda



Intro Reprise



Rewind



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



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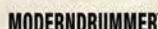
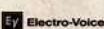
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Rachel Fuhrer

by Stephen Bidwell

If you try to pigeonhole Ume, you'll fail miserably. The same can be said for the band's hard-hitting drummer, whose road to rock 'n' roll glory has been anything but predictable.



Rod Maurice

Rachel Fuhrer hasn't seen her central-Texas home very much in the past twelve months. Ume, the Austin-based band she joined in 2011, has spent

"I'd never done an album with a Grammy-winning producer before. My feeling was, 'I'm going to be this guy's canvas.'"

much of the past few years on the road, sharing tours with groups like Helmet, ...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead, and the Toadies, and gaining admirers like the members of Jane's Addiction, who invited Ume to play the Lollapalooza after-party in 2013. Ume's sound garners diverse comparisons to post-hardcore and shoe-gaze bands,

but the live show is all about front-woman Lauren Larson's shredding guitar and ethereal vocals, to which Fuhrer plays a worthy foil. Rachel anchors the

music with a muscular touch that points to her metal and hardcore background, but somewhere inside that power is a church-trained musician, a Berklee grad, and a longtime fusion head with a seemingly inescapable connection to the legendary drummer Rod Morgenstein.

Fuhrer grew up on the South Shore of

Long Island, New York. Once, when she was nine, she was at a Christmas party at Tiki Recording Studios with her bass-playing dad, who recorded there regularly. Rachel seemed bored, so studio owner Fred Guarino suggested she "play around" in the drum room. Though she'd never taken any lessons, she went in and had a go. "How long have you been playing drums?" Guarino asked when he returned to check in on her. "Remember when you told me I could come in here and play?" "No, I don't mean right now...I mean how long have you been playing drums for?" "I'd never played drums before that," Fuhrer says. "So that was where it began."



Rod Maurice

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Fuhrer plays a Gretsch Catalina Maple set, including an 18x22 bass drum, a 9x12 tom, and 16x16 floor tom. Her snare drums include a 5.5x14 vintage Ludwig Supra-Phonic, a 5x14 vintage Ludwig Acrolite, and a 6x14 Pearl brass free-floating model. Her Sountone cymbals include 14" Custom Brilliant hi-hats, 18" and 20" Extreme crashes, and a 22" Extreme crash/ride. Her heads include a Remo Controlled Sound Reverse Dot Coated snare batter and Remo Hazy Ambassador bottom, Remo Coated Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and an Aquarian Super-Kick II bass drum batter and Black Regulator front head. Rachel's sticks are Vater Nude 5As. Her hardware includes Pearl stands and PowerShifter Eliminator pedals, and she uses a Tama Rhythm Watch metronome.

MD: You obviously have a natural ability at the drums. Did you join your school band?

Rachel: No, none of that. I played at church. My dad always had bands, and he was really into classic rock, so I grew up listening to the Beatles, Jethro Tull, Neil Young. The neighborhood that my parents grew up in, I grew up in too, and by the time I came along it was very Jamaican, Dominican, Haitian. My dad was the bass player in our neighborhood church, and they had a gospel choir led by this rad lady who played piano. I started playing at church as the drummer, which was kind of cool. I learned a lot that way. They would improvise like crazy, because they would just sing and sing and sing until one in the afternoon.

MD: Were you playing in rock bands back in high school as well?

Rachel: Well, when I was in high school we moved to North Carolina, and I got made fun of for my accent, which made me even shyer than I already was. I was playing in bands with my dad and his buddies, though, and they were into fusion, electric jazz...you know, the "F-word." I didn't join a rock band with kids my age until I was a senior in high school.

MD: Did you take private lessons?

Rachel: I started taking lessons and learning to read music when I was in high

school. Also, Tiki Recording had some big clients, like Taylor Dayne and Brian Setzer, and Rod Morgenstein recorded his first instructional video there. So the guy who owned the studio sent me that videotape early on, and I would watch it over and over again. I started getting into bands like the Dixie Dregs and Mahavishnu Orchestra and looking for method books in *Modern Drummer* while figuring out stuff on my own.

In North Carolina I hooked up with this guy Doug Morgan, who played in the Steve Morse Band with [original Dregs bassist] Jerry Peek, as well as with a Raleigh band called 3PM. Doug was pals with Rod Morgenstein, oddly, and he started teaching me technique and reading. We worked mostly out of David Garibaldi's *Future Sounds* book.

MD: Then you went to music school.

Rachel: I ended up going to the North Carolina School of the Arts. That program was all orchestral stuff. It was a good education. I stayed there for three years, but I knew I didn't want to do orchestral music. I just wanted the theory and the training, but that ended up being a stepping stone for me to go to Berklee, where—full circle—I ended up studying under Rod Morgenstein. I studied more intensively with Jackie Santos Jr.,

though—that guy was killer and a vital influence.

MD: Other than Rod, who are some big players in your world?

Rachel: I would say John Bonham is number one. Elvin Jones. Billy Cobham. Bill Bruford. Josh Freese—that guy is amazing. Also a bunch of these really heavy dudes, like Tomas Haake from Meshuggah. It's hard for me to pinpoint just a few. I go through phases of pretty much everything.

MD: Adam Kasper [Soundgarden, Foo Fighters] produced the latest Ume album, *Monuments*.

Rachel: He's awesome. I'd never done an album with a Grammy-winning producer

before. My feeling was, "I'm going to be this guy's canvas. He knows what he's doing, so whatever he says, I'm going to try it." It was cool, man. We kind of flew through the drum tracks. I was out of there in a week. We wrote stuff in the studio; there were things we wrote on the spot, and some arrangements got changed.

MD: What gear did you play on the record?

Rachel: I used what they had at the studio, including an old Slingerland kit and a whole bunch of old Zildjian ride cymbals. I don't think I used any real crash cymbals; they were all rides with rivets and stuff. We tried a ton of snares too, like some Keplingers and Black Beauties.

MD: You've been teaching drums for a while. How do you manage with Ume being so busy?

Rachel: I'm lucky—I hang on to a lot of adult students while I'm on tour, and we hook back up on the other end. I just load them up with stuff to work on while I'm gone. My kids are tougher to hang on to, because if they're not practicing they'll jump into something else or they'll seek out the teacher at school.

MD: You also have musical side projects.

Rachel: I have a post-hardcore band called We'll Go Machete. That gets really mathy and angular; people say it sounds like Quicksand or Fugazi.

MD: Is there anything you just can't be without on the road?

Rachel: I'm a big cyclist, so I always miss my bike on tour. I would love to bring a little folding bike out with me. Other than that, loading up with NPR podcasts and Cheez-Its takes care of the driving.



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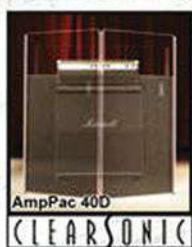
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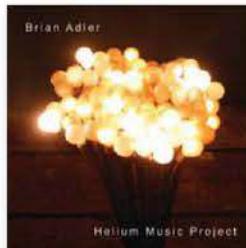
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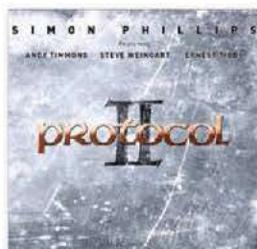
RAY MARCHICA
A DIFFERENT VIEW
This slinger gets inside tunes on demand, but his star shines brightest when he's leading his own jazz units.

A longtime favored NYC drummer, Ray Marchica shuttles between Broadway, television sessions, and various bands about town. His second disc as a leader features a superb sextet with a two-sax front line, boasting an earthy sound. Marchica flashes chops when appropriate but is satisfied to sock it and lock it. That's clear from the get-go, when a flam pickup launches headlong into a pocketed, bluesy shuffle. On the Latin-tinged cuts, he's tight with percussionist **Café**, creating an edgy yet oil-smooth momentum. On the drum solo "Eccentricity," Marchica expertly wields dowel sticks, stressing touch and color over power. The devilishly angular meter-shifter "Rat City" lets the groover buckle his funk shoes, and the catchy "Song for a Rainbow" finds him paying homage to Art Blakey with marching rolls morphing into soulful, hung-back swing. Honest and spirited. (Sons of Sound) **Jeff Potter**



BRIAN ADLER
HELIUM MUSIC PROJECT
The author of the ambitious *World of Percussion* method book presents his concepts on record. Drummer/percussionist Brian Adler makes an

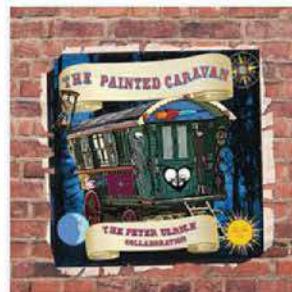
understated entrance on "Esa Pantera Bajo la Luna," his cymbals so soft and washy that you might not realize he's even there. Then suddenly the music shifts into a section of sax, upright bass, and handclaps that ultimately gives way to a waltz-y pulse that allows the drummer to bring the full colors of his kit to the fore. Smooth and loose, Adler shows his stuff without showing off, and this variety of odd-meter modern-jazz arrangements and short interludes includes his subtle work on shakers, congas, tabla, and bells. (Circavision Productions) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



SIMON PHILLIPS *PROTOCOL II*
More than a dozen years after his previous album as a leader, the now "formerly of Toto" drummer gets back to fusion business.

Twenty-five years ago, drum legend Simon Phillips recorded his first instrumental solo project, *Protocol*. To celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, Phillips gathered original material he's been developing over the fourteen years since his last release, *Vantage Point*, and organized a stellar group of players, including guitarist Andy Timmons, keyboardist Steve Weingart, and bassist Ernest Tibbs, to bring the instrumental jazz-rock material to life. The seasoned drummer focuses on groove, melody, and superb group improvisation to create an inspiring collection of funky, jazzy tracks. It's a treat to hear the unit's thoughtful interplay without the music becoming a jam fest or battle of superchops. The creative drumming concepts over the ostinatos of "Enigma" and "Octopia" remind us why Phillips has been so in demand for more than four decades. (simon-phillips.com)

Mike Haid



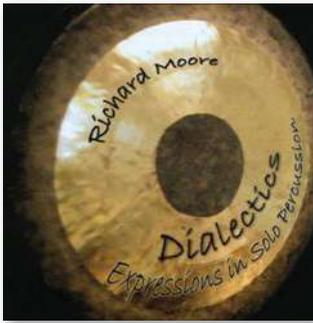
THE PETER ULRICH COLLABORATION
THE PAINTED CARAVAN
In the '80s, he brought colorful ornamentation to the influential goth-rock of Dead Can Dance. His work is still full of wonder and surprise.

Peter Ulrich is concerned with the song first on *The Painted Caravan*, a grand mix of folk and world music, though each track boasts an interesting array of percussion, including djembe, Turkish cymbals, and temple blocks, which sets the music apart from your typical bare-bones acoustic coffeehouse fare. Guest vocalists dominate throughout, and there's a ton going on, though it never feels cluttered. The sparse percussion parts on the Irish sea shanty "Hanging Man" and the Baroque "Fanfare for the Lost Tribe" are just enough. And dig the trashy cymbal overdubs and cool swells on "Tempest." (City Canyons/AIS) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



VIRGIL DONATI *IN THIS LIFE*
The Allan Holdsworth collaborator boldly goes where few drummer/composers are capable of going.

When it comes to masterful technique and advanced rhythmic explorations, no one drummer may be more cutting-edge than Virgil Donati. On this instrumental tour de force of progressive jazz-rock fusion, Donati creates rhythmically dense compositions that are just as melodically and harmonically challenging for the stellar cast of players he has assembled. Fans of Planet X, U.K., and Allan Holdsworth will feel happily at home, while followers of Donati will be captivated by a musical approach to metric modulation and a keen sense of interplay. Virgil's amazing hand/foot technique, dynamics, drum tones, and rhythmic knowledge are a joy to behold throughout the collection. The opening drumnastics of the title track establish an amazing mastery of the kit, evolving into nonstop rhythmic detours that keep the listener constantly guessing where the time has shifted. (virgildonati.com) **Mike Haid**

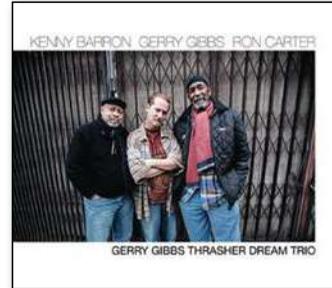


RICHARD MOORE *DIALECTICS: EXPRESSIONS IN SOLO PERCUSSION*

The percussionist, whose interests lie as far afield as orchestral, jazz, world, and early-music rhythms, tackles one sound at a time on his latest.

Each piece on *Dialectics* focuses on a different member of the percussion family, including bass drums (the title track), drumset (Max Roach's "The Drum Also Waltzes"), cimbalom (Bartók's "Andante"), and marimba (Bach's *Cello Suite No. 3*). The music throughout is wonderfully recorded and executed with precision. Though at times the album sounds a bit more like a master class than a disc you'd throw on for recreational listening, Moore's expertise in handling it all with flair is impressive. For a taste of other-worldly flavors, check out his fleet improvisation on the Persian santur, a Middle Eastern hammered dulcimer. (alisonmelville.com/pipistrelle.htm) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

NEXT TIME IN TAKING THE REINS Ulysses Owens Jr., Jeff Ballard, Rudy Royston, and more



GERRY GIBBS

THRASHER DREAM TRIO

The jazz and fusion burner hits hot and heavy on his ninth outing as a leader.

On *Thrasher Dream Trio*, Gerry Gibbs enlists two of his heroes for a knockdown, drag-out jazz session. He displays muscular chops and a hyper-active mindset throughout the fifteen cover and original tracks, featuring pianist Kenny Barron and bassist Ron Carter. Who wouldn't strut his stuff with these two jazz giants? Gibbs swirls brushes sweetly on his ballad "The Woman on the TV Screen," then switches gears, storming à la Tony Williams on "The Eye of the Hurricane." He swings, solos, and generally slugs it out—you can almost see the steam rising from his drums. (Whaling City)

Ken Micallef

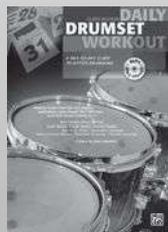
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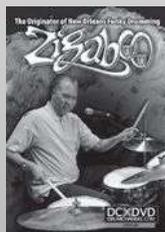


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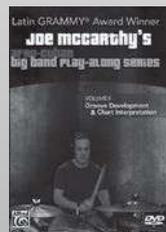


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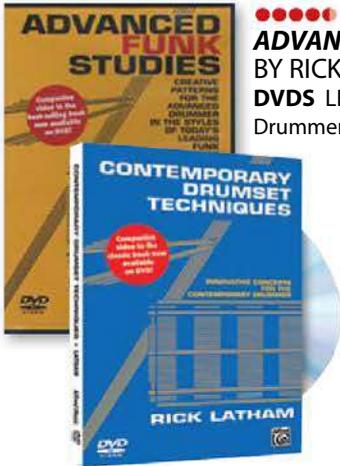


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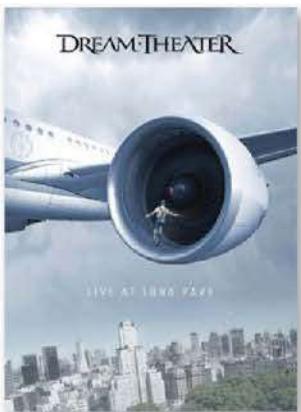
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Drummer/educator Rick Latham put his passion for highly developed funk drumming to paper over thirty years ago with the now classic *Advanced Funk Studies* and *Contemporary Drumset Techniques* instructional. With the advent of video, Latham created onscreen companions to his award-winning books. Now available in digital format, the technique-shaping ideas, including excellent linear patterns, are as relevant today as they were back when drum gurus such as Gadd, Mason, Porcaro, Clark, and Garibaldi brought this exciting funk format to the forefront of pop music. Grooves, fills, and solos from the original books are explained and played by Latham, along with several full-band performances showcasing musical examples of the genre-altering drumming concepts. There's a treasure trove of chops-building technique to be tapped here. (Alfred) **Mike Haid**



★★★★★ **DREAM THEATER**
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This first live Dream Theater DVD featuring **Mike Mangini** proves to be a testament to the strength of the core members of the band overcoming adversity, and it also chronicles a warm welcome for the drummer. It's a win-win for the band and the fans, as there's an undeniable chemistry on display that cycles from the stage to the crowd and back again. The complexity of current material such as "Bridges in the Sky," "Lost Not Forgotten," and "Outcry" is delivered with spot-on perfection. It's obvious that Mangini has found a home with the fans when he delivers a dynamic solo that sends them into prog pandemonium. The two-disc live set includes many DT classics, as well as the entire *Dramatic Turn of Events* collection. Disc two features bonus concert footage, recaps the dramatic drummer auditions that led to Mangini's hiring, and details Mike's initiation into the band. (liveatlunapark.com) **Mike Haid**



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Chico Hamilton

Foreststorn “Chico” Hamilton, who played an integral role in the formation of the West Coast–based “cool jazz” style of the 1950s, died this past November 25 at age ninety-two. He was never a flashy drummer in terms of technique, but his smooth sense of swing was perfect for the more laid-back type of jazz that developed in his hometown of Los Angeles.

Hamilton was an original member of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, which many credit with starting the “cool” movement. He later formed his own “chamber jazz” ensemble with the unique instrumentation of guitar, flute, cello, bass, and drums. That group achieved much popularity in the ‘50s and can be seen in two movies: *The Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) with Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis, and *Jazz on a Summer’s Day*, a documentary about the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival. Much like his contemporary Art Blakey, Hamilton became known as a leader who could spot and nurture young talent, and over the years such prominent players as bassist Ron Carter, saxophonists Eric Dolphy and Charles Lloyd, and guitarists Jim Hall, Gabor Szabo, and Larry Coryell got their start with Chico.

Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts cites Hamilton as his first influence in those years. “The first thing I heard that I wanted to emulate was Chico Hamilton playing brushes on ‘Walkin’ Shoes’ by Gerry Mulligan,” Watts told *MD* in a 1990 interview. “For years I just played brushes on a banjo head.” Years later the two drummers became friends, and they played together on a track from Hamilton’s 2001 album, *Foreststorn*, called “Here Comes Charlie Now.”

Hamilton, in fact, was very proud of his use of brushes. “When I was about fourteen or fifteen playing with a band, the leader made me use brushes,” he recalled in a 2001 *MD* interview. “Every time I’d go to pick up the sticks, he’d say, ‘Put them sticks down, boy. Let me hear those brushes.’ It really paid off, because I spent about fifteen years playing for singers, and brushwork was the name of the game—being able to lay down a groove and stay quiet enough underneath them.”

Hamilton also had an impact on Peter Erskine. “I was directly influenced by a recording he made for the Impulse label



in 1966, called *The Further Adventures of El Chico*,” Erskine says. “It was lightweight fare but somehow really great. Chico played bossa nova and samba in the coolest way. He was able to get inside of the beat and stay there, just simmering, but he could also add some terrific rhythmic counterpoint. He kept it all very focused. Listening to it again after so many years makes me realize I owe Chico Hamilton that much more respect and thanks.”

Erskine cites another way in which Hamilton influenced him: “He played single-headed toms, and that functioned as jazz’s permission to play our drums that way—a model I followed until Mel Lewis chewed me out in a *DownBeat* interview for doing the same!”

Hamilton’s use of single-headed toms was originally born out of practicality during World War II. “It was hard to get calf heads,” Chico told *MD*. “So if I would go through a batter head, I’d replace it with

the head from the bottom. I got so used to hearing the sound that way that when Gretsch started making my drums for me, that’s what they made.”

Born in 1921, Hamilton began working professionally with such musicians as Dexter Gordon, Illinois Jacquet, and Charles Mingus while still in high school. He toured with Lionel Hampton before serving in the army during World War II, and then he worked with the bands of Jimmy Mundy, Charlie Barnet, and Count Basie before becoming the house drummer at Billy Berg’s nightclub in L.A. in 1946. He toured with singer Lena Horne before joining Mulligan’s group in 1952.

In the mid-’60s Hamilton became active as a composer for advertising jingles and movie and TV soundtracks, while continuing to lead his own band. In the mid-’70s he went back on the road full time as a bandleader. He expanded from the cool-jazz sound and incorporated elements

of free jazz, hard bop, and jazz-rock fusion into his group's style. He continued leading bands until shortly before his death, and until late in 2012 he was appearing in Manhattan with his group Euphoria, which he formed in 1989. He also recorded throughout his life. In 2011 he released an album titled *Revelation* on the Joyous Shout label. He had recently completed *Inquiring Minds*, which is scheduled for release this year.

Hamilton received a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Award in 2004 and a Kennedy Center Living Jazz Legend Award

in 2007. He became involved in education as well, teaching at the Parsons New School for Jazz in New York City and at Mannes College at the New School. One class he taught was titled Analysis of Rhythm. What did he feel the students needed to learn? "They don't understand where their pulse is," he explained in 2001. "Take a note—quarter note, half note, whatever. In that note, your pulse is either in the middle, up front, or behind. To familiarize yourself with that ahead-of-the-beat feeling, think in terms of Latin music, where everything is on top. If you're right down the middle, that's like Jo

Jones; he started that with the Basie band, who outswung everybody. If you're down the middle, it's very easy to groove with the bass player, if he plays down the middle. If you play on the end of the beat, that's like Erroll Garner, who played real delayed.

"It took me a long time to get into teaching," Chico said. "Once I did, I realized that this was my way of giving something back, because music has been very good to me. So if I can help some young players develop into good musicians, that's my reward."

Rick Mattingly

Ricky Wellman

Ricky "Sugarfoot" Wellman may be most widely known as jazz master Miles Davis's last touring drummer, but perhaps more important is his role in the genesis of go-go music, a marathon funk style indigenous to the Washington, D.C., area. Wellman passed away at his home in Newport News, Virginia, this past November 23, from pancreatic cancer. He was fifty-seven.

Ricardo Dalvert Wellman was born on April 13, 1955, in Bethesda, Maryland, and grew up in D.C. and Prince George's County. His father, Frank, was the original drummer in the Soul Searchers from the late '60s until his premature death in 1970, and taught his son to play drums very early. Ricky contracted polio as a youngster, which kept him from playing outside, but he was never far from the drums.

By age thirteen, Wellman had a regional hit with the Maryland R&B group the Jaguars, "Crazy Thing"/"Banana Fanna." Before he graduated from high school, he had recorded with gospel singer Myrna Summers and toured with Peaches & Herb. In 1976 Wellman landed the gig with Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers after sitting in for the end of a set (and eventually the rest of the night). In 1978 the band had a national hit with "Bustin' Loose," but the classic go-go sound may have been the result of the players vamping on stage over a feel similar to Grover Washington Jr.'s "Mister

Magic" while waiting for a late Chuck Brown to arrive at the gig. Brown showed up and scratched out some rhythm guitar, rapping over the beat, and the band continued to play the rhythm under every cover tune.

Wellman worked in the D.C. area into the '80s, recording and playing with Experience Unlimited (E.U.) and releasing go-go standards with Brown. In 1987 a D.C.-raised member of Miles Davis's stage crew played Davis a tape with Wellman on it. Davis tracked down Wellman, who ended up touring with the trumpeter until 1991 and appeared on albums including *Amandla*, *Dingo*, and the posthumously

released *Live Around the World*.

After Miles' passing, Wellman recorded with fellow Davis alum Kenny Garrett (*Prisoner of Love*, *Black Hope*) and toured with Santana, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter. In February 2013 he was inducted into Go-Go Radio's Hall of Fame. "The thing that made Ricky such a phenomenal, gifted talent," Wellman's cousin and Soul Searchers/E.U. trumpeter Steve "Too Tall" Coleman said in an interview with *Washington City Paper*, "was that once Ricky joined your band, the band got better."

Stephen Bidwell



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