

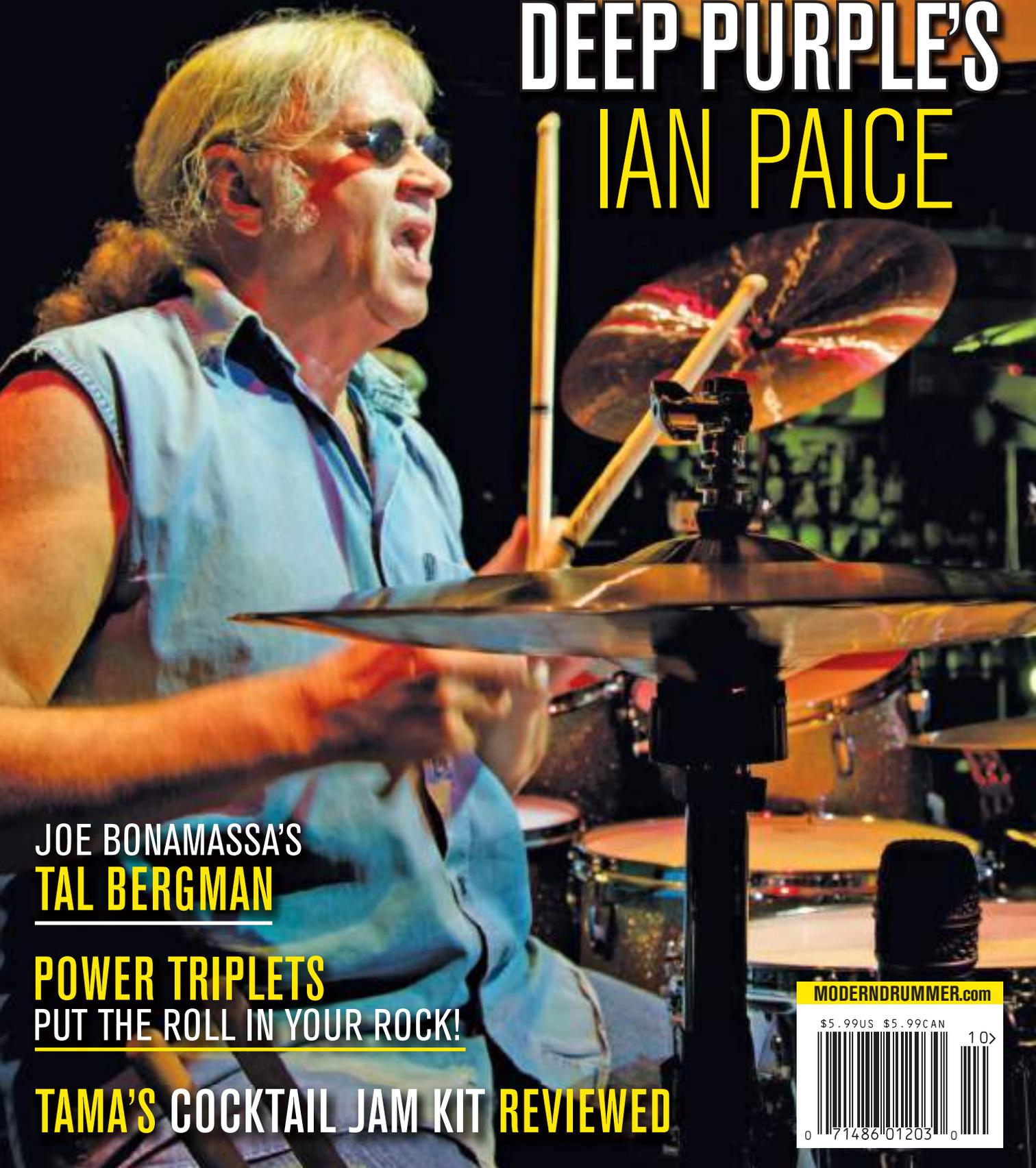
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October 2014

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## On the Cover

### 46 Deep Purple's Ian Paice

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann  
For almost fifty years, there's been only one drummer in the legendary classic-rock band Deep Purple. And this is exactly as it should be.



## Features

- 30 Encore**
  - 32 Catching Up With...**
  - 34 Tim Very**
  - 36 Tal Bergman**
  - 56 Influences**
  - 58 Rudy Royston**
  - 64 Ryan Brown**
  - 88 Up & Coming**
- Shudder to Think's *Pony Express Record*.** by David Jarnstrom
  - Simon Kirke /// Steve Fidyk /// Bob Pantella**
  - Owning it** with Manchester Orchestra. by Ben Meyer
  - Joe Bonamassa's** funky, fiery foil. by Robin Tolleson
  - Bill Stevenson**, punk drumming godhead. by Stephen Bidwell
  - The bold jazzer** makes his solo statement. by Ken Micallef
  - Tackling Zappa** Plays Zappa. by David Brensilver
  - Maya Tuttle** of the Colourist. by Adam Budofsky

## Education

- 67 Basics**  
**Power Triplets**  
Putting the Roll in Your Rock  
by Rich Redmond
- 68 Strictly Technique**  
**Duple/Triple Single-Diddle Gear Shifters**  
Part 1: 8th-Note Triplets and 16ths  
by Bill Bachman
- 71 Around the World**  
**Samba Starter**  
Part 4: The Mocidade School  
by Adam Osmianski
- 72 Rock 'n' Jazz Clinic**  
**Groove Freedom**  
Part 3: 32nd-Note Patterns  
by Mike Johnston
- 74 Jazz Drummer's Workshop**  
**Syncopation Revisited**  
Part 5: Afro-Cuban Applications  
by Steve Fidyk
- 78 Concepts**  
**Artistry Versus Commerce**  
Balance Is Everything  
by Russ Miller

## Equipment

- 18 Product Close-Up**
  - Tama Silverstar Cocktail Jam Drumset
  - CRX Xtreme Brilliant Cymbals
  - Cympad Moderator Cymbal Washers
  - Gibraltar 9600 Series Thrones
  - Sabian Stick Flip
- 26 Electronic Review**  
**Drum Earz** DRM-1X In-Ear Monitors
- 28 Gearing Up**  
The Faint's  
**Clark Baechle**
- 80 Collector's Corner**  
Big Bertha
- 82 New and Notable**



## Departments

- 8 An Editor's Overview**  
**Highway Star**  
by Billy Amendola
- 11 Readers' Platform**
- 12 News**
- 16 It's Questionable**  
Mind Matters: The Unglamorous Side of Gigging
- 84 Showcase**  
Featuring Drum Market
- 90 Critique**
- 94 Backbeats**  
2014 Chicago Drum Show
- 96 Kit of the Month**  
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# Highway Star

When I was a teenager in the '70s, radio was popular and always breaking new bands. Back then, FM radio played album cuts—not just the hits—which really encouraged us to get more deeply into the latest groups. And those groups made some of the greatest music of all time. I don't think it's just because I came up around then that I believe that period was a high point in music history; if you ask around, you'll learn that, today, lots of teenagers still listen to what we now call classic rock.



One band that embodies the term *classic*, but is still burning red hot in 2014, is Deep Purple. In its forty-six-year existence, the group has gone through several changes, with fans referring to the lineups as Deep Purple Mark I, Mark II, and so on. But only one drummer has been in the drum seat the entire time—in fact, only one musician has been in every single DP lineup—and that's this month's cover artist, the great Ian Paice.

Paice was one of the first left-handed drummers I ever saw, and in 1968, when I heard Deep Purple's first hit single, "Hush," I immediately became a fan. Later I played their albums *Machine Head* and *Made in Japan* religiously, and my band included many Deep Purple songs in our set list. (It seemed that every band back then—and maybe even now—had to play their biggest hit, "Smoke on the Water.") I became an even bigger fan when Glenn Hughes and David Coverdale joined and recorded the classic 1974 album *Burn*, featuring amazing songs like "Lay Down, Stay Down," "You Fool No One," and the fan-favorite title track.

I remember having a friendly rivalry with my roadie, Big Dave. It was almost like those Beatles/Stones battles people would have; in this case, it was a John Bonham/Ian Paice battle. Although I liked the way Bonzo played with Led Zeppelin, my own style gravitated more toward Ian's. I remember being especially proud when I could play his complicated signature drum parts on "Highway Star," "Space Truckin'," "Never Before," and "Speed King."

By the early '70s, Paice was widely regarded as one of the greatest drummers in the world. Ironically, this magazine began production in 1977, a year after Deep Purple broke up. In 1984, though, the group re-formed, and has remained active pretty much nonstop ever since. For the past twenty years Purple has featured the stable lineup of Mark II legends Ian Gillan on vocals and Roger Glover on bass, along with guitarist Steve Morse, formerly of the Dixie Dregs, and keyboardist Don Airey, who replaced the late Jon Lord in 2002.

While we've interviewed Paice several times over the years, and were honored to have him perform at the Modern Drummer Festival in 1999 and 2005, this is his first appearance on our cover, and we're *thrilled* to present this long-overdue story to you. I'm personally overjoyed to see one of my biggest influences on the cover. And we think you'll be as fascinated as we were by Ian's life story—as well as by the journeys of the other drummers profiled this month, including Joe Bonamassa's Tal Bergman, jazz great Rudy Royston, Bad Company's Simon Kirke, and Zappa Plays Zappa's Ryan Brown.

Enjoy the issue!

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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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- 10.6.14 Ted Brown Music Tacoma, WA
- 10.8.14 Hugo Helmer Music Burlington, WA
- 10.11.14 The Music Store Tulsa, OK
- 10.13.14 Marshall Music Co Lansing, MI
- 10.15.14 Moore Music Evansville, IN

## TOUR DATES

- 10.17.14 Damm Music Wichita, KS
- 10.18.14 Explorer's Percussion Kansas City, MO
- 10.20.14 Bailey Brothers Birmingham, AL
- 10.22.14 Ken Stanton Music Marietta, GA
- 10.24.14 Drum Center of Lexington Lexington, KY
- 10.25.14 Willis Music Florence, KY
- 10.28.14 Alto Music Middletown, NY
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## READERS' PLATFORM



### August Issue

Two articles in the August 2014 issue of *Modern Drummer* deserve mention. Bernie Schallehn's thoughtful response to the singing drummer who wonders if he can actually run his new cover band like a democracy caught my attention. Every band I've organized has been run like a democracy. In my opinion, it's the best way to do it. And keep in mind that any jazz performance, with its built-in aspect of improvisation, is a working model of democracy. Anyone who wants to play an improvised solo is generally given that freedom. Jazz, which makes itself up as it goes along, could only have been born in America, a country that also makes itself up as it goes along. Jazz is America's own purest art form!

Regarding Terry Conway's First Person essay, "A Copy Life," about why he and his bandmates continue to work so hard to keep their cover band going, despite the hours that are long, late, odd, and hard... believe me, I know the nightclub circuit. I've played in many excellent cover bands over the years. The most fun and rewarding gigs are special private parties and public events, where people come primed

to party! The nightclub scene is probably harder, I would agree.

I'm worried that Terry's band might be playing too many weekends. If they're booked just about every Friday and Saturday night, with few weekends off to catch up on sleep and spend more family time at home, I think they could be headed for trouble. I hope they think about cutting back on their schedule at least a bit, to avoid music burnout and to achieve more balance in their lives. The life of a weekend-warrior musician is incredibly rewarding, but I detect a tone of weariness in Terry's story. I hope they don't crash and burn.

Lee Warner



### Dropped Beat

In our Catching Up With... article on Paul T. Riddle in the August issue, we incorrectly stated that Riddle is still performing with the Marshall Tucker Band. In fact, the group's current drummer is B.B. Borden.

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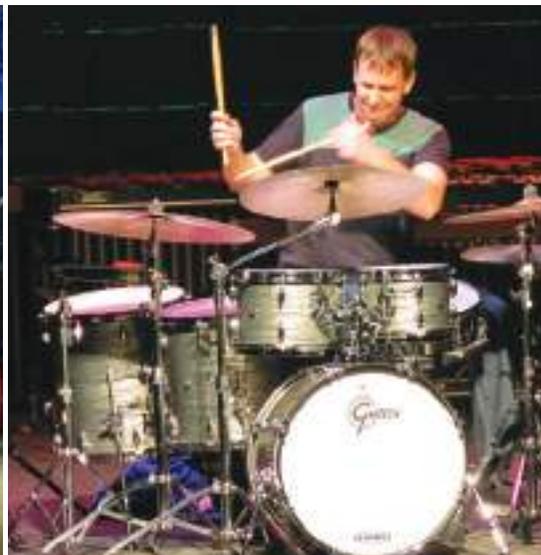
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#PLAYMORE

## 2014 PAS/KoSA New York Weekend of Percussion



The Percussive Arts Society and KoSA held their joint Weekend of Percussion event in New York City this past February 15 and 16. Among the highlights, John Hadfield and Shane Shanahan covered traditional and modern applications of frame drums, Javier Diaz conducted a master class on how to build the book of a Broadway show, Keith Carlock (above right) led attendees through the topics of constructing grooves and musical technique ideas, and the Excelsis Percussion Quartet and drummer Lisa Pegher (above left) performed Bobby Previte's "Terminal 4."

## Out Now

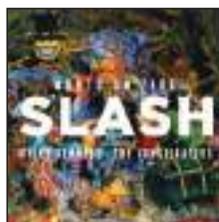
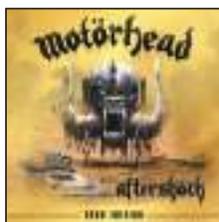
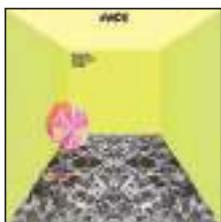
### The Allman Brothers Band *The 1971 Fillmore East Recordings*

The Allman Brothers Band's seminal double live LP, *At Fillmore East*, was originally compiled from four sets at the famous New York City rock venue in March 1971. Now the album has been expanded to six CDs, with fifteen unreleased tracks. "The weekend when we recorded *At Fillmore East*, most of the time it clicked," drummer Butch Trucks recalls. "We were finally starting to catch up with what we were listening to. We had lived together, we got in trouble together—we all just moved as a unit. And then, when we got on stage to play, that's what it was all about—and it just happened to all come together that weekend."



### Gentle Giant *The Power and the Glory* Reissue

"It's great to see this reissue," drummer John Weathers says. "As far as I'm concerned it was one of the best Giant albums. The subject matter and the fact that it had a definite thread running all the way through it gave us something cohesive to work with in that it tells a story, albeit a sad but very recognizable one." The reissue campaign of the iconic progressive-rock band's 1974 album comprises several versions, including a Blu-ray edition featuring visual companions to each track, as well as a vinyl LP. Included in all versions is a brand-new mix done by producer/Porcupine Tree guitarist Steven Wilson, who recently remixed the Emerson Lake & Palmer catalog.



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**On  
Tour**



*Todd Nakamine*

**Ben Thatcher** with Royal Blood /// **Lars Skoglund** with Lykke Li /// **Jason Willer** with Nik Turner's Hawkwind /// **Zach Lind** with Jimmy Eat World /// **Brandon Barnes** with Rise Against /// **Jordan Mancino** with Wovenwar /// **Jim Eno** with Spoon /// **Atom Willard** with Against Me! /// **Will Calhoun** with Living Colour

September 12 through 14, Chicago's Humboldt Park will be the scene of the tenth-annual Riot Fest, which also passes through Toronto and Denver. Among the drummers playing the event are **Jason Cooper** with the Cure and **Stephen Perkins** with Jane's Addiction.



*Aloysious Lim*

**Daniel Tracy** with Deafheaven is among the drummers performing at this year's Basilica Soundscape. The event, held September 12 and 13 at Basilica Hudson, a historic reclaimed 1880s factory on the Hudson waterfront, features a wide range of music, visual art, and literature that, according to the organizers, "aims for specific connections and overlaps instead of 'festival'-style overload." Other drummers playing the event include **Thor Harris** and **Phil Puleo** with Swans, **Anne-Marie Vassiliou** with White Lung, and **Greg Fox** with Guardian Alien and solo. For more information, go to [basilicasoundscape.com](http://basilicasoundscape.com).

The Rockstar Energy Drink Uproar Festival kicked off year five on August 15 in Detroit with a lineup that includes **Godsmack (Shannon Larkin)**, Seether (**John Humphrey**), Skillet (**Jen Ledger**), Buckcherry (**Xavier Muriel**), Pop Evil (**Chachi Riot**), Escape the Fate (**Robert Ortiz**), Redlight King (**Jaydon Bean**), 3 Years Hollow (**Chris Cushman**), and Within Reason (**Griffin Zarbough**). The tour ends September 21 in Post Falls, Idaho.



*Sruti Hovartos*

## Soilwork's Dirk Verbeuren Launches Online Instructional Videos



*Dirk Blasts*, the new series of online instructional videos by Soilwork drummer Dirk Verbeuren, offers students tools to build their technical skills and further their musical careers. "Throughout my tours and drum clinics," Verbeuren says, "I frequently get asked about playing faster, building stamina, creating dynamic grooves, and making a living as a musician. If you're looking to improve your technique and independence, pick up some cool chops along the way, and gain useful insight about being a professional drummer, these monthly lessons are for you."

The Premium Lessons bundle gives students unlimited access to Verbeuren's teachings, and two new exclusive videos will be available for download each month. All lessons will be filmed using three cameras, feature a clear audio mix, and include a detailed PDF sheet for students to use during their practice sessions. Subscribers will also have the opportunity to ask Verbeuren questions and suggest future lesson topics. For more information, go to Dirk's official YouTube channel.

## Drummers in Arms

### Kiss's Peter Criss Honors Mountain's Corky Laing at Bonzo Bash

During the Bonzo Bash held at the Bergen Performing Arts Center center this past May, the famed drummer of Mountain, **Corky Laing** (right), was given this year's Bonzo Bash Legend Award. The award was presented to Laing by previous recipient **Peter Criss**, the original drummer with Kiss. Laing later joined house band the Moby Dicks on the classic Mountain song "Mississippi Queen."



### Just a Couple Prog-Rock Legends Shooting the Breeze



**Pat Mastelotto** (left) and **Franz Di Cioccio** were among the many great progressive-rock musicians who took part in this year's Cruise to the Edge, hosted by Yes. Mastelotto was on board with Stick Men, while Di Cioccio appeared with PFM, the long-running Italian band with whom he's played since 1970. Take a closer look at the photo, and see if you can recognize the famous bass player peeking out from behind the truck.

## Sarah Hagan to Head Zildjian Artist Relations Worldwide



Sarah Hagan has been promoted to director of worldwide artist relations for the Avedis Zildjian company. She assumes responsibility for planning and executing Zildjian's global artist relations program, which is based out of the company's headquarters in Norwell, Massachusetts. A drummer and former teacher, Hagan joined the company as a

marketing and events coordinator and was promoted to East Coast artist relations manager. In her ten years with Zildjian, Hagan has personally selected cymbals for drumming luminaries; managed clinic tours with Dennis Chambers, Gavin Harrison, and Marco Minnemann; and signed artists including Kings of Leon's Nathan Followill, Neon Trees' Elaine Bradley, and Matt Greiner of August Burns Red.

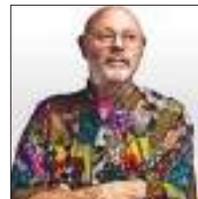
## Percussion Retail Giant Steve Weiss Passes

This past April 21, Steve Weiss, owner of the popular Pennsylvania-based percussion retailer Steve Weiss Music, lost his long battle with prostate cancer. Weiss, a fixture at the annual Percussive Arts Society International Convention who was known for his eye-catching tie-dyed shirts and ear-catching comments, often described his PASIC booth as his "annual garage sale."

"Steve was a character," Aquarian Drumheads founder Roy Burns recalls, "but he was a demon in business. He was able to tune in to what the young percussion players were interested in. He had a sixth sense about what percussionists would like and what they would respond to."

Last November the Percussive Arts Society honored Weiss with its President's Industry Award. Although Steve was unable to attend the convention in Indianapolis, his video presence greeted the audience. Upon hearing of his passing, one customer posted on Facebook that he looked around his music studio, seeing all the equipment purchased from Steve Weiss Music, and tears came to his eyes. "Few individuals leave such a lasting legacy," the customer wrote.

**Lauren Vogel Weiss**



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# Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

## The Unglamorous Side of Gigging

**I've been playing out on the weekends for two years. My band plays clubs and bars about three times a month. The problem is, the thrill is gone. Rather than being fun, the gigs feel like a second job. Can I get past this feeling?**  
Vince

Let me set the scene for a typical night for you. It's 1:15 A.M., and you're gazing out a tavern window into a sky that's just beginning to spit snow. Your band is starting the last set, and soon you'll be tearing down, packing up, and making the trek home. Fatigue has taken up residence in your shoulders and arms. You know your kick drum will feel like it weighs a ton during load-out.

When patrons walk into a club and notice a band performing, what do they see? Ideally, they experience the joy of a good band really rocking the house—the glamorous side of gigging. They have no idea what goes into the before-and-after of this production.

That's right—even your small club gigs are productions. And all productions take work; they don't just happen. Because you may be making a cognitive error by thinking like an audience member, let's highlight some of the unglamorous aspects of being a club drummer.

### Preproduction

You break down your drums at home and then load them into your vehicle. You drive to the venue, which may be five or fifty miles away. There, you might have to double-park or drive up onto the sidewalk for load-in. On occasion you have to park a fair distance away and lug your gear from there. You unload into the club, sometimes having to elbow your way through a packed house. Some venues are dumps and dives, and you might have to contend with a surly drunk.

The owner and waitstaff could be friendly, grouchy, or indifferent. The "stage" may just be floor space in a corner of the room, or it could be an elevated area specifically designated for performances. You assemble your kit. Depending on the size of the stage, you might have to

compromise your own comfort a little so that all of the members of your band can fit. You may feel cramped, but this is the area you've been given to work with.

### Postproduction

After you play three or four sets to a disinterested few, a very enthusiastic crowd, or an audience that hits somewhere in the middle, it's time to pack up and go home. If you're the bandleader, you may have to deal with a disgruntled club owner because your draw wasn't all that great that night. He or she hands over your pay, and you divide the cash among the band. Unless you have some very dedicated fans, the breaking down and loading out of gear is your responsibility. Your ride home could be a short hop or a long haul. Plus the weather conditions might be bad and slow down your drive.

### Analysis and Introspection

In your question, you said that gigs with your band "feel like a second job." The reality is that the elements of preproduction and postproduction *do* involve work. You're dealing with people, places, and things on a set schedule. And you're expected to give your best effort each night.

If it's the performing that feels like work, however, I'm wondering if the reality of being a musician doesn't match the fantasy you held in your mind. In Jackson Browne's version of "Stay," he sings, "But the only time that seems too short is the time that we get to play." You should be feeling enjoyment during your shows. Are you? Sure, some nights are better than others, but most club musicians keep at it for the sheer pleasure of playing for people. The pay is usually secondary and often equates to pocket money. It's time to do some introspection to determine how much actual enjoyment you derive from the performance aspect of your production.

Certain variables may be dampening your enthusiasm. Being unable to attract



a fan base beyond family and friends often takes away from the excitement and gratification. Venues that are dirty and in disrepair, with a nasty clientele, can affect you negatively as well. Another issue would be performing a genre of music that isn't to your liking, and excessive travel time and a disruption of your normal sleep schedule might also be subtracting from a positive experience.

You could be focusing too much on the "work" aspect of being a musician. When you think about an upcoming gig, do you start ruminating on all the extra effort required for the engagement? Take notice of the emotions you're feeling during pre- and postproduction. If they're strongly negative, perhaps you're putting too much focus on them.

Club musicians who survive the circuit have surrendered to the process. By surrender, I mean accepting that being a gigging drummer brings with it a range of human behaviors and emotions, and not all of them are joyful or exciting. For the folks who stick it out, it's the pure love of performing that drives them to play for one person or a thousand, on big stages or in dingy bars.



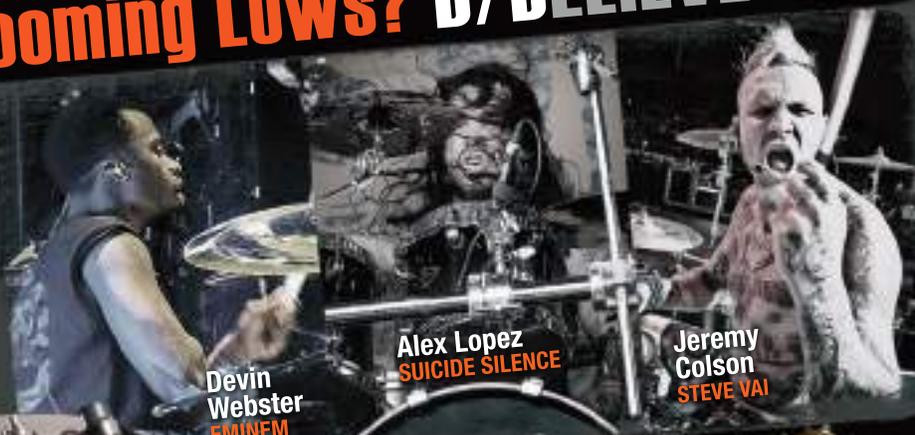
**Bernie Schallehn** has been a drummer and percussionist for over forty-five years. He holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and, while in private practice, held the credentials of a certified clinical mental health counselor and a certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor.



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# Tama Silverstar Cocktail Jam Drumset

An innovative take on the classic compact setup for drummers on the go.

**W**hen we think of cocktail drumsets, we usually picture a tall, tubular drum with a few accessories hanging off the side of the shell. The hardware is usually shell-mounted, and the height of the kit often dictates a standing style of playing. Tama's new Silverstar Cocktail Jam kit breaks those rules with a new design that adds more versatility and adjustability to an already compact setup.

## Specs

The Silverstar Cocktail Jam kit uses the same 6-ply, 6 mm birch shell composition and small-lug design as Tama's popular full-size Silverstar drumset. The company's birch sound is rooted in the legendary Superstar line, which was the first to feature all-birch shells in the 1970s. The new Silverstar pays homage to the classic Superstar sound.

The Cocktail Jam kit comes with four drum components: a 6x16 bass drum, a 5.5x14 floor tom, a 5x10 rack tom, and a 5x12 snare. It also includes two L-arm accessory clamps for the snare and rack tom, a bass drum pedal, a closed hi-hat attachment, and a cymbal arm. The bass drum has four leg attachments: two with rubber feet that act as legs/spurs and two without feet for insertion into the pedal adapter. The setup time for the Cocktail Jam kit was approximately ten minutes from start to finish, and the outfit was very sturdy once completely assembled.

The kit comes with clear single-ply heads on the toms, a coated single-ply snare batter, and a coated double-ply head with a clear overtone ring on the bass drum. The tom heads stood up well to hard hits, but the snare could use a double-ply version if you intend to tune it lower to emulate the sound of a 14"; this lower tuning made the single-ply head susceptible to denting.

## In Action

The Silverstar Cocktail Jam kit was a blast to play. The genius of its design is in the three-bar mounting system. You can adjust the floor tom/bass drum sections to different heights based on your preference for standing or sitting, which is a unique advantage of the Jam over traditional cocktail kits. The best way to mount these components is to put the rack tom and snare on the left bar, the

cymbal on the center bar, and the hi-hat on the right.

After testing the kit for a few hours, we discovered that having the floor tom mounted farther apart from the bass drum, for a standing playing position, offered the most resonance and tonal distinction between the two drums. When the drums were placed closer to the floor, bass drum hits would cause the floor tom head to resonate more.

All of the hardware brackets, including those for the hi-hat, cymbal, and tom arms, mount on the three vertical posts. I was happy to see that all of the adjustments on the brackets are spring-loaded, which keeps the flat washers secure against the wing nuts for quick, easy, hassle-free assembly. The springs also help prevent the wing nuts from shaking loose while you're playing.

## Teardown

The bass drum and toms on the Cocktail Jam kit are single headed. This allows them to be stacked easily inside one another, like Russian dolls, and placed in a single case. The hardware package includes padded spacers to wrap around the drums when they're nestled inside one another, so they won't be scuffed or damaged during transport. Although the single-headed tone may be a turnoff for some, the quicker decay and lower volume make the drums a great choice for gigs in smaller rooms where volume control is critical. (The single-headed design also makes the bass drum and toms super-easy to tune.)

## Final Tally

The Tama Silverstar Cocktail Jam kit gets a nine out of ten for functionality, versatility, affordability, and value. It's best suited for jazz, Latin, and some hip-hop settings but could easily work in other genres that are on the lighter side. The hardware is top notch and cases are included, also big pluses. The drums fit in one case, and the hardware (including the pedal) fits in the other. All you need to do then is grab your sticks and cymbal bag, and you're ready to roll. How cool is that? The list price is \$833.

## Eric Mezzo





# CRX Xtreme Brilliant Cymbals

China-made B20 cymbals for heavy hitters on a limited budget.

Introduced in 2013, CRX cymbals provide a range of dark, medium, and bright tones at very competitive prices. Individually crafted from B20 bronze by cymbal smiths in China, these pro-quality instruments include the unlathed Classic, the traditionally lathed Rock, and the recently reworked Xtreme series, which has a brilliant, microlathed, hammered finish. We were sent a set of Xtremes to evaluate, and we were quite impressed. These are no run-of-the-mill mass-produced budget cymbals.

## The Lineup

The Xtreme models we received include an 8" splash, 15" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, an 18" Stacker (with six holes), an 18" China, a 20" crash/ride, and a 21" ride. All of the cymbals were medium-heavy to heavy in weight and designed for aggressive, high-volume playing. Their tone is described as being "bright, powerful, and penetrating," all of which proved to be true, minus some of the harshness often associated with heavier cymbals.

## Hi-Hats and Crashes

The 15" Xtreme hi-hats (\$374.99) have very large bells and comprise a medium-heavy top over a heavy bottom. I expected them to sound clunky, but they were actually quite responsive to quick open barks, and they had a crispy, low-pitched closed sound. They also roared rather nicely when played open. The open sound was a bit pitchy, but it was nothing that would be noticed in the context of a loud band.

The 16" Xtreme crash (\$174.99) has a small bell, and the crash sound was clean, quick, and glassy. This cymbal reminded me more of a large splash than a small crash. The 18" crash (\$224.99) has a larger bell, but it also produced a clean, clear sound with smooth, glassy overtones. Both crashes had a fairly firm feel without being overly stiff.

## Splash, Stacker, and China

The 8" Xtreme splash (\$59.99) was the only model in the bunch that felt excessively stiff, yet it still managed to produce a classic splash sound that worked well for quick accents, and it stood up when played side by side with the larger and more aggressive cymbals in the series.

The 18" Stacker (\$224.99) has a large bell and comes with six 2" holes cut into it. The holes help to "dirty up" the tone while also giving the cymbal a faster attack and quicker decay. It wasn't as China-like as some other perforated cymbals I've played. In fact, it sounded a bit more like a hand-hammered thin crash, while maintaining the durability and power of the other cymbals in the series.

The 18" China (\$224.99) has an inverted bell, so you don't have to place it upside down on your cymbal stand, and you can access the bell for additional sound choices. This was my favorite cymbal in the CRX Xtreme line. It spoke very quickly, with a deep, raspy tone and minimal gonginess. It was dry enough to articulate quick, trashy ride patterns on the bell or bow, à la





fusion great Billy Cobham, yet it could also be smashed for big, explosive accents.

### Crash/Ride and Ride

The 20" Xtreme crash/ride (\$299.99) has a large bell and is medium-heavy in weight. Although the name indicates that this cymbal is meant to be bashed for a wash of sound, it also proved to be a fairly articulate ride. It opened up rather nicely when I needed it to, yet it always retained a bit of stick definition.

The 21" Xtreme ride (\$349.99), on the other hand, is a heavy-weight cymbal intended to produce ultra-clear stick articulation and a strong bell sound. The sustain wasn't as clear and even on the ride as on the crashes, and the pitch was lower than I expected, which actually worked to the cymbal's advantage, making it sound a bit richer than your average mid-price rock ride.

### Summing Up

All in all, these new CRX Xtreme cymbals proved to be just as professional sounding, if not more so, than other mid-price offerings currently on the market. I'd have no problem recommending these models to friends and students who are looking for cymbals that sound good, will withstand heavy hitting, and don't cost a fortune. Be sure to log on to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com) to hear the CRX Xtreme line in action.

**Michael Dawson**

## Cympad Moderator Cymbal Washers

Six size options for when a little or a lot of cymbal control is required.



**S**o you've done everything you can to soup up your drumset: sput on some fresh heads, swapped in fancy snare wires and solid brass hoops, and carefully placed pieces of Moongel dampeners to control funky overtones. But what about your cymbals? Is there anything you can do to improve their sound or tamp down some of their sustain when you're practicing or playing in quieter situations? You could stick a few pieces of tape or other muffling products (like Moongel) on the cymbal. Or you could pick up a box of Cympad Moderator cellular foam washers to replace the bottom felts on your cymbal stands. They do essentially the same thing, albeit in a much cleaner, neater, less sticky manner.

The Moderator Cube set we received includes six felts, each 15 mm thick and ranging from 50 mm to 100 mm in diameter to "allow for incremental modification." The cellular foam construction is said to outperform traditional felt washers by contouring to the shape of the bell to increase articulation and reduce hand fatigue and cymbal breakage.

We tried the Moderators with a range of crashes and rides of varying sizes and weights. If you're looking to significantly decrease sustain and overall volume, for practice or teaching situations, the larger models (80 mm, 90 mm, and 100 mm) work very well to bring the decibels down to a non-damaging level without completely deadening the tone. They were far superior to other methods of sound control (layers of T-shirt, excessive tape, or large foam appliqué), in that they still allowed enough of the natural sound of the cymbal to speak through for a more realistic response. The smaller Moderators (50 mm, 60 mm, and 70 mm) are ideal for less extreme sound control, like for drying up super-washy rides and overtone-laden crashes. If you find yourself adding a little tape to the underside of your cymbals, whether for recording or playing quieter gigs, try some Moderators instead. Just be aware that the bell sound will be the most compromised, sounding more like a "thunk" than a "ding," especially when you use the larger sizes. The six-piece Moderator Cube set lists for \$33.

**Michael Dawson**

# Gibraltar 9600 Series Thrones

Whether you prefer a classic round-top, motorcycle-style, or oversize seat, these new models have you covered, and they come in some cool colors.

In order to make music that feels good, you have to be relaxed and comfortable, but that can be a lot harder to achieve when you're sitting on an old, worn-out seat. Shopping for an updated drum throne may not be the most exciting thing you'll ever do, but it could be one of the smartest. Gibraltar knows this better than anyone, which is why the company is a leader in the industry of drumming comfort. This year alone, Gibraltar released three new seat tops in the 9600 series. All of the tops rest on the same tripod base with double-braced legs, oversize rubber feet, a memory lock, and a spindle that can be adjusted from 20" to 28". The seats we were sent for review include the Round Top, the Moto, and the Oversized.

## Round Top

Gibraltar's new traditional Round Top throne is 3.5x13.5 and made from synthetic leather with about 3" of memory foam for added comfort. The leather has a four-panel design with two red panels and two black panels. (A gray-and-black option is also available.) Tying into the red-and-black color scheme is a red thread wrapped around the circumference of the leather side panel. Aesthetics aside, the seat was quite cushy, while being solid and supportive as well. Round tops also allow for a more versatile seating orientation,

so drummers who prefer to scoot up or hang back will be pleased with this model's flexibility.

## Moto

The Moto bicycle-top throne features the same synthetic leather side panels but comprises a woven nylon material on top. Its largest sections measure 4x16.5. Half of the throne has a built-in lip that travels along the back section, helping to anchor you into position.

## Oversized

The largest of the three tops, the Oversized round seat has a lip around the circumference, as well as thigh cutouts in front. Constructed with the same woven nylon material as the Moto, this throne is 17" wide and 4" thick. Its increased seating area could help prevent discomfort after a long show or practice session. This was my favorite of the three tops. It's big, sturdy, and comfortable, and it weighs only about 2 pounds. My one hesitancy is with its size. I would definitely use this throne in my teaching studio, where it doesn't have to be moved around very frequently. But it didn't fit in my hardware bag, so if I wanted to use it on gigs, I would have to load it separately.



Round Top

Moto

## Last Call

All three of these new Gibraltar 9600 series thrones were very well made. Though I preferred to use the oversize round top in my studio and the traditional round top for gigging, you might prefer the stability and leg freedom provided by the Moto. As with all things in music, choosing a throne is a personal decision and ultimately up to each individual. Regardless, a reliable and comfortable throne is an essential piece of every drumset, and Gibraltar's new offerings are as good as they come.

**Ben Lauffer**

# Sabian Stick Flip

A standout freestanding stick bag that folds and zips into a neat, low-profile package.

Sabian's Performance Accessories series includes the innovative Fast 22 cymbal bag that allows you to keep your hi-hat on the clutch, environmentally friendly cleaners, Quiet Tone practice pads, Hybrid and Phosphor Bronze snare wires, and space-saving Stacker cymbal arms. New to the line is the Stick Flip, a slick drumstick holder that folds over to stand up on its own and zips into a nice, flat package that can be stored inside a cymbal bag or drum case or carried over the shoulder with the included strap.

The Stick Flip measures around 11" wide, 19.25" long, and 1.75" tall when closed and can hold approximately seven pairs of medium-size sticks in each of the two pockets and still zip up easily. There are also two smaller zippered mesh compartments for holding small tools, drum keys, earplugs, and the like. The top flap of the Stick Flip is magnetized, so when the case is unfolded and properly secured in place against the back, there's little chance that it'll collapse. It could topple over, though, if jammed with heavyweight mallets and not set up correctly.

To minimize that user error, I suggest removing the shoulder strap if you don't need it, as it tends to get in the way when you're trying to align the magnetic flap against the bottom portion of the back of the Stick Flip. It'll take a couple tries to get the hang of how to set it up, but as an alternative to hanging stick bags off floor tom lugs or clipping bulky holder cups to cymbal stands, the Stick Flip is a winner. The list price is \$60.

**Michael Dawson**



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# Drum Earz DRM-1X In-Ear Monitors

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Forty-five years ago, I played my first gig, at a youth center. What I remember most about the experience was the cacophony of electrified instruments, throbbing drums, and crashing cymbals. I also recall that my ears rang for two days afterward. It was then that I started my quest to not only hear better on stage but also to protect my hearing.

Buying a wedge floor monitor helped me hear the vocalist more clearly but did nothing to stop a guitarist from attacking my ears with the sound blasting from his amp. Over the years I tried earplugs made of various materials—wax, foam, rubber—as well as a pair of custom-fit silicone plugs made for me by an audiologist. All offered varying degrees of comfort and success in terms of blocking unwanted decibels. It was never a perfect marriage between the wedge and the plugs, though. The harmful volume had been lowered, but at the cost of muffling the sound coming through my monitor.

By 2010, custom in-ear monitors (CIEMs) had been invented, but those I saw advertised were way out of my budget, except for one: St. Petersburg-based Drum Earz. I placed a call and reached the owner/operator, Mitch Marcum, a professional drummer who had recently started the business with the mission statement of “a quality product at an affordable price.” I set up an appointment with him at his house while on vacation Florida with my wife, so I could have impressions made for a single-driver model tuned specifically for drummers.

Two weeks later, flesh-tone (chosen from an array of colors) acrylic Drum Earz arrived at my house back in Upstate New York. I tried them on and immediately noticed



how comfortable they felt. I plugged them into a small Behringer mixer and ran a feed out of my PA. The first time I used them in performance, the mix from the PA gave me the singer's voice clearly, plus just a hint of kick drum.

My Drum Earz are now four years old and they're true workhorses, having been used consistently in rehearsal and on stage. I've had absolutely no problems with them; I'm completely satisfied with their performance.

Each CIEM is equipped with a mid/high driver. As Marcum had assured me, even though they are single-driver monitors, they are by no means an entry-level product. They deliver ultra-smooth low-mids to crispy highs. The isolation factor is approximately minus 26 decibels, which provides the hearing protection I've always wanted.

In addition to providing an incredibly clear and true vocal feed, the driver is configured and tuned to accurately handle the broad spectrum of frequencies created

by a drumkit. Unless I'm playing a large venue, I'm happy with a simple monitor mix that's primarily lead vocal with a bit of kick drum. The single-driver Drum Earz have a frequency response of 30 Hz to 17 kHz, however, which covers just about any sound you'd want to hear in your ears.

Over the past four years, Drum Earz has expanded to include dual-, triple-, and quad-driver CIEMs, plus a cool acrylic custom-fit earplug that offers 26 decibels of sound reduction. Marcum also changed the look of his in-ears by designing the Anti-Wax Low End Chamber, which is an inverted bell tip that makes it nearly impossible for wax to enter the sound tube. The air space in the tip also doubles as a miniature low-end chamber.

The list price for the single-driver DRM-1X model is \$245 and includes a 54" detachable stereo cable, a carrying case and pouch, a cleaning tool, and a shirt clip.

**Bernie Schallehn**



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**Sticks:** Vater SD9 wood tip

**Hardware:** DW 5000 bass drum pedal (main), DW 3000 bass drum pedal (spare), assorted Gibraltar and DW stands

**Heads:** Remo Coated Ambassador snare and tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Coated Ambassador front head

**Electronics:** Roland RT-10S snare trigger, RT-10K kick trigger, and PD-9 pad; Drum Tech Pole Pad dual-zone trigger; MacBook Pro laptop; Arduino Micro controller

**In-ear monitors:** Ultimate Ears



**T**he reason I got a clear kit was because I knew I wanted to put LED strips in the drums," Baeche says. "They're controlled by our sequencer using MIDI. I figured out how I was going to wire them, and then I went down to C&C and they drilled the holes for the quarter-inch input jacks that connect all the wires. It's a real clean design.

"The lights are all preprogrammed before we go on the road. I program all the strobes, floor lights, and drum LEDs, and the video screen, so they can be triggered. That's all set ahead of time, so it runs itself. But the moving lights we have on stage are controlled by our lighting director.

"I use a MacBook Pro, and we run Logic as our sequencer. The LEDs are controlled with MIDI through an Arduino Micro controller and Arduino software that I wrote. The Pole Pad trigger is built a bit differently, and the main reason I got it was because its design fits well with the kit and it doesn't get in the way.

"As the person behind the kit, I never really get to hear the mix as it's blended in the front of the house. But pretty much every song has a triggered kick and snare sound. Sometimes I'll use the same sounds for different songs, just so it's present in the mix and doesn't sound like something's missing. The drum sounds usually stay the same for the entire song, but a few songs do have changes that are mapped out, where the triggers might be turned off for a part or volumes are adjusted slightly to create contrast.

"The technology side of things keeps getting [better]," Baeche concludes. "We used an [Akai] MPC as a sequencer for the first twelve to fifteen years, which is a solid and reliable machine, but it's not as easy to whip up an idea on the fly. I got pretty good with it, but you needed to have a calculator nearby so you knew how long to make notes and stuff. It's a lot easier now."



# Shudder to Think *Pony Express Record*

D.C.'s least classifiable rock band put the alternative back in alt-rock with its first major-label album, which sounds as joltingly fresh today as it did twenty years ago.

A polished, unpredictable unicorn of an album fusing genres as disparate as free jazz and glam metal, Shudder to Think's 1994 release, *Pony Express Record*, crash-landed on an increasingly stale "alternative" scene like a smoldering escape pod jettisoned from an alien spaceship. Despite sterling production and a modest MTV push, the band's heady blend of dissonant guitars, proggy time signatures, and operatic melodies proved too challenging for a heavily gentrified Alternative Nation. But the brave and patient few who endeavored to crack the *PXR* riddle continue to herald the recording as one of the truly transcendent rock efforts of the last two decades.

"It's a weird album; I still don't quite get it to this day," admits onetime Shudder to Think drummer Adam Wade, whose punchy stickwork plays a crucial role in *PXR*'s aesthetic. "I don't think it was ahead of its time. I just think it's *out* of time. It's on another plane in its own little bubble."

A veteran of the fertile late-'80s

post-hardcore scene in Washington, D.C., Shudder to Think spent its formative years on the hometown indie Dischord Records. The quirky quartet shared the same punk-rock urgency and ethos of labelmates Fugazi and Jawbox, but, armed with the angelic pipes and pop sensibility of enigmatic singer/guitarist Craig Wedren, the band also flashed tantalizing cross-over potential. Thus, A&R guru Michael Goldstone signed the group to Epic Records shortly after inking Pearl Jam and Rage Against the Machine.

By the time material was coming together for Shudder's major-label debut, original drummer Mike Russell—an ambidextrous, angular player—had departed to pursue a career as a math teacher. The band promptly poached Jawbox's Wade, whose decidedly smoother, more traditional approach provided a solid spine for Wedren's deconstructionist songwriting. "Craig would invent these weird chords and turn them into big loops that would be in some crazy time signature," Wade recalls. "My gut reaction was to play as straightforward as I possibly could."

Navigating *PXR*'s odd-time obstacle course with Matt Cameron-like aplomb, Wade does a masterful job of framing Wedren's labyrinthine compositions. Within the first minute of the bombastic "9 Fingers on You," he cycles through sections of 7/4, 13/8, and 9/4—in both common time and half time—all the while retaining the song's Van Halen-inspired raunch. A few tracks later, he nimbly glides along to the spider-web-delicate 17/8 verses of "Kissi Penny" before pounding out staccato Morse code patterns in a jagged post-chorus. And he deftly adjusts when the band unexpectedly drops an 8th note in the dizzying outro progression of the stop-start album opener "Hit Liquor."

Wade's relaxed pocket is another key ingredient in the *PXR* gestalt; even the most upbeat and technically demanding songs exude languid nonchalance. And Wade scores major air-drum points for consis-



## *Pony Express Record* (1994)

Hit Liquor • Gang of \$ • 9 Fingers on You • Sweet Year Old • Earthquakes Come Home • Kissi Penny • X-French Tee Shirt • No Rm. 9, Kentucky • Chakka • Own Me • So Into You • Trackstar • Full Body Anchor

**Craig Wedren:** vocals, guitar

**Nathan Larson:** guitar

**Stuart Hill:** bass

**Adam Wade:** drums

Produced by Ted Niceley

tently crafting simple yet catchy beats and fills. Note how he accentuates the seasick verse riff of "Earthquakes Come Home" with a slick hi-hat bark/cymbal stab combo, and how he populates the song's blissful, wide-open 6/4 finish with perfectly placed snare rolls and tom-tom builds. "There's no real spot you can point to and say, 'Look at that crazy whack-a-doodle drum thing,'" Wade says. "The music just doesn't call for it. It's a spacious, complex record that didn't need to be overcomplicated with more drums."

Partially due to *PXR*'s poor sales, its follow-up, *50,000 B.C.*, adopted a more accessible sound. Wade was unreceptive to the change, however, and the band fired him in the middle of tracking. Following runs with Krist Novoselic's ill-fated post-Nirvana project Sweet 75 and with the emo/indie darlings the Jealous Sound, the journeyman drummer opted for a career as a Los Angeles-based audio engineer.

Time heals all wounds, however, and Shudder to Think's classic *PXR* lineup reunited in September 2013 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of D.C.'s beloved Black Cat venue, opening the door for possible future activity. "I always wanted Shudder to stay weird and continue the mantra of 'Let's not sound like anything else,'" Wade says. "If the four of us went in to make another record, I bet we could do it again."

**David Jarnstrom**

## Hot Stuff

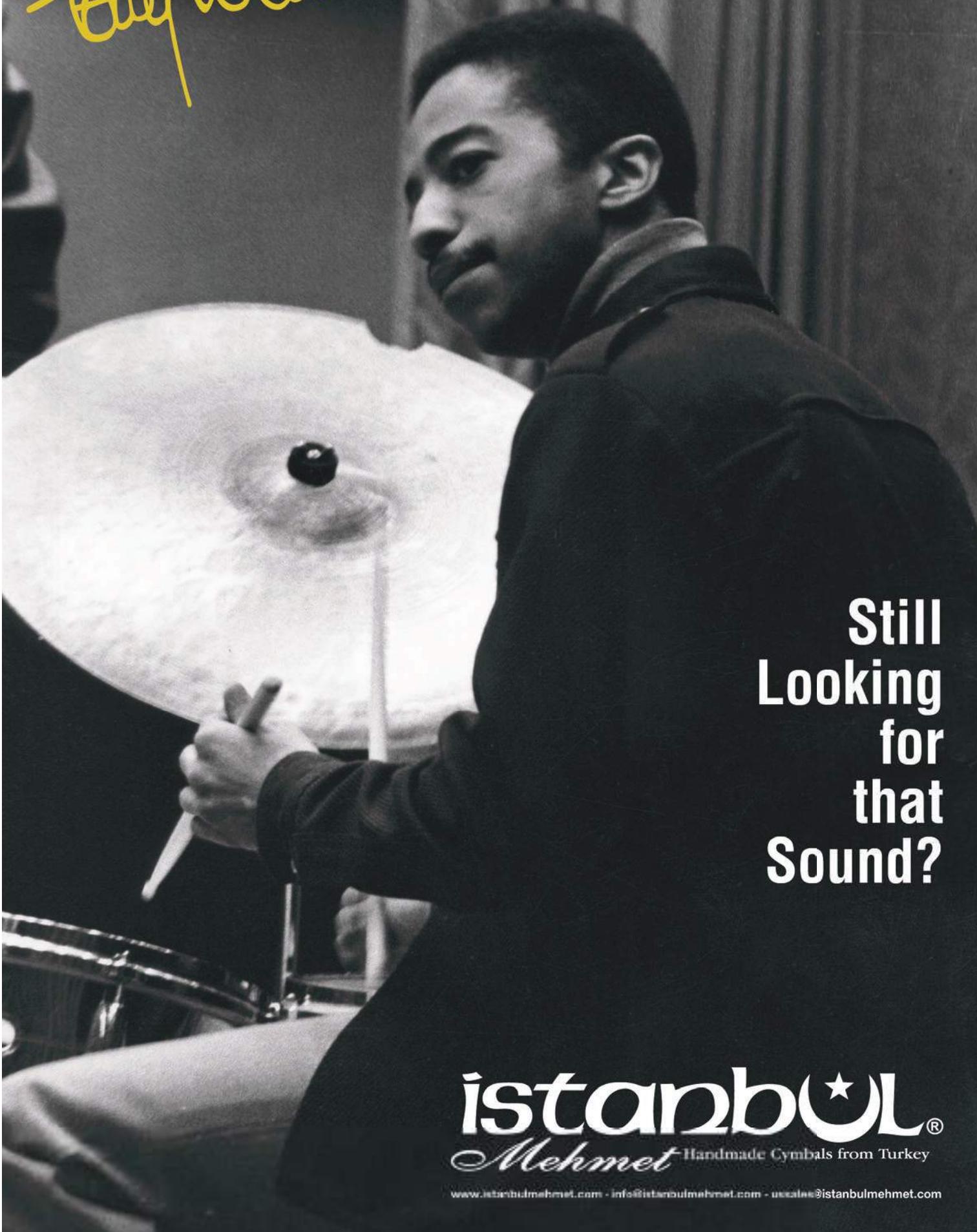
**K.I.S.S.** Some of *Pony Express Record*'s most rapturous moments occur when Adam Wade ditches the calculator and interprets Shudder's thorny, odd-time thickets as straight and simply as possible. Check out the 1:54 mark of "Kissi Penny," where he gives an algebraic instrumental section the Phil Rudd treatment on its second pass, momentarily inducing head banging rather than head scratching.

**Flam-tastic.** Wade exhibits brutal economy in his playing, often eschewing clutter-laden fills for exclamatory flams—e.g., the killer "crack, crack" that announces the tidal-wave choruses of "So Into You," or the "flam-kick-kick-kick-kick-kick-flam" pile-driver lick that sets up the second verse of "Chakka."

**Bonzo's blues.** Wade channels his inner John Bonham on the warped-blues number "Own Me." The tune's spacious, swinging 12/8 verses recall Led Zeppelin's "Since I've Been Loving You," while at 1:32 the band ventures into "Dazed and Confused" territory, with Wade deploying a flurry of tasty fills in between triple cymbal crashes.



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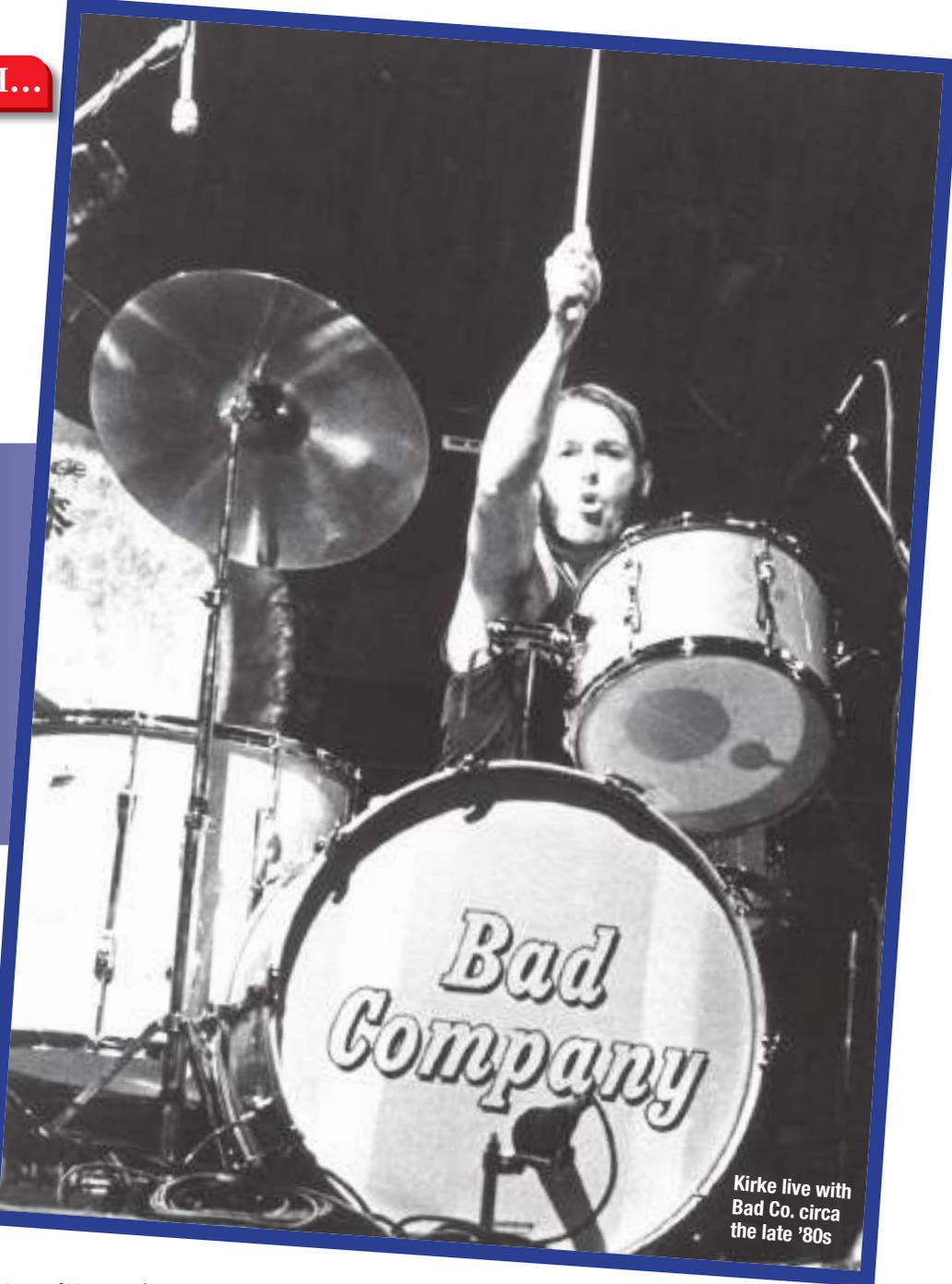
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## Bad Company's Simon Kirke

Since 1968, Simon Kirke, the legendary drummer with the early-'70s British blues-rock band Free ("All Right Now") and its offshoot Bad Company ("Can't Get Enough," "Shooting Star"), has been known for having one of the fattest beats in the biz. In fact, his rhythms are so identifiable, many fans are surprised to learn that he's also got serious abilities as a guitarist, pianist, and songwriter, skills showcased on his two solo albums, 2005's *Seven Rays of Hope* and 2011's *Filling the Void*.

"I've been playing guitar for as long as I've been playing drums, which is about fifty years now," Kirke says. "I picked up piano forty years ago, and I started writing songs around 1972, primarily as a way to musically document my thoughts." And Simon's solo gig is no mere vanity project. Recently, the Simon Kirke Band, featuring G.E. Smith on guitar, Wilbur Bascomb on bass, Jeff Kazee on keys, and Kirke on drums and vocals, played a number of shows in New York City, with more likely in the future.

This summer, however, was largely about Bad Company. In 2013 the group and Lynyrd Skynyrd co-headlined a dual fortieth-anniversary tour, and this past July found the two classic-rock titans sharing the stage again. The tour represents the latest burst of activity from Bad Co., whose three surviving original members (Kirke, singer Paul Rodgers, and guitarist Mick



Kirke live with Bad Co. circa the late '80s

"The tour of Japan was a lot of fun, but we really had to play with precision. We couldn't rely on the boisterousness of the U.S. audiences to carry us through."

Ralphs; bassist Boz Burrell passed away in 2006) reconvened in 2009 for the first time in ten years, with concert runs in the U.K., North America, and, as a rarity, Japan.

"The tour of Japan in 2010 was a lot of fun," Kirke says, "though the audiences are so much more quiet and polite. We really had to play with precision. We couldn't rely on the boisterousness and familiarity of the U.S. audiences to carry us through. The Japanese fans were sweet, though, giving us presents and shyly requesting autographs."

The band has no problems eliciting noise from audiences in the States, of course—especially when in the company of a beloved rock institution like Lynyrd Skynyrd. "Bad Company and Skynyrd go way back," Kirke says. "We complement each other very well, personally and musically. They're our brothers in arms in a way."

**Bob Girouard**



## Jazz Ambassador Steve Fidyk

**H**eads Up!, the small-group leader debut by big band specialist and MD Jazz Drummer's Workshop columnist Steve Fidyk, kicks off with the fiery up-tempo track "Untimely," which contains phrases in 5/8 and 7/8 followed by two quick bars of drum fills. Other more "drummy" moments on the album include Fidyk's feature track, "The Bender," on which he plays some slick Art Blakey-type pitch bends on the snare and mambo-style grooves while navigating a tricky twenty-bar melody full of rhythmic twists and hits. This track is also the one where the drummer gets to stretch out for an unaccompanied solo.

On the remainder of the album, Fidyk strategically picks his spots to step out front, whether through lush Joe Morello-inspired brush solos ("Make Someone Happy," "Might This Be-Bop") or a groove-based improvisation over an odd-time take on the jazz standard "Love for Sale." On tracks like the mid-tempo blues "Last Nerve" and the ballads "T.T.J." and "I Can See Clearly Now," Fidyk

takes on a decisively more supportive role. "There's predictability with drummer records," Steve says. "They're usually very aggressive, and the tunes are usually technically difficult. I didn't want to go in that direction. I set out to write tunes and arrangements that everyone could enjoy on some level. It's really an extension of my personality and the types of music I like and grew up listening to. And I wanted to be featured as a writer and arranger."

While *Heads Up!* was written for a classic jazz quintet format, featuring Terell Stafford on trumpet and flugelhorn and Tim Warfield on tenor sax, Fidyk brought in guitarist Shawn Purcell to fill out the rhythm section, along with Regan Brough on upright bass, giving the band a more contemporary texture. "I was raised on '70s radio, and I really dig the sound of the guitar," Steve says. "Having the guitar gives the band a more modern sound, and the note response is faster. I also wanted to integrate some arrangements of '70s pop songs, like 'I Can See Clearly Now,' so the guitar was a nice fit."

To prepare for the making of *Heads Up!*, Fidyk brought Stafford and Warfield in from Philadelphia for a couple of gigs in Annapolis, Maryland, where the drummer and his rhythm-section mates are based, so they could hash out the arrangements on the bandstand. On day three, the quintet went to Systems Two in Brooklyn to cut the album live. "We didn't use click tracks," Fidyk says. "The musicians were minimally isolated in one room, and there was little editing. We recorded the whole thing in five and a half hours. The session was honest from start to finish." **Michael Dawson**

## Monster Magnet's Bob Pantella

"You have to tour if you want to make any money.  
It's the only way to survive."

**M**onster Magnet's beastly beatsmith, Bob Pantella, has a work ethic as solid as his groove. Besides supporting the renowned heaviness of New Jersey's premier space-metal heroes, as well as the MM spinoff Atomic Bitchwax and Cycle of Pain, featuring J.D. DeServio of Black Label Society, Pantella wears multiple hats with his own brainchild, Riotgod. The band's sound begins with a raw slab of rock 'n' roll that evokes a familiar cluster of influences and funnels them into intense yet accessible songs. "Riotgod is a great creative outlet for me, because I love writing," Pantella says. "A lot of times I'll just have the guitar parts, and [vocalist] Sunshine sees what melodies and lyrics he can come up with. If it's working, we'll take it further. Then I demo everything but the leads and lay down my drum parts. Once that's done, the rest of the band comes in and records their parts, replacing what I've demoed."

As a producer, Pantella says, "I prefer

that everyone does full takes. We try to get all our sounds right on the way in so that we're not using a bunch of fancy plug-ins. That helps keep the recording sounding as natural as possible. I try not to abuse the technology that's available. I treat it as though it's on tape."

Being an active member of four bands, Pantella finds that time management is crucial. "I'm constantly busy," he says. "My main priority is Monster Magnet, then comes my other bands, and after all that is producing and studio stuff." Riotgod's new album, *Driven Rise*, was released in March, and Atomic Bitchwax and Cycle of Pain are working on new records. Constant time constraints help Pantella make decisions in the studio, both as a musician and a producer. "I'm pretty good at separating my roles," he says. "I know when to walk away from a song."

It's a skill that becomes more important with each passing year; Pantella, like most

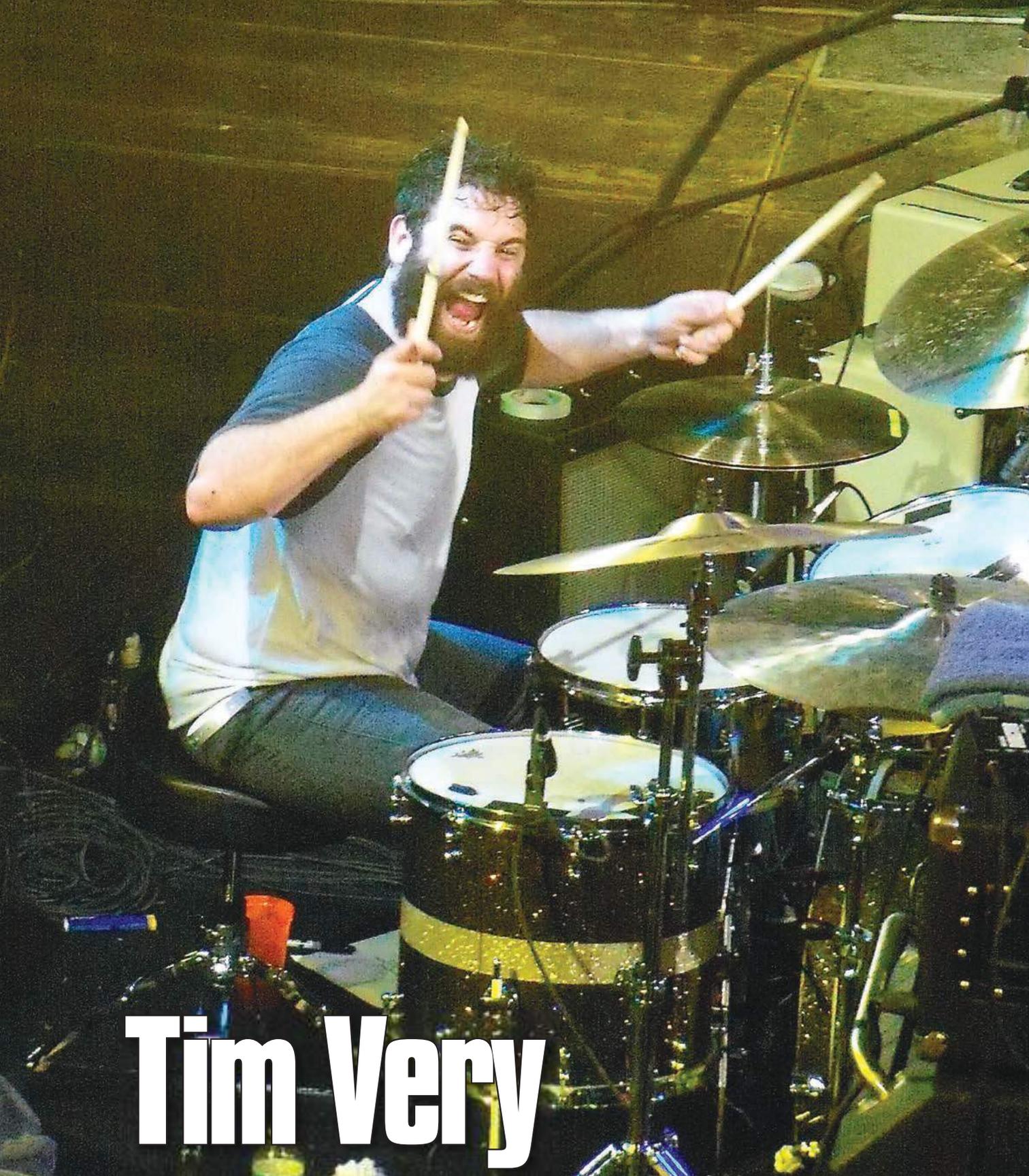


Sinners Art

pro musicians, can ill afford to lazily work on his studio tan and wait for inspiration. "Fifteen or twenty years ago, bands were in the business of selling records, but that's not the case anymore," he says. "Now you have to tour if you want to make any money. It's the only way to survive." Pantella's touring schedule takes him straight through the fall, making multiple trips across the pond for festivals throughout Europe with Monster Magnet, Atomic Bitchwax, and Riotgod.

**David Ciauro**





# Tim Very

After four years with the dynamic rockers Manchester Orchestra—and a few before that paying dues on the indie scene—he's finally gotten the chance to take full ownership of the drums on a widely anticipated album. And, *boy*, does he own it.

by Ben Meyer



The seeds of Manchester Orchestra were sown over ten years ago by lead vocalist and songwriter Andy Hull. But the addition of Tim Very to the band's lineup in 2010 during the writing of the 2011 album *Simple Math* brought a fresh voice and increased energy to the already boiling mixture of honest, emotional vocals and pummeling instrumental textures the group had become known for. Along with recent visits to the United Kingdom, appearances on most of the late-night network TV shows, and the inclusion of the song "April Fool" on the soundtrack of the *NHL 12* video game, the band has steadily gained a devoted fan base through extensive domestic touring and releases on established indie labels like Canvasback, Favorite Gentlemen, and Loma Vista.

Manchester's fourth album, *Cope*, released this past April, marked the band's highest chart debut to date, no doubt making Very's involvement all the more satisfying. "*Cope* was the first chance for me to own an entire Manchester record," says Tim, who shared drumming duties with Len Clark and Benjamin Homola on *Simple Math*, after the departure of drummer Jeremiah Edmond. "They were completely trusting and confident. Now that we've figured out how we want our songs to sound, it's a lot nicer, because we're not in that phase where everybody's still trying to figure out their sound and style and trying to add something

and feel valuable. There are all these dynamics you have to figure out when you're a young band. We knew what we wanted to make for this record. We knew we wanted high energy and heavy, tight riffs. We knew we just had

to get to work and start banging them out in the kitchen.

"I was able to supply a lot of energy, along with Andy Prince, our new bass player," Very continues. "They let the rhythm section go for it on this record. It was really rewarding to be able to do that kind of fast-paced, pounding drumming with a lot of big fills. You can't ask to play in a band that's more gratifying for a drummer than

**"I really want to impact the *feel* of the songs with what I'm bringing. It takes years to start to figure out how to do that as a drummer, but eventually it clicks."**

Manchester. I'm just bashing my drums to death! It's been really exciting. We just did *Letterman* a couple of days ago, and we did the title track from *Cope*, which is a complete slam-fest. It was nice to come out swinging."

Recorded entirely at the band's recently constructed studio in suburban Atlanta, *Cope* is the result of the members digging in their heels and focusing on what they wanted to create. "We do everything out of our studio," Very says. "We do our own merch, and we ship out packages from there. The place is really our lifeblood. We brought in our producer, Dan Hannon, and our main guy, Brad Fisher, who tracked most of the record with us. We just did it every day at the house. It was a really nice way to make a record without being under the pressure of the clock. That's another really rewarding thing about *Cope*—the amount of DIY that was involved in making it."

Very sees his role in Manchester Orchestra as being an active participant in the songwriting process, not simply a supplier of the beat. "Most of my experience comes from real-world playing in bands," he explains, "just writing and playing shows. You learn how to do the songs a service instead of just trying to get noticed or trying to get your kicks in. If you want to have any kind of worth, it's about finding a way to be valuable to the song and the sound of the group you're playing with.

I really want to impact the *feel* of the songs with what I'm bringing; I want to add something to the song and give it some life. I can make the bridge hit harder, or I can add something here or there to give it more feel. It takes years to start to figure out how to do that as a drummer, but eventually it clicks."

Another thing that can take years to sink in for young players is understanding that success in music isn't all

about playing skills. "When Andy Hull asked me to come play," Very recalls, "he certainly wasn't like, 'Can you read drum music?' He wanted to know if I was someone he felt comfortable with. Kids come up to us after shows sometimes, and they want you to drop some nugget of wisdom on them that's going to get them fast-tracked to where you are. They see what you're doing, and they want to do that. They don't realize what they're asking. It's a long road to get there. You're not going to do into a room, play the right drum solo, and then all of a sudden your musical life is just sorted out. That's how I used to think about it when I was young too. I actually met Andy when I was playing in this band from Pensacola, Florida, called Arkitekt. He was just starting up Manchester, and he and I stayed in contact through the years as they were growing."

Today Very has four years under his belt with Manchester, and he's clearly happy with the way things are progressing for him and the band. "We're leaving for the U.K. today for five shows, then we come home for a couple of days before heading out on a headlining tour," he says. "We're bringing a really awesome band with us called Balance and Composure, and Kevin Devine, who sings with us in Bad Books, is opening the tour with his band. There are a lot of connections between the three groups, so it's going to be an exciting package to be out with. I love it—waking up every day and seeing thirty guys I really like."

#### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Very plays C&C drums and Zildjian cymbals.



# TAL



# BERGMAN

**DON'T LET THE BLUES FOOL YOU—GUITAR SLINGER JOE BONAMASSA'S DRUMMER OF CHOICE CAN TACKLE JUST ABOUT ANY STYLE YOU THROW HIS WAY.**

STORY BY ROBIN TOLLESON + PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

**T**al Bergman's dad isn't a drum teacher, but the advice he gave his son about music was invaluable nonetheless. "He used to tell me that I have to talk with my instrument," Bergman recalls, "and that if I have nothing to say, I shouldn't play. Music is like conversation—to say something, a lot of times with drums it comes from your attitude and energy. It can be more abstract. I never studied drummers in the way of learning all their licks, but I listened and learned their attitude."

Bergman has been seen on PBS with world music star Loreena McKennitt and on *MTV Unplugged* with rap icon LL Cool J. He's recorded with fusion legend Joe Zawinul, Turkish multi-instrumentalist Omar Faruk Tekbilek, and Italian operatic pop trio Il Volo,

toured with new-wave hitmaker Billy Idol, and played and done production work on classic-rock crooner Rod Stewart's *It Had to Be You: The Great American Songbook*. For several years the drummer has been visible with bluesman Joe Bonamassa, appearing on the guitarist's *Tour de Force* DVD and CD box sets. Bergman's own band, Rock Candy Funk Party, is making noise as well, most recently with the CD/DVD package *Live at the Iridium*.

Bergman, who was born and raised in Israel and is now based in Los Angeles, studied classical snare and mallets with the percussionist of the Israel Philharmonic—but was simultaneously listening to anything and everything else he could get his hands on. It's a worldview that has served him well...



**Tal:** I grew up thinking that the drummer needs to know how to play everything, not just one kind of music but whatever they throw at you, from funk to jazz to pop to bebop to vintage hard rock. I like all kinds of music, when it's good. I found out when I moved to the States that they like to put people in a frame, like this guy's a jazz guy, this guy's a rock guy, this guy's a funk guy.

Sometimes people think that if you play all styles, you're not really good at all of them. Especially today, though, there are no rules, and I love to incorporate different things. In Rock Candy, for instance, the intro [to opening track "Octopus-E" on *Live at the Iridium*] has got a second-line thing, but it also builds like a rave buildup. I learned a lot of stuff from dance music and raves. I find it

interesting the way they build tension with dynamics, not just with tonality but with rhythm. I like to listen to all of that stuff, and as long as you listen while you're playing, you can go anywhere you want.

**MD:** Do you ever incorporate Middle Eastern rhythms into your playing?

**Tal:** I always incorporate them, because

they're very funky. They are North African, so the influence is from Africa. The accent a lot of times is on the 1 with the Arabic stuff. I believe it's very good to always go to the basics, and then you make your own thing out of it. So I do incorporate a lot of that when I play, as long as it's good for the music. I'm not going to do it just because

**“IT HELPS ME TO KNOW HOW IT LOOKS ON PAPER. IF I KNOW THAT THE NEXT PHRASE IS 16TH NOTES, OR TRIPLETS, OR QUINTUPLETS, IT COMES WITH A LOT OF AUTHORITY.”**



## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Bergman plays Sonor drums and Sabian cymbals. He uses Remo heads, a Sonor Giant Step bass drum pedal, a Porter & Davies BC Gigster round throne and BC2 engine, an LP percussion tray and Black Beauty cowbell, Vater Tal Bergman signature sticks, a Yamaha ClickStation, a 2box DrumIt Five electronic drumkit, and Lewitt mics.



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## Tal Bergman



**“YOU NEED TO BE WITH PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHERE THE TIME IS WITHOUT LEANING ON THE DRUMMER. EVERYBODY SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT THE TIME.”**

I want to. It has to serve the song.

**MD:** What were some of the important things you learned in your early studies?

**Tal:** It's important to have the right technique, because then you don't have problems with your wrists, your back. Really try to minimize your energy and use it for what you need to. I think reading is extremely important, because knowledge is power. And when I know what I play, the execution is much better, and your time is also much better. It helps me to know how it looks on paper. So if I know that the next phrase is 16th notes, or triplets, or quintuplets, or whatever, it comes with a lot of authority. Because the drummer needs to be the driver.

**MD:** How old were you when you first started playing?

**Tal:** Since I was six years old it's all I wanted to do. I always wanted to be the best drummer for myself, to know that I'm always striving to be better. That's my challenge, because every time you play something, you know you could do better.

There's no end to it. That's all I've done all my life. I've never had any other job.

**MD:** Who were the drummers you heard that could really put it all together?

**Tal:** All the great ones, from Gene Krupa to Buddy Rich to Tony Williams. Max Roach, Roy Haynes. I could go on and on—Steve Gadd, Harvey Mason, Billy Cobham. James Levi.

**MD:** Speaking of James Levi, Rock Candy Funk Party covers a couple of Herbie Hancock tunes.

**Tal:** I like a lot of the Herbie Hancock stuff from the '70s. I love the interplay that went down there, and then I love all the session drummers, like when you play just the right stuff. I think that's very important. I don't know if Rock Candy is the perfect example of that, because it's where we go to have fun, so we allow ourselves to be a little more elaborate than I would do playing behind somebody else. But, you know, we gotta have an outlet.

**MD:** Did you move to the United States with a particular gig?

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## Tal Bergman

**Tal:** No. I came to the States for the first time when I was sixteen. I made enough money doing gigs in Israel already, and my parents were good enough and crazy enough to let me go to the States for a year by myself. My mother's cousin was a viola player in the Toronto Philharmonic, so she hooked me up to learn with a group called Nexus, which was made up of the percussionists from the Toronto Symphony and Philharmonic. They were great percussionists and masters in African music too. Some of them studied in Africa for a long time. They were very adventurous, and she hooked me up to study with them privately.

I met Chick Corea when I was a kid in Israel, probably when I was sixteen. I sat in with him playing bongos, because that was the only thing they would let me sit in with. No way I could get the drummer out of the chair. But Chick really liked what I played, because I played more Middle Eastern kind of stuff. We stayed in touch, and then I saw him play in Toronto. I was waiting for him in the snow at sound-check, and he remembered me and said, "Why don't you come and sit in with us?" I was like, "Okay." I probably overplayed like I don't know, but he invited me for another show. Then he said, "Why don't you come to L.A., and I'll get you a teacher." He hooked me up with Mike Garson, a great piano player, and he worked with me through all the styles of jazz. That was my first time in America.

**MD:** When did you move to the States for good?

**Tal:** When I was twenty I moved to New York. I studied some at Drummers Collective with Robbie Gonzalez, Kim Plainfield, Michael Carvin, Frankie Malabe. It took me, I would say, six years to get my first real gig, which was touring with Blood, Sweat & Tears. I was in New York for a long time, playing the jazz circuit, and then I got a gig with Billy Idol, which was totally different. Everybody thought it was a heavy metal gig, but to me it was like disco-pop. It was very tight, a lot of drum machines. So I learned to play all the parts, including all the electronics, and then I moved to L.A. and started doing sessions.

**MD:** When and how did you meet up with Joe Bonamassa?

**Tal:** I think I'm on my fourth year with Joe. I was introduced to him by his bass player, Carmine Rojas, who I've known and played with for a long time. I said, "Listen, I'm going to come only for three weeks because I don't really tour as much." I've got twins—they are thirteen years old

now, a boy and a girl—and I try to work as much as possible in town. But I had met Joe before, and he's a good, honest guy. So I started playing, and we had so much fun. Joe's an amazing player and a great guy. I can be with my friends, and I don't think I've ever been on a tour that was so relaxed, without any politics. So I'm still doing it.

The show is really open. We get to jam, and he gives me drum solos. And now we've got [percussionist] Lenny Castro in the band, and it's actually getting funkier. It's got more groove. I fly my family [out] every two or three weeks when I'm on the road.

**MD:** Bonamassa always seems to have a new project going.

**Tal:** He works very hard. I find that people who don't sleep a lot make it big-time. [laughs] They just have more hours in the day. I personally like to rest before a concert. It's a two-and-a-half-hour show, and you really have to be on top of your game the whole time. You can't relax for a second; you need to direct traffic. You really have to have your eyes and ears open the whole time. It's fun and it keeps my chops up. And I still manage to do all of my sessions in L.A. They either wait for me or I program some stuff on the road when I need to. So I must admit that I didn't really lose much work in L.A. doing that. And also the session scene is not what it used to be, so you can't count on that.

**MD:** What kinds of sessions are you doing these days?

**Tal:** I work with [producer/engineer] Humberto Gatica, including Il Volo's last few albums. They've got huge budgets for their recordings, so he will wait for me. Now I'm working on an English singer he's producing; he got me the tracks so I could do drum sessions for that one when I get back.

I have my own studio as well—a really big space, 2,500 square feet. It was a very famous studio called Lion Share. Kenny Rogers owned it, and it has a great drum room. I'm not talking about those [expensive rooms], but for a working drummer, it's amazing. It used to be ABC Dunhill—a lot of big records and a lot of history, like Michael Jackson, *Aja* by Steely Dan.... I cut the first Rock Candy Funk Party album there.

**MD:** It seems like all the players on that album are having so much fun.

**Tal:** It's something that I'm very proud of, because I actually have a vehicle to really play what I love to play, with the people that I love to play with, with nobody telling

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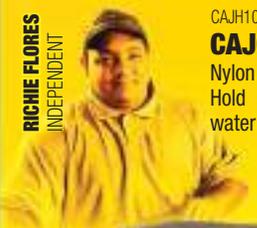
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## Tal Bergman

us what to do, and put it out worldwide. We're getting rave reviews about it, maybe because not too many people do that kind of music today.

It's more like jazz-rock. It's not that fusiony, because we're trying simple heads. It doesn't have many unisons or odd times, and it's not about people showing their chops. It's about really laying down a groove and doing it in a jazz way where you can break it down when everybody takes a solo and take it somewhere and not be afraid to be really delicate, and at the same time not be afraid to rock hard. It's exciting, because we like to keep the music simple, but the interplay is where it's happening. That's more like the music of the '60s and '70s—Miles, Herbie, Cobham, all that stuff, even some Jeff Beck. I try to come up with simple grooves that people can understand, then we can mess around with it. But if people are not bobbing their heads, then they're going to get lost; it's going to be too sophisticated for them and not as much fun. The thing is to be a party, so we don't take ourselves too seriously.

**MD:** Rock Candy Funk Party does a nice cover of Herbie Hancock's "Heartbeat."

**Tal:** I'm pretty much copying the drum groove on the original record, but playing it like you would play it in 2014. When you listen you don't notice it, but when you try to learn it, you know Herbie put some land mines there. You've got a 3/8 bar—he throws in this odd stuff where it's like, *What?* The parts that they came up with, all the counterpoint is so happening. There is no way that we can do it better than they did. I love that stuff, so we sort of stay true to the main parts. Jazzmen, everybody plays the way they play, but that tune plays itself.

A lot of times instead of a drum fill I'll just turn the beat around. It creates a lot of tension. You can displace the kick and snare in different places. I love moving stuff around. You can't always do that. It depends on who you're playing with.

**MD:** Ron DeJesus plays some great guitar on that.

**Tal:** He's one of the funkiest guys, man. He's originally from the Bronx, and he knows funk inside and out. Ronnie and I used to go and play the Baked Potato for fun when I was in town. One time, Joe came and sat in with us, and we had such a ball. Ron's one of those guys who really has the right feel, a natural player. Between him and Joe it's such a beautiful interaction, so much respect.

And Joe's killing on the stuff. When we did some stuff in the studio, in one day he

played the rhythm parts, his solo, and everything, and I couldn't say a word. It was so on the money. And he loves to take risks, that guy. It's a project where he can really play what he likes as well. He doesn't have to sing, he doesn't have to wear a suit, he gets to stretch and be challenged, and he loves a challenge. Joe can take a ten-minute solo and you won't get bored.

**MD:** Your cover of Herbie's "Steppin' in It" is really about breaking it down.

**Tal:** You have to be with the right musicians. You need to be with people who know where the time is without leaning on the drummer. Everybody should be thinking about the time. Sometimes stuff rushes a little, sometimes it will slow, but that's natural. It also depends on the music and the intensity, but as long as everybody's together and the energy's there and the vibe is there, then it's fine.

**MD:** You can hear that sort of implied time in the careful build on "Ode to Gee."

**Tal:** It really started like that, with us just creeping in, and I love that in music. You don't have to play it—you can just hint at it, and the listener does the rest.

Dynamics are really important in music. I will create dynamics by taking parts out. I'll play a groove and then take the bass drum out, like a DJ will mute a channel. I like to do that—just play a groove and then eliminate one of the parts, or take the ghost notes out. I like to play with the hi-hats really dirty, then the only thing I change when I go to the verse is to tighten the hi-hat, and suddenly everything is clean.

It's a lot of reacting—that's something I learned from Zawinul. I was in the studio with him and he gave me these tracks to play that unless you're listening from the beginning, you don't know where 1 is. And I said to him, "When do you want me to do a drum fill to lead into another section?" He says, "Why do you need to do a fill? Listen and react." How nice is that? So instead of doing a fill, I'll do a break. Or instead of changing the beat I'll just change the tonality or energy.

**MD:** There's such a chill vibe on "Best Ten Minutes of Your Life."

**Tal:** I totally took that beat from [the Temptations'] "Papa Was a Rolling Stone." I love the drumming on that. All the guy was playing was the hi-hat all the way through. When I was a kid I used to play that forever and just play the hi-hat, and the bass drum and the snare whenever it came up. It's very minimal, and then when you need to go out you can go out. You gotta love to do it. It's easier to do a fancy drum fill than to keep a groove.

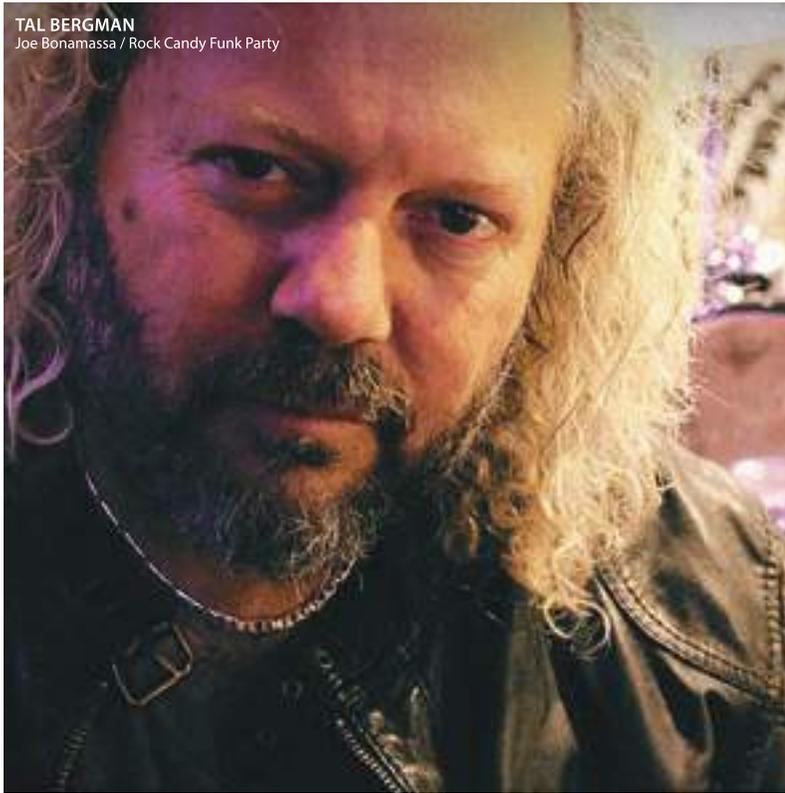


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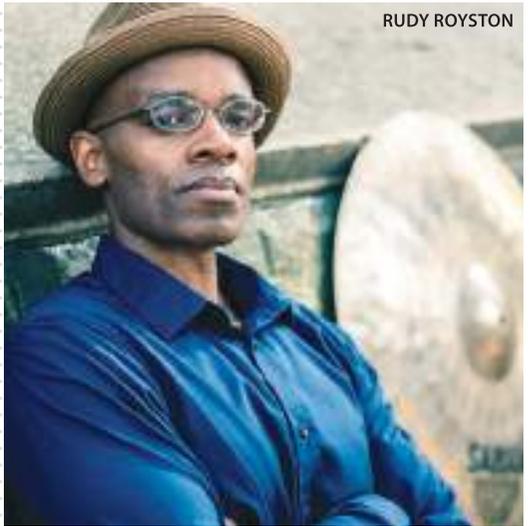
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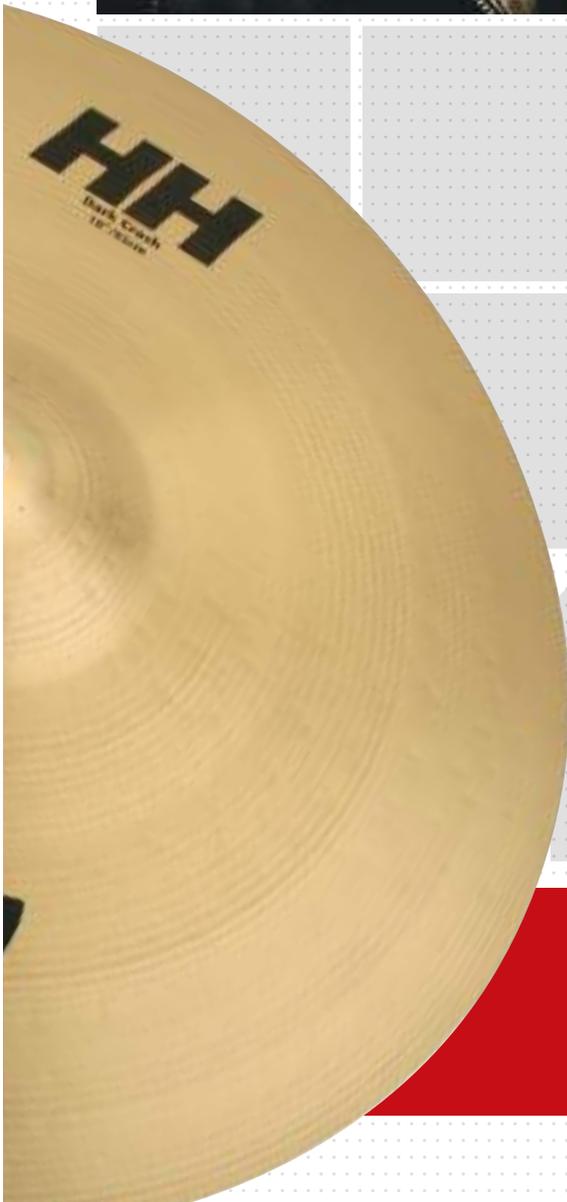
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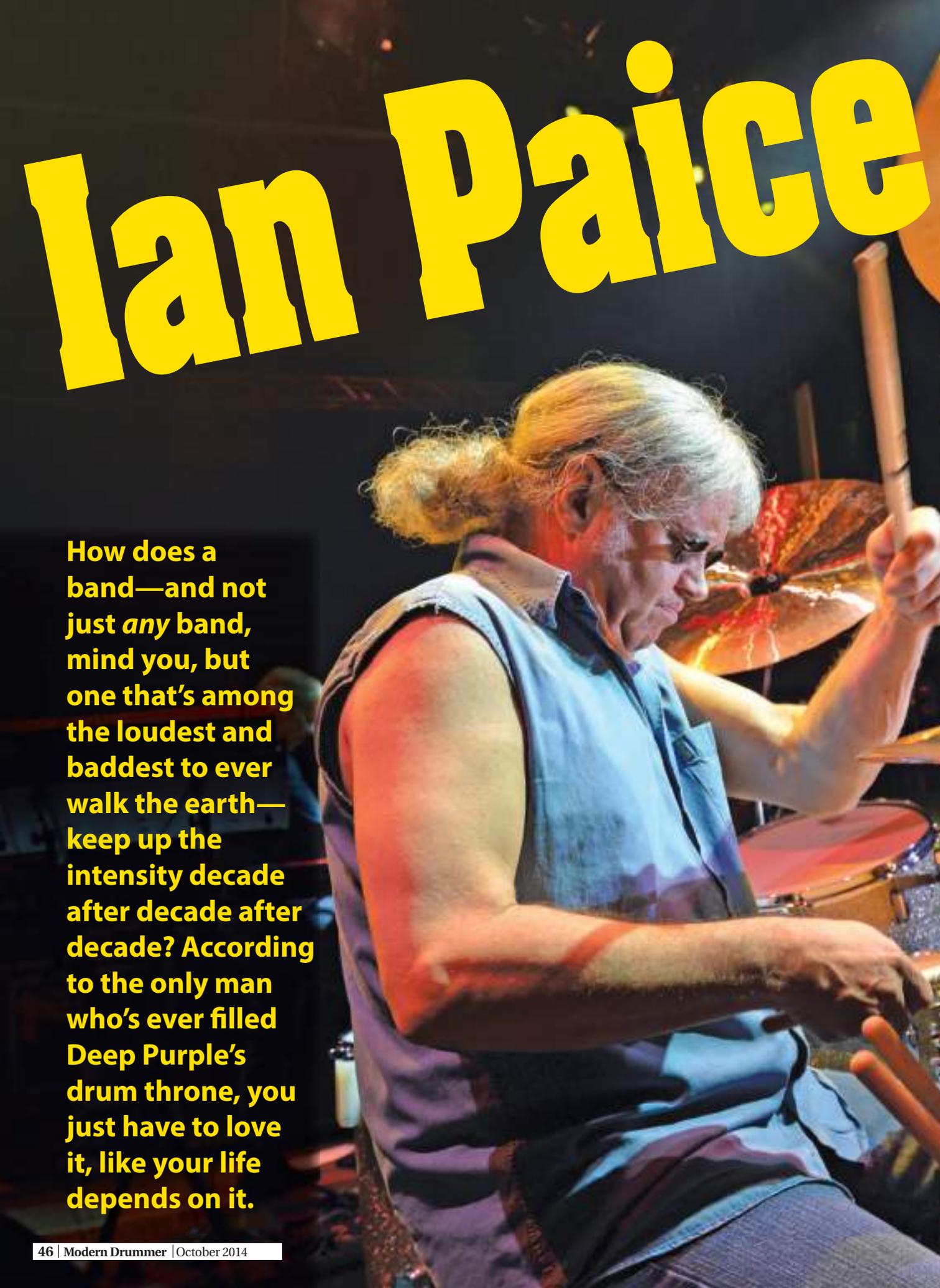


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# Ian Paice



How does a band—and not just *any* band, mind you, but one that's among the loudest and baddest to ever walk the earth—keep up the intensity decade after decade after decade? According to the only man who's ever filled Deep Purple's drum throne, you just have to love it, like your life depends on it.



by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann



**W**e can practice drums or play in a band until we're blue in the face. We can be dedicated, tour 365 days a year, and take every gig possible to hone our sound. But no matter how hard we work, we probably won't ever help pioneer a genre of music like the round-spectacle-wearing, long-sideburn-sporting British rock 'n' roll master Ian Paice and his highly influential band of the last forty-six years, heavy metal gods Deep Purple.

Purple's sound is so heavy that in 1975 the *Guinness Book of World Records* listed the drummer and his mates as "the globe's loudest band"—though if you've ever seen Paicey play, you've noticed that his touch on the instrument is anything but "loud." Everyone—and we mean everyone—has heard Paice's famous 16th-note hi-hats

chugging along with Ritchie Blackmore's guitar riff on "Smoke on the Water," from the band's 1972 studio masterpiece, *Machine Head*. "Smoke on the Water" is iconic in every sense, a classic example of a rock song built on tension and release, and Paice's jazz-inspired snare work, commanding hand-foot combos, and supreme sense of timing are among the most important elements that draw generation after generation of rock fans to it.

Purple is no one-hit wonder, though. Despite a number of lineup changes since bursting onto the scene with its revved-up cover of Joe South's "Hush" from its 1968 debut album, *Shades of Deep Purple*, the band has continuously drawn critical respect and a large, loyal

**“Once I got back into the touring thing again, I realized that**



Sayre Joan Berman

international following. And the musicality, power, and creativity of Paice's drumming is stamped all over Purple's catalog. Take the opening title track of 1971's *Fireball*, whose blistering double bass and syncopated bell and snare patterns during the intro come at you like a bull out of the gate. (It's actually a rare instance of Paice playing double bass. So rare, in fact, that he needed to grab a spare drum left in the studio—by the Who's Keith Moon!) Or take the slippery funk groove and ridiculous fills on *Machine Head's* "Maybe I'm a Leo." Or the left-handed drummer's dark but groovy swing on "I Need Love," from 1975's *Come Taste the Band*.

Remarkably, Purple is still raging, and Paice continues to come up with magical ways to keep up the heat. Last

year the band released the studio album *Now What?!*, and Ian's powerful pocket and sense of restraint on tracks like "A Simple Song" and swinging half-time shuffle on "Bodyline" are proof that he can still insert himself into any musical environment without taking over the song. This year, the current "Mark VIII" lineup of Ian Gillan on vocals, Roger Glover on bass, Steve Morse on guitar, Don Airey on keyboards, and Paice—the only remaining original member—has been out hitting the world's stages yet again, bolstered by the recent reissue of the band's seminal 1972 live document, *Made in Japan*. Paice was gracious enough to chat with MD from his home in England a day before embarking on yet another world tour.

**I would never let it go until I really couldn't do it anymore."**

**“When it’s just a matter of ‘1, 2, 3, 4,’ I find it a little disheartening. But occasionally the more stuff you play, the worse it sounds. Sometimes trying to be too eclectic can send you in the wrong direction.”**

**MD:** Your style is very different from that of the drummers from the era you came up in, the late '60s and '70s. You play with so much modern power on albums such as *Machine Head* and *Fireball*, but you also have a greasy, bar-band, boogie-woogie feel, like we hear on the early-'80s Whitesnake records you played on.

You managed to transition styles pretty easily for someone who’s renowned for pioneering heavy metal drumming.

**Ian:** When I started playing drums and listening to music, I wasn’t just listening to rock ‘n’ roll. The early influences that enthralled me were *not* rock ‘n’ roll drummers—they were jazz drummers, big band drummers.

**MD:** Big band drummers from England?

**Ian:** No, the really good guys from your side of the pond. The first guy was Gene Krupa. I wanted to look like Krupa—he looked so cool. I don’t mean that in terms of sort of mimicking his act or look, but when I saw those old movies of him, he was the coolest-looking guy in the picture. There were other movies that might have

had Buddy Rich in a cameo, or one of the other great big bands—the Dorseys, Count Basie—so I was watching all these different guys.

Before I had drums or sticks, I had a pair of old wooden knitting needles of my mother’s, and I would try to copy what these incredibly great players were doing, just by watching the way their hands moved. I wasn’t trying to be like all the kids who were mimicking the rock ‘n’ roll drummers they had seen. I was already trying to be something that was probably a stage ahead of that. All the big band guys just had their genre down, and it was magnificent what they were doing. And even though it was a different generation from mine, that magic came through.

And that’s how I started playing, so when I began playing in a rock ‘n’ roll band, all those influences—all those little tricks and movements—were already there in my playing. So I saw it from a slightly different point of view.

**MD:** Your playing is chameleonlike. Whitesnake’s “Fool for Your Loving” and

“Come an’ Get It” are basically R&B drumming compared to the psychedelic drumming of Mark I Deep Purple and the heaviness and power of Mark II Purple. You have a distinct sound, but also a unique ability to blend into the music.

**Ian:** Sometimes what’s needed is totally different from what I may have played on the track before. As you say, it’s somewhat chameleonlike, but I’ve always tried to look at the drum part as a piece of music rather than just a rhythm.

I’ve never really been happy with having to play a “1, 2, 3, 4...” I’ve always found that if you can find a good drum track, it generally makes a much better music track, because then the rhythm becomes inherent to the composition. It’s part of the life of the song. But when it’s just a matter of “1, 2, 3, 4,” and wait till the end, I find that a little disheartening. You can’t do it all the time. Occasionally there’s a track that comes up and all it needs is a “1, 2, 3, 4,” and the more stuff you play, the worse it sounds. So you have to understand that sometimes trying to be too eclectic can send you in the wrong direction.

**MD:** When you appeared at the Modern Drummer Festival in 2005, your playing really connected with the crowd on a level that had nothing to do with technique, flash, or speed. People could *feel* it.

**Ian:** Any art form, whether it’s with a paintbrush, a drumstick, a violin, or a piece of stone, is about the artist giving his emotions to the person receiving that art. If you end up with a one-way street, where the art is just giving and the audience doesn’t understand what’s going on, then the art sort of gets lost. It doesn’t need to be the most technical or the fastest thing; it just needs to talk to the person who is receiving the art. And if it *can* do that, you’ll get the emotion back from the receiver. And it’s the most gratifying thing in the world, where you may do something which to *you* is quite simple, and everyone else goes, “Wow! That was just the right thing at the right place, and it made me feel good.”

Some people say, “Oh, you’ve got all this technique...” I don’t. I have the ability to translate what I’m hearing in my head into



Sayve Joan Berman



notes that I put on the kit. If it comes out as being technical, that's pure chance, because I didn't have any formal training. I used to watch and learn from these good drummers, and I would learn a few rudiments from guys who knew them when I didn't.

**MD:** That comes from playing with a lot of bands too, not just being a drummer practicing on your own. I read that you were playing at a young age.

**Ian:** I got my first kit at fifteen, and I started playing with my old man during dinner dances—waltzes, quicksteps, foxtrots, those sorts of things. I had a crappy little job as a civil servant, which just about made me enough money to pay the installments on my drumkit.

My old man said once, "Look, my

drummer can't make it—sub for him tonight." And after playing this rather cheesy dance music for three hours, he gave me the same amount of money that I'd have earned in three days at my job. *Hey, this is pretty good!* Wasn't a lot of fun apart from it being with my old man, which was funny because he did like a drink or two and that became quite hilarious at times. But then you move on to your little local band and that takes you as far as that can go.

Then, if you've got the juice, someone comes along and says, "You wanna move up the ladder?" For me it was very quick. I went from getting my first kit on my fifteenth birthday to being in Deep Purple before I was twenty. So for me, it wasn't the number of bands I was playing with—it was

the number of *gigs* I was able to do. That's the real secret. And when you're in a cover band, of course, you're not just playing one style of music. You're playing everything that's a hit. For us that may have been a Motown groove or a Beatles thing or a Bob Dylan song. It was all under a sort of blues/rock/R&B umbrella, but it was all different styles of playing. So you get all this stuff in your artillery case.

**MD:** All the great drummers seem to have played gigs all the time when they were young. But if you're not gigging and you're just practicing or watching drum videos, it's the equivalent of playing tennis against a wall and not actually being part of the game, right?

**Ian:** Not expecting any surprises. You're in control of everything. These kids on TV

## Tools of the Trade

Paice plays Pearl Masters series drums with thin 4-ply maple shells and no reinforcing hoops. His stage kits have either silver sparkle or white marine pearl finish; his studio kit is piano black.

Ian's live configuration includes his 6.5x14 signature steel snare drum; 8x10, 9x12, 9x13, 10x14, and 10x15 toms; 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms; and a 14x26 bass drum, all mounted with the May internal mic system. In the studio he uses a 22" or 24" bass drum and no internal mics. All drums other than the bass drum have steel hoops.

Paice's cymbals come from Paiste's 2002 series, including 15" hi-hats

(either Medium or Sound Edge), 22" and 24" crashes, a 22" or 24" ride, a 22" China, and an 8" splash. In the studio, his crashes are 20" and 22".

Paice uses a Pearl Demon double bass drum pedal, all Remo Coated Ambassador batter heads except for a Powerstroke 3 on the bass drum, and Promark 808L Ian Paice model sticks. His accessories include Hardcase drum cases, Protection Racket soft cases, AKG microphones, and Beyerdynamic headphones and mics. And Ian adds this: "I'm trying to get Jack Daniels on board for 'pre- and post-gig relaxation,' so any JD guys reading this, help me out!"



shows like *American Idol*, *Britain's Got Talent*...in a controlled environment it's easy to get things perfectly right. It's when things *aren't* perfectly right, when things go wrong, that you need all those gigs and the experience of dealing with catastrophes to be able to get through it. Kids don't get it now because they can't play often enough.

In my first band, when I was fifteen, we always did three shows a week—Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Thursday, Friday, Sunday. By the time I turned professional at seventeen I was doing six or seven shows a week, fifty-two weeks a year. You get to the top of your game very quickly, and you see so many other guys who are better than you, who have more things to offer than you, and you take what you think you can use, and what you think you can change. You also might see some guy who's absolutely bloody awful but has one thing he does well, and you can use that one thing. But if you're not out there on stage and not meeting these other guys, you can't grow the same way, and your playing is much more limited.

And when you've done it night after night after night, you also learn what *doesn't* work. This is as important as learning what does work—sometimes it's more important. I might enjoy doing this

one thing, but it completely knacker the song up. It's one of those things that if you don't play every night you'll never get it.

**MD:** You've always been a very fluid drummer in Deep Purple; you can hear the swinging, the jazz influences, especially on the first few albums. When you come around to *Fireball* and *Machine Head*, your playing is straight power, yet it still looks so graceful.

**Ian:** Thinking musically means you have to adapt to every piece you're playing. "Hush," which was a big hit, was a samba beat. Now, if you don't have that feel down, then the song doesn't work. The fact that it had a nice avant-garde free-form organ solo at the end meant that I could do other things, but it was still within that rhythm.

The limitations of the first incarnation of Deep Purple included Rod Evans' voice. He was a pretty good balladeer, but he wasn't a great rock 'n' roll singer; we were held back on certain things that we were edging towards, but we could never quite get there because Rod's voice wasn't made for that. When we acquired Ian Gillan and Roger Glover in 1969, all the ideas that had never quite come to fruition now began to blossom. You say the drumming style changed—well, it had to, because the music being created was different.

Another drummer who had a *massive* change in style was Billy Cobham. If you go back to his late-'60s recordings with the Horace Silver Quintet, he's playing gentle, almost lounge drumming. Then he comes back three or four years later, and all of a sudden you've got Billy Cobham the monster, playing all these polyrhythmic things with speed and power with the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Now, that change wasn't something that happened overnight. He just never had the vehicle to play that way.

We had a lot of good players playing similarly at the time but not the *same*. So we could all take things from each other without stepping on each other's toes. I could take something from John Bonham, who could take something from Cozy Powell, who could take something from Ginger Baker, and we had Mitch Mitchell.... We had a handful of great, different hard-rock drummers, and we would gently blend stuff from each other. And in the States you had Carmine Appice, who was your first real monster rock 'n' roll drummer. He was really important to all of us.

**MD:** Early on, some music critics negatively labeled you guys a British Vanilla Fudge.

**Ian:** That's what we wanted to be, we were so enthralled by the Fudge. But we needed

to do it slightly differently, so we used a lot more classical pieces to try to make it work. But it was sort of paying homage to heroes. We couldn't admit that we weren't them, but sooner or later the true nature of the beast had to show up. [laughs]

**MD:** Does it ever blow your mind that Deep Purple basically invented the heavy metal genre?

**Ian:** It was one of those things...if you were there at the time, somebody was going to do it. And we're forgetting that the real innovators of this whole thing—who were there before us—were the Who. The Who were the first band that played loud and had crazy virtuosity throughout the band. So let's not forget the importance of the maniac at the back there, Keith Moon. He just broke every rule in the book. Sometimes it was a train wreck; most times it was magnificent. The Who just changed everything for everybody. They took a lot of the shackles away for a whole generation of young British musicians, drummers especially.

**MD:** Who were some of the drummers you came up alongside who were your friends?

**Ian:** You couldn't say that all of the drummers were "friends"—we were friendly acquaintances—because everybody was working all the time. The only

time you actually met someone was if everyone was in the same club in London for the night, or if you were on the road and ended up with the same night off in the same town. It was far more likely that your friends would be instrumentalists who weren't drummers, because you were always working. But I knew Cozy Powell quite well. I knew Bonzo a little bit—we weren't close friends but we were friendly. I never really knew Ginger. I knew Mitch Mitchell...but that's about it. Everybody else was working as hard as I was. You got to know each other more after you became established.

**MD:** You did a bit of session work early in your career as well.

**Ian:** When I was at home or when I had a day on the road with nothing to do, if something came up I'd always take the chance and do it. Back in '68 I apparently did a session for the Velvet Underground. Maybe five years ago somebody sent me the tapes of it and said, "It says it's *you*." I listened to it and thought, *It COULD be me*.

I do remember that one of the craziest sessions I ever took was through jazz saxophonist Eddie Harris. Eddie was a nice guy, but you could see that the record company wanted to put rock 'n' roll names

on his albums just to sell a few more records. It was me, Stevie Winwood, two or three other names who were worthwhile. I did three tracks. They all had written parts, which were nonsense to me, and I had to have Eddie explain what I was meant to do. Those sort of sessions you remember because it's so nonsensical!

**MD:** Things started changing for Purple around 1973.

**Ian:** Ian Gillan left because he wanted to do something else, and Roger was having health troubles, so it was difficult. We were having to cancel tours. We were stuck with a successful band with no singer. So we had to try to keep it going without losing the emphasis of the band, but you know it couldn't be the same. Then we eventually found David Coverdale. Ritchie Blackmore always wanted the band to move to a more blues-rock format, and David had a more bluesy voice. So that allowed Ritchie's more bluesy ideas to come through.

It's difficult...you look back at all the crazy mistakes you made and you think, *How did we let that happen?* We let it happen because we weren't in control of ourselves. We were just having too much of a good time all the time and not seeing the dangerous signs happening. Looking back,



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## Ian Paice

what we should have done when it was all becoming uncomfortable and no fun was to have just taken six months off—have a big holiday and recharge the batteries and just forget we knew each other for a while. But we didn't have the experience then, and we didn't have management that was experienced enough or cared enough to see what was happening.

In that period, in one year we made three albums, did two U.S. tours, a European tour, and a Japanese tour. Yeah, you can't do it. Eventually you have to step back and remember this sort of adult Disneyland that

you enjoyed five or six nights a week is exactly that—it's Disneyland; it ain't reality. And sometimes you have to come back home and take out the garbage and go to the supermarket, just to remember that life is really important.

**MD:** You kept yourself pretty busy after the initial breakup of Purple in 1976. You went on to do a trio thing, and then you joined Whitesnake but later left because you didn't want to tour as much, correct?

**Ian:** No, initially what happened was that David, [founding Deep Purple keyboardist] Jon Lord, and I decided we didn't want to

do it anymore. There was a three/two split in the band—three guys who liked to drink and two guys who liked other chemical substances, which took them sort of beyond control. And about that time I was starting to think about having a family. In 1978, when my son was born, I got the call from David to join Whitesnake. All my ideas [about staying home to raise a family] went out the window, because I really missed being on stage with a good powerful band. So that's how I got back into playing again.

I never realized how much I would really miss it—and not just being on the stage. I missed being surrounded by other good musicians. When you surround yourself with guys who are maybe not the same level as you are, it's doable, but you spend the whole gig worrying about them rather than concentrating on what you're doing. But when you've got good guys around you, all you've got to do is *your* thing. And I really did miss that. So once I got back into the touring thing again, I realized that I would never let it go until I really couldn't do it anymore. Because what I have here is a finite article, and the years will eventually take their toll and the things I want to do will be impossible. So I'll never let it go again when I don't have to.

**MD:** It's interesting that you were saying that thirty years ago. It's 2014 now and we're talking about you going on a world tour tomorrow.

**Ian:** Each one of us in Purple—even Stevie [Morse], who's the youngest one now—knows that we can't go on forever. And when it does eventually stop rolling, we will *all* miss it so badly. So while we're still having fun, which is the number-one thing here, and we can still generate a living for our families and audiences still want to keep coming to see us, we just keep banging on. Once it's gone, it's gone forever—there is no turning a corner and rebranding and re-forming. So we're going to hold on to it as hard as we can.

**MD:** You guys are still powerful on stage.

**Ian:** If you look at some of the footage of me in my twenties, I'm working like a son of a bitch. It took me a long while to work that out. When the sticks are two feet in the air...you're not making any noise up there. It's when that stick hits something that you make the sound—and the better you get at it, you can be far more efficient in how you *apply* that power. It's almost like a karate punch—it doesn't travel very far, and the moment of impact is when all the power is created. Power is created through speed.

I can move the stick really quickly from two feet above the drum, but those first

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twenty-two inches are pointless. It's those last two inches that make the impact. *That's* where you learn the technique of getting the most out of the least. You can get the same amount of volume, create the same power, but you can do it with half the energy expenditure—which, when you're a kid, is not a concern. You've got energy to burn, so you just do whatever comes naturally. But absolute power is about technique and efficiency.

**MD:** Do you do anything different now before shows?

**Ian:** I'm not an obsessive musician—when I was a kid I played because it made me happy, and I still play because it makes me happy. If I don't feel like playing, I don't play. It's quite normal for me not to see a drumkit for three or four weeks. I am blessed with fairly good health, apart from carrying around a few extra pounds, because I do like a glass of beer. On stage I pretty much get up to 80, 85 percent within the first two shows. By the fourth show I'm usually back up to where I should be. I have a Jack or two before I go on, never more. And I practice a few singles and doubles for five minutes; that gets the fingers loosened up, because the fingers are where the magic happens.

**MD:** How do you stay inspired when you're not touring or doing music?

**Ian:** Musically, if I'm offered something that I can do in my little studio in the way of sessions and I think it'll be interesting or fun, I'll have a whack at it. Other than that, I love watching sports on TV. I've pretty much become...not a recluse, but a very chill guy at home. I'm very fortunate. Life has been good. I have a wonderful home here in the U.K. and a wonderful place on one of the Spanish islands in the Mediterranean for when the weather's really nice in the summer. I just go down there and drink some good wine and eat some fresh fish and read lots of books and lie in the sun. I don't do anything else for weeks. I just let it all go away.

I believe you can have two lives and that both can give you happiness. If you don't have that balance, I think you get in big trouble. If you're at home all the time, you probably go a bit loopy because you know what you're missing, and if you're on the road all the time you'll go mad.

**MD:** The music industry today is a completely different beast from the way it was when you were coming up. What sort of advice would you offer young drummers today?

**Ian:** If you like playing drums, do it because it makes you happy. If you can find a few

friends around you, form a little band. If it goes somewhere else, treat it as a bonus. When we started, we never thought that we would be successful, that it would be our careers. We were just kids having fun, and that was enough. For the few of us who had it and had the luck, it became something else. I've said before, success is a strange thing. You go chasing it and you won't find it. But if you stay true to yourself and enjoy yourself and make yourself happy, you might find that success taps you on the shoulder from behind. But you can't force it.

There are some fantastic young players

around the world, and it seems that the industry's against them. They can't be pigeonholed; they can't be put into little pockets of music. The industry doesn't want to be bothered. Play what you like, play what makes you smile, play from your heart, and just keep on doing it and enjoying it. And if you never leave your garage—if your drums stay in your garage and you just batter the crap out of them—the very least you can do is make yourself smile, because you still have something that most of the world doesn't have or understand.



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# INFLUENCES



Marc Gührner

# Bill Stevenson: All or Nothing

**B**ill Stevenson's playing in Black Flag and the Descendents provided an archetype for hardcore drumming, making Stevenson perhaps the most influential player from the original West Coast punk scene. Beyond the kit, his band-leading and songwriting credits with Descendents and All and his deep production and engineering résumé place him among the most important figures in all of American punk rock.

Stevenson's speed, precision, and economy of technique on the drums are legendary. "Back in 1987, I wanted to develop my stamina," Superchunk/Bob Mould drummer Jon Wurster recalls, "so I started playing along to the Descendents' *Liveage!* album every day. Bill is the king of the lightning-fast 16th-note roll, and to be able to hang in there with 'Myage,' 'Coolidge,' and 'I Don't Want to Grow Up' felt like an accomplishment."

John William Stevenson was born on September 10, 1963, in Torrance, California. While working at a bait shop with future Black Flag/Circle Jerks singer Keith Morris, Stevenson

got a drumkit in hopes of playing in Morris's band Panic. That was not to be...just yet. By the late '70s the self-taught drummer had connected with guitarist Frank Navetta and bassist Tony Lombardo in the first Descendents

lineup, and after recruiting Milo Aukerman as lead vocalist, they made a statement on 1982's *Milo Goes to College* LP that can still be heard in Green Day, Blink-182, and a legion of pop-punk bands. From the galloping snare intro of "Myage" to the quick mixed meters of "Suburban Home," the album became the punk-drumming bible for a generation of nascent pounders.

While still in high school, Stevenson had the chance to play with Keith Morris when Panic, now known as Black Flag, needed a replacement for drummer Robo, who was unable to travel due to visa issues. Stevenson did most of the band's 1981 U.K. tour, and after the Descendents went on hiatus in '82 (see their album title for the reason) Bill joined Black Flag full time. Between 1983 and 1985, he toured incessantly and appeared on six discs with the group.

The first side of Black Flag's 1984 sophomore album, *My War*, Stevenson's first with the band, featured material similar to the group's seminal 1981 debut, *Damaged*, but at a more moderate tempo, proving early on that band *and* drummer could slay in decidedly non-caffeinated settings as well. Stevenson is required to show even more restraint on side two, with each of the three loping tracks passing the six-minute mark. As drummer Jeff Gretz (Zao, From Autumn

to Ashes) notes, "What makes 'Nothing Left Inside' and most of the *My War* album amazing is the tension Bill creates by not picking the pace up as the verse leads into the chorus, but *slowing down*, only to snap back to the original tempo on the new part."

As 1984 continued, Black Flag's music moved further away from the straight-up-and-down hardcore punk anthems of *Damaged* to incorporate even slower heavy metal elements as well as guitarist Greg Ginn's improvisational explorations. Evidence of Stevenson bridging the gap between free improv and hardcore can be heard on side two of Black Flag's second release of 1984, *Family Man*, and on its instrumental 1985 EP, *The Process of Weeding Out*.

Stevenson never stopped writing Descendents-style material, though, so when that band reconvened he dove right in, keeping up the intense touring schedule and releasing an album a year through 1987's *All*. That title became useful for multiple reasons, providing the group's new name when Auckerman once again left to focus on his

academic career, and encapsulating Stevenson's worldview as laid out in the song "All-O-Gistics." The work pace continued, with All releasing nine studio albums between 1988 and 2000. In addition to serving as an outlet for Stevenson's

"To this day I bet you I could play the whole *Milo Goes to College* album note for note. That's how I learned how to play the drums."

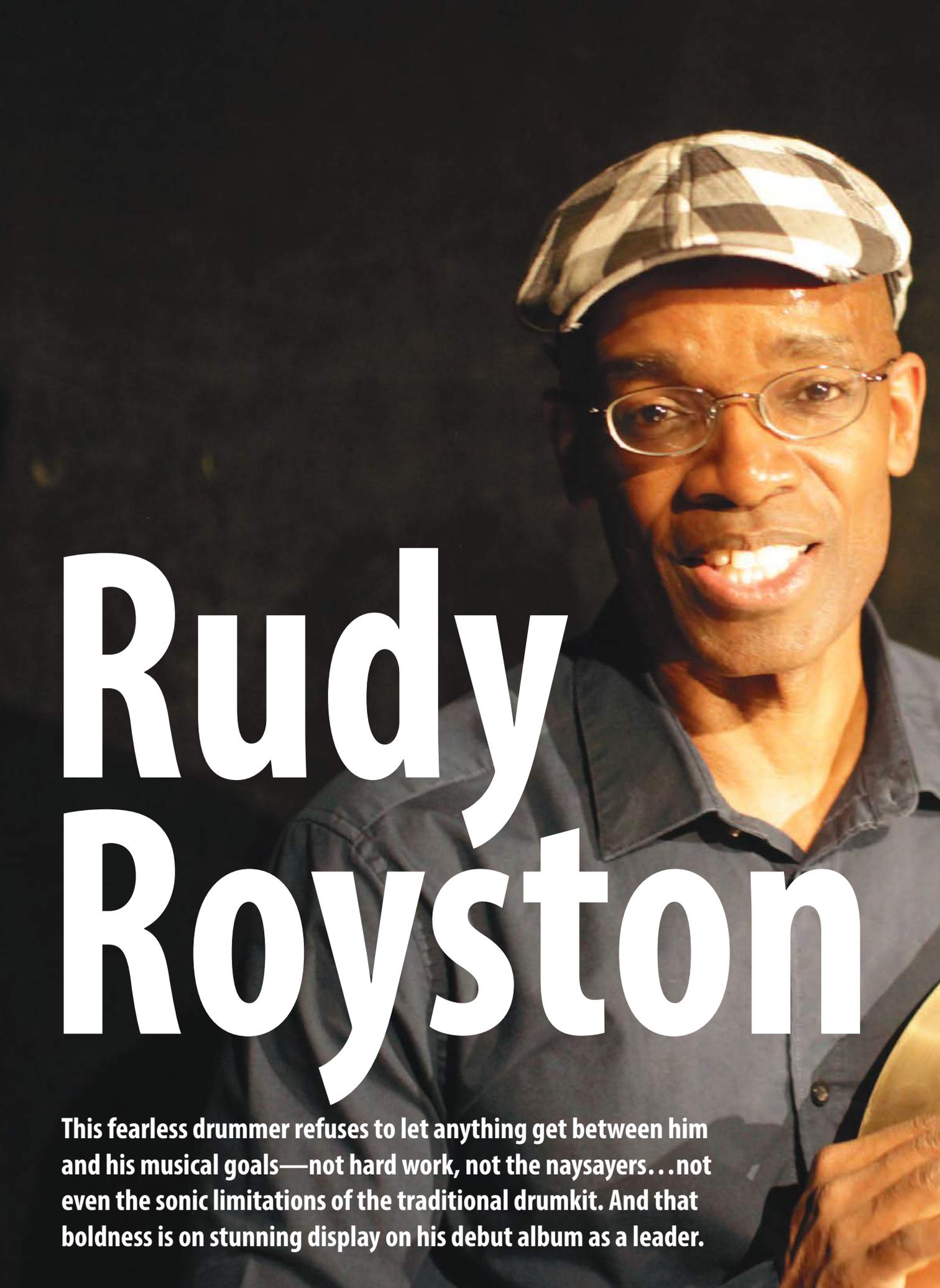
—Dave Grohl, from the Descendents/  
All documentary *Filmage*

growing songwriting and drumming abilities, All offered valuable production experience, and when the group landed a major-label deal in the mid-'90s, it used the advance to build what would become Blasting Room Studios, in Fort Collins, Colorado. To this day Stevenson engineers and produces albums there for artists like Rise Against, Puddle of Mudd, Face to Face, Alkaline Trio, NOFX, and the Lemonheads.

If nearly 500 credits as a performer, writer, engineer, and producer aren't evidence of superhuman abilities, in 2009 Stevenson found himself in the emergency room with an eighteen-inch blood clot in his lungs, followed within a year by a tennis-ball-size brain tumor and ensuing weight gain, with the drummer topping out at around 385 pounds. Separately these things could kill anyone, yet Stevenson came out of the tumor-removal surgery with minimal recovery time, even more driven than before. Recent performance footage of Descendents, Flag (featuring former Black Flag members), and the melodic hardcore project Only Crime shows Bill still laying it down as if nothing ever happened. **Stephen Bidwell**

Go to [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com) to read an exclusive interview with Bill Stevenson.



A close-up portrait of Rudy Royston, a Black man with glasses and a plaid flat cap, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Rudy Royston

**This fearless drummer refuses to let anything get between him and his musical goals—not hard work, not the naysayers...not even the sonic limitations of the traditional drumkit. And that boldness is on stunning display on his debut album as a leader.**



Whatever you do, please don't ask Rudy Royston to play the drums—at least not in the way some people think about the job.

"If I have to play a drummer's role, holding down the groove, I *cannot* do it," Royston says. "I'm miserable if I have to do that. I'm hearing the percussionist in my head, I'm hearing other melodies—and I have to be able to play some of that. It's a discipline for me to just lay down a groove. I can do it, but it's not easy."

An explosive drummer who, when freed from strict timekeeping duty, can sound like Jack DeJohnette and Roy Haynes in a head-on collision with Dennis Chambers, Royston is an expert illustrator whose broad percussion background and unique imagination provide him with an enormous range of sound and color, rhythm and power.

Royston's debut album as a leader, *303*, shows his broad range of musical influences with a skilled septet including guitarist Nir Felder, bassists Mimi Jones and Yasushi Nakamura—who often play on the same track—pianist Sam Harris, and saxophonist Jon Irabagon. A trained percussionist first and a drummer second, Royston is also a poet (literally), which perhaps furthers his lyrical drumming. *303* ranges from serene Debussy-like pieces to covers of Radiohead and Mozart to the title track, a dense arrangement that's almost classical in scope, and burning in performance.

Royston, who grew up in Denver—his album is named for the area code where he was raised—studied jazz performance, marching percussion, and classical percussion at the University of Northern Colorado, the Metropolitan State College of Denver (now the Metropolitan State University of Denver), and the University of Denver, where he received bachelor of arts degrees in music and poetry. Upon arriving in New York via Rutgers University in 2006, Royston bulleted his way into the city's intense music scene, performing and/or recording with Bill Frisell, Les McCann, David Gilmore, Jason Moran, JD Allen, Sean Jones, Jeremy Pelt, Greg Osby, Tia Fuller, Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Bowen, Bruce Barth, George Colligan, Stanley Cowell, Tom Harrell, John Ellis, Jenny Scheinman, and the Mingus Big Band.

On a recent night with guitarist Jeff McLaughlin's trio in a small Greenwich Village club, Royston lent the classic "Stella by Starlight" a hundred different rhythmic shades, creating endless permutations on the basic swing pulse with 16th notes and triplets, half time and straight time, modulating in a way that was more about color than meter, dissecting and layering rhythms, elongating some passages and halting others, and scalding it all. Royston swung hard while tirelessly graduating the rhythm, dropping bombs and conspicuously restructuring the song's essence. It was a lesson in drumming, but also in possibility.

Currently working on projects with Rudresh Mahanthappa, Linda Oh, Nate Wooley, and Ben Allison, Royston is looking at a future full of work requiring him to play the drums—the way *he* likes to play them.

by Ken Micallef

**MD:** The way you played those permutations in “Stella by Starlight” was amazing. What’s the core of that approach? It was mind-boggling!

**Rudy:** [laughs] If I’d gone straight into full-on 4/4 swing right away—especially playing with a cat like Jeff, who takes longer solos—I would have played too much up front. So I planned ahead: I broke up the phrases with 16ths, actually taking little pieces of the melody and doing variations on it. So first I did the half-time thing, then I broke it up and played the melody—you can hear it and feel it—and I saved the full-on 4/4 cymbal ride part.

When a cat has been soloing forever, and then you go into the swing part, it brings the music to a new level.

**MD:** As a listener you think the full-on straight-four swing section is under way, then you realize it’s not.

**Rudy:** And you can do that in different spots. You don’t need to always wait until the form is recognizable to start swinging. Start swinging before that, before the top of the form kicks in.

## Recordings

**Rudy Royston** 303 /// **Bill Frisell** Big Sur /// **JD Allen Trio** Victory! /// **Dave Douglas Quintet** Be Still /// **Steve Cardenas** West of Middle /// **Ron Miles Quartet** Laughing Barrel /// **Linda Oh** Initial Here /// **Ralph Bowen** Total Eclipse /// **Emily Braden** Soul Walk /// **Mike DiRubbo** Chronos

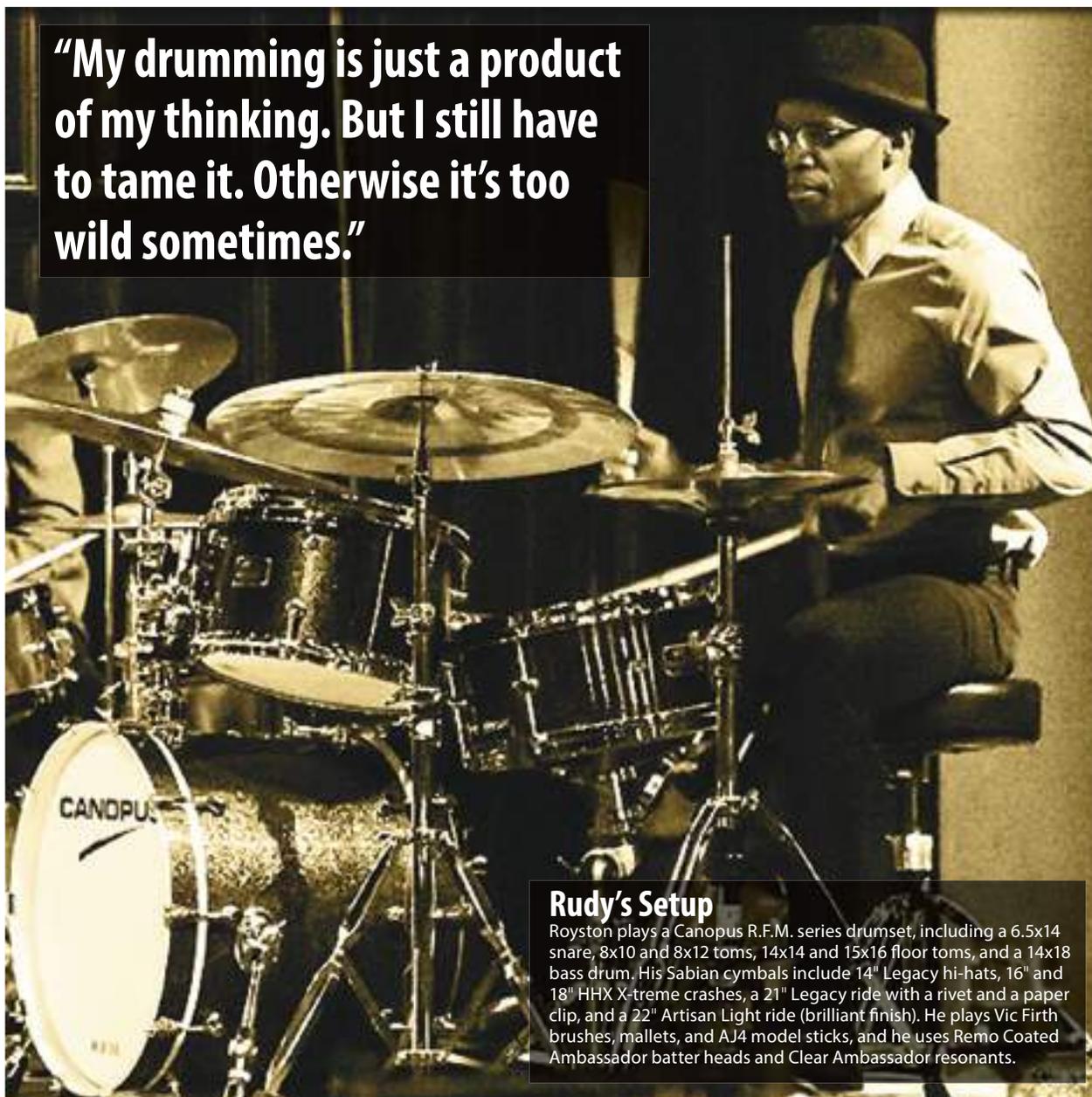
**MD:** Where in your evolution did you learn to do that?

**Rudy:** That came from playing with [trumpeter] Ron Miles in Denver. Just having that freedom to go where you want to go. And playing with Bill Frisell, making sure each moment is a musical moment. So if I go into swing early, that’s what I’m trying to do. Those four bars before the top of the [melody], that’s swinging. But if I switch something, it feels like something’s happened in the music, which it has. I love that freedom.

**MD:** You’ve played with so many people since coming to New York. When you decided to do your own CD, did your inner composer and arranger move the focus away from the drummer?

**Rudy:** When you’re playing other people’s music you play what their music tells you to play. It’s not about your composition. It’s about your composition within the context of their tune, but you didn’t write the tune. So I wanted my record to show the

**“My drumming is just a product of my thinking. But I still have to tame it. Otherwise it’s too wild sometimes.”**



## Rudy’s Setup

Royston plays a Canopus R.F.M. series drumset, including a 6.5x14 snare, 8x10 and 8x12 toms, 14x14 and 15x16 floor toms, and a 14x18 bass drum. His Sabian cymbals include 14" Legacy hi-hats, 16" and 18" HHX X-treme crashes, a 21" Legacy ride with a rivet and a paper clip, and a 22" Artisan Light ride (brilliant finish). He plays Vic Firth brushes, mallets, and AJ4 model sticks, and he uses Remo Coated Ambassador batter heads and Clear Ambassador resonants.

compositional side of what I do. I was getting a reputation as a powerhouse drummer. That's cool—I'll take that. But on my record my thing is about texture and color and vibe.

**MD:** You unleash the power, but there is so much variety of texture in your drumming. And it's very gritty. What was your drumming focus on *303*?

**Rudy:** To play all the textures and illustrate what I'm thinking on my own tunes. That's why the tunes switch. They go from one thing to a totally different thing. My thinking is a bunch of musical thoughts and elements. My drumming is just a product of my thinking. When it's my music I can play whatever I want. But I still have to tame it. Otherwise it's too wild sometimes.

**MD:** On *303* we hear Latin tunes, groove-oriented tunes, R&B, bossa nova, swing...but the title track is where the album really takes off.

**Rudy:** The album gives you a taste of other kinds of music, all leading to "303." Why can't I go from this chill section to this killing section in a single song? "303" is also about a good melody, something you can sing. Ron Miles would have these killing melodies—those of us playing his music were counting it all out, but the audience didn't know that. I wanted to have strong drumming and good solos all in one tune.

**MD:** You're masterful at playing different dynamic levels. You keep stoking the fire and changing it around. How did you develop that skill?

**Rudy:** First of all, you really have to know the sound of your drums and cymbals, what sounds bring out the energy or the textural changes in your kit. Sometimes I'll be riding a cymbal and I'll switch to playing the shoulder just a little bit, and that picks up the energy. It's going from height to height to height. I might be playing at a certain level, then I slowly bring it down to where you can't really feel it. Then the next solo begins and I bring it back up to another level. But really it just went back to the previous dynamic.

**MD:** Is it also about switching sources?

**Rudy:** It's switching volume levels, knowing your kit, or knowing when to drop a bomb. You can swing a tune at the same dynamic

## Influences

**Wynton Marsalis Quartet** Live at Blues Alley (Jeff "Tain" Watts) /// **Brian Blade Fellowship** Perceptual (Brian Blade) /// **Sting** Bring On the Night (Omar Hakim) /// **John Coltrane** A Love Supreme (Elvin Jones) /// **Bob James and David Sanborn** Double Vision (Steve Gadd) /// **John Scofield Band** Pick Hits Live (Dennis Chambers) /// **Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers** Live at Ronnie Scott's (video) (Art Blakey) /// **Ralph Peterson** The Art of War (Ralph Peterson) /// **Chick Corea Elektric Band** Chick Corea Elektric Band (Dave Weckl) /// **Don Cherry** Symphony for Improvisers (Ed Blackwell)

level but drop five bombs or five serious cymbal crashes, and it feels like you took it to a different place. It's all about taking the music where you want it to go instead of being a slave to your drums. You have to know your drums and make them relate what you want to say.

**MD:** What drummers do you admire who work dynamic levels in a similar way?

**Rudy:** Brian Blade does that super-well with Wayne Shorter. He will explode, then bring it back. He has a way of *not* playing loud and building it. Jack DeJohnette does that as well; he's one of my favorites.

**MD:** You have DeJohnette's stinging rimshot thing happening. And his permutations.

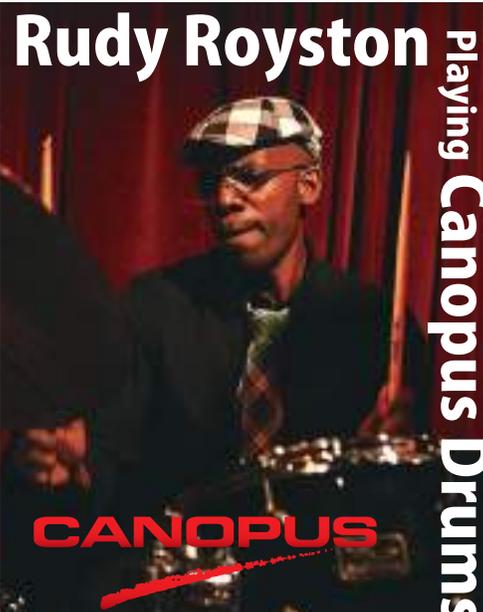
**Rudy:** That began for me after hearing Jeff "Tain" Watts, when he played very polyrhythmically with Wynton Marsalis in the 1980s. Tony Williams and Art Blakey too. But the permutations didn't come from drummers. Those are just melodies that I'm hearing and being adventurous with.

**MD:** What is the lineage of your studying? What was your focus?

**Rudy:** I never studied drumset. That only happened during two Telluride Jazz Camps, with Duffy Jackson one week and Ed Soph the next. The rest of the time I studied classical percussion. When I was a kid my dad worked for Rhythm Band Incorporated, and he was always bringing percussion home. He would bring home boxes full of rhythm sticks, bongos, triangles, and stuff. I played all of it.

**MD:** Did your studies focus on a particular percussion instrument?

**Rudy:** Timpani, bass drum, snare drum...and I really dug marimba. I played a bunch of different classical marimba pieces. "Yellow After the Rain" is one that any college percussionist will know. Classical music really opened up different hues of music for me. As a



**Rudy Royston**

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**“You really have to know your drums and cymbals, what sounds bring out the energy or textural changes in your kit.”**

Emra Islek

percussionist you're in the back, waiting to play your three snare drum accents, but the whole time you get to check out what's happening in the orchestra, how the cellos are interacting with the English horn.... Weird stuff like that is amazing to take in. I also played in church while studying classical percussion, and at the time gospel music was changing toward a certain emphasis on good melody.

**MD:** What's the key to breaking free of influence and creating your own style?

**Rudy:** I don't mean to sound corny, but it takes courage. You have to be brave but also not take it so seriously. Some cats never try anything new, because they don't want to sound bad. But you *have* to sound bad—you have to suck at something. You have to sound terrible to know how to fix it. But some cats don't have that sense of adventure in their playing. Have fun with it; don't take it so seriously. And do the work.

**MD:** When have you done the most shedding or practice?

**Rudy:** The past four years here in New York. I had worked on playing a lot, but it wasn't clean. I had to develop my language. I'd record gigs, or just remember what I sucked at on the gig, then I would get on the drums and slow down the problem. I would sing what I was actually trying to play. I'd work out the sticking and make it work until it was strong. Doing that will open up your vocabulary for the other things you have to work on. Work that one thing out, and it will connect to something else.

**MD:** What is your focus now?

**Rudy:** Authenticity. How do I play what I want to play when I want to play it? How do I control that? How can it be authentic? How can I not play what I usually play? Conceptually, that's what I'm working on now. Technically I'm practicing applying paradiddles around the kit.

**MD:** What has made the biggest difference in your evolution

as a drummer?

**Rudy:** Actually, just coming to New York in 2006—the whole change of environment and intensity going from Denver to New York. That pushed me over the edge. That changed my whole way of thinking about music. I was in grad school at Rutgers, then I would come to New York to play jam sessions at Smoke, Cleopatra's Needle, Zinc Bar. That's how I gauged whether I could cut it in New York.

**MD:** How did you navigate sitting in on New York gigs?

**Rudy:** At first some cats were vibing me. They'd stand over me with a look saying, *What you're playing isn't happening*, but that only motivated me. Little by little, they could see that I could play, and I began getting gigs. My first gig was actually a session, cats reading through music. I thought, *This is cool, but I need to get paid!* But people started calling me. Javon Jackson was my first major gig. He's from Denver, and he knew what it was like. He comes from that Art Blakey vibe—he knew I had to make money for my family. Then a Bill Frisell gig with Ron Miles back in Denver, then Don Byron, then it took off.

**MD:** How do you keep your chops up?

**Rudy:** I run through a technical regimen, a drum corps warm-up from the Blue Knights Drum and Bugle Corps. And I work on paradiddles and diddles, and triplet exercises where you accent and tap after each [figure].

**MD:** After the wild ride and diversity of the album, the last tune of *303* is very atmospheric.

**Rudy:** I wanted the closing track to feel like a statement had been made, like adding a period. I wanted to leave the listener with something that wasn't about the drums. I wanted to end with music.



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# Ryan Brown

Thierry Jobbaud

Since 2006, the music of the late, legendary Frank Zappa has been alive and well in the repertoire of Zappa Plays Zappa, a band led by Frank's son Dweezil. Until recently, Joe Travers had the job of handling the ludicrously demanding work of Zappa's long line of gifted drummers. Meet the latest guy to take the challenge.

by David Brensilver

In February 2013, Zappa Plays Zappa tour manager Pete Jones called Ryan Brown to tell him that Dweezil Zappa needed a drummer. Brown had met Jones in 1999, shortly after moving to Los Angeles, and the two had bonded over their mutual affection for the groundbreaking music of Dweezil's father, Frank Zappa. When Zappa Plays Zappa was launched in 2006 and Jones became the band's tour manager, Brown said that he'd love to get involved if the drum seat became available. "I never thought in a million years that it would open up," the drummer recalls.

And then it did. Brown, who does sessions in Los Angeles, plays in a band called Black Belt Karate, and teaches at Musicians Institute, asked, "What do I need to do?" Jones told Brown to immediately send video of himself playing two particularly difficult Zappa tunes.

Brown pulled aside a student at MI who frequently helped classmates put together YouTube videos. In early March 2013, within five days of hearing from Jones, Brown sent video of himself playing along with "Inca Roads," from *One Size Fits All*, and the arrangement of the infamous drummer-challenging piece "The Black Page" that appears on *Make a Jazz Noise Here*. Two days later, Dweezil called and, after a lengthy

conversation about Frank's music and the drummers who performed it, invited Brown to audition for his band, saying he'd send a list of songs to learn.

Two and a half weeks later, just days before his scheduled audition, Brown emailed Dweezil to ask about the song list, which he hadn't received (by design, he assumes). Dweezil sent him ten songs, and forty-eight hours later, after essentially living and practicing for the audition at MI, Brown was playing with Dweezil and bandmates Scheila Gonzalez and Kurt Morgan. "It was intense," Ryan recalls. "Plus I hadn't slept very much at all."

Dweezil emailed Brown the next day to invite him to a callback, and to tell him to add "City of Tiny Lights" to the list of audition songs; he wanted to hear Brown handle a tune that Terry Bozzio had played on. All went well, and Brown got the gig, leading up to twenty-six eight-hour rehearsals and a tour during which the band would celebrate and perform the 1974 album *Roxy & Elsewhere*, along with other tunes.

Just the mention of attempting to tackle Frank Zappa's music is enough to perk up drummers' ears. *MD* wanted to find out what kinds of experiences prepared Brown for such a trying endeavor.

**MD:** From your perspective, what is required of a drummer to play Frank Zappa's music?

**Ryan:** The first thing that comes to mind is that you have to have a knowledge of all styles of music, because, as you know, so much of Frank's catalog weaves between all these different styles constantly. There are orchestral parts, going into jazz, going into rock, going into different time signatures, different feels.... So I think the biggest thing is knowing many, many styles of music and being able to navigate all the time signatures.

**MD:** To what degree do you have to channel the different drummers who played with Frank?

**Ryan:** That's the word I've been using too: channeling. I'm totally trying to channel those guys. And I feel almost like I'm kind of dialing back and forth between Bozzio, Vinnie [Colaiuta], Ralph [Humphrey], Chester [Thompson], and Chad

Wackerman—because as a fan, if I were going to go see the band, I would want to hear it like that, or as close to that as possible.

**MD:** How much of your own style and attitude are you able to deliver while also executing all these parts?

**Ryan:** The solo sections of tunes is when I get to do that—listening very intently to what Dweezil is doing and reacting rhythmically to what he's playing and just playing off him. On the heads, I try to stick to what's on the record.

**MD:** Did the repertoire dictate the equipment you brought out on the road?

**Ryan:** Yes, definitely. The kit I have is the minimal amount of stuff that I need to pull off everything, which is funny, because for years I've been a four-piece guy.

**MD:** How did you decide what gear was going to be required?

**Ryan:** The first thing I did was look at

Joe Travers' setup. Then I got the list of tunes and started learning them. So, for starters, the fill on "More Trouble Every Day," on the *Roxy* record, and the fills on "Florentine Pogen," those two in particular you have to have five toms to be able to play them just like the record. And then for "The Black Page" and stuff that's on *Joe's Garage*, I definitely had to have the Rototoms. [Bongos are actually notated in the "Black Page" part.] And then I have a Roland sampling pad for all the cowbell stuff, because there's lots of cowbell on the *Roxy* record. We sampled a bunch of different cowbells, and I use those in lieu of actual cowbells. As far as cymbals go, I have a lot of bells, splashes, Chinas....

**MD:** You mentioned that you've been a huge Zappa fan since you were young. Which of his drummers had the most influence on you?

**Ryan:** The way I got into the whole thing was because of *Modern Drummer*.



Carl King

I started playing drums when I was eleven. I started buying *Modern Drummer* magazines, and in every issue there was some mention of Frank Zappa, in conjunction with Bozzio, Vinnie, or Chad. And I just remember for months going, “Man, who is this Frank Zappa guy? I should probably check this out.” So then I bought *Zappa in New York*, with Bozzio. The first song on that is “Titties & Beer,” and I was not really prepared for that at that point in time. So I listened to it maybe once and kind of shelved it for a few months.

And then, every month in *Modern Drummer*, still, there was some mention of Frank. I was like, “Wow, maybe I need to give this another shot, because there are so many records.” So I went back and just randomly bought *Ship Arriving Too Late to Save a Drowning Witch*, and when I put that on, it was over. I was just like, “I get it.” And then I went back and listened to *Zappa in New York*, and I was like, “I’m on board now. All right, how many lawns can I mow so I can make enough money to buy all these records?”

**MD:** Beyond Zappa’s music, who are some of the other players who have influenced you?

**Ryan:** I studied with Kenny Aronoff for four years. I went to Indiana University and studied with him and got a degree in jazz studies with an emphasis on percussion. It was a great mix of doing orchestral stuff every day, jazz every day, and rock stuff with Kenny.

**MD:** Who were you studying the orchestral stuff with?

**Ryan:** Tom Stubbs from the St. Louis Symphony would fly in to Indiana once a week for a couple of the years that I was there. I learned a lot from Tom and from Wilber England. And then I was in all the jazz bands, took all of David Baker’s classes, Dominic Spera’s classes. So I got this great mix of orchestral, jazz, and rock for four years there, nonstop, which, looking back on it, was the perfect preparation for what I’m doing with Zappa Plays Zappa.

**MD:** Who are some of the other players who come to mind?

**Ryan:** I’m a huge Rush fan, so definitely Neil Peart. I’m also a huge King Crimson fan, so Bill Bruford, Pat Mastelotto.... I love XTC—Dave Mattacks, who played on *Nonsuch*, is one of my favorite drummers, and Prairie Prince, who played on *Skylarking*, I love him. I’m way into

Primus. Living Colour—Will Calhoun was probably my earliest huge inspiration. My first three huge inspirational guys were Gregg Bissonette, Will Calhoun, and Dennis Chambers.

**MD:** What are some of the main principles you talk about with students at Musicians Institute?

**Ryan:** The biggest thing that I try to teach there is how to learn songs, because there are always guys who can play but don’t know song form. And that’s what it’s all about. I’ve done a ton of session stuff, and I try to teach students how to pay attention to song form and how to learn songs fast, and I put them in fake session situations where I’m the producer. I’ll say, “Okay, here’s this tune. You get to listen to it one time, and then you have to track it.” And I have a whole system of how to quickly chart stuff out. I try to prep them for that, which, for me, is the real world.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

With Zappa Plays Zappa, Brown plays a DW Collector’s series maple drumset in champagne sparkle FinishPly. It includes a 22” bass drum; 10”, 12”, and 13” F.A.S.T.-size toms; 16” and 18” F.A.S.T.-size floor toms; and a 5x14 snare in red over laser blue lacquer finish. His setup also includes 6”, 8”, and 10” Remo Rototoms and a Roland SPD-S sampling pad.

Ryan uses Sabian cymbals, including a pair of 14” hi-hats with an HHX Legacy top and an HHX Evolution bottom, an 18” HHX X-treme crash, a 7” HH Radia cup chime, an 8” AAX splash, an 18” HHX Stage crash, a 20” HHX Stage ride, an 18” Paragon crash, a 19” Paragon Chinese, and a 20” Paragon Chinese with a 12” Vault Radia inside.

Brown uses DW hardware, including DW 9000 hi-hat and double bass pedals. He plays Remo heads, including Clear Pinstripe tom and Rototom batters, Clear Ambassador tom bottoms, a Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter, and a Coated Controlled Sound snare batter with a black dot underneath. He uses Vater 5B wood-tip sticks.



Patrick de Purseval

## Don’t You Ever Drop That Thing?

**Ryan Brown explains his unique interpretation of a classic Zappa moment.**

We played the *Roxy & Elsewhere* record every night on tour, and one of the songs is “Don’t You Ever Wash That Thing?” On the record, in the middle of the tune, Frank calls out, “Ladies and gentlemen, watch Ruth....” The band stops, and Ruth Underwood does this awesome little marimba solo. So we played this tune every night for eighty-six shows, and every night Dweezil would call on someone in the band to do something fun and cool. We never knew who he would call, and we all started doing crazy stuff. One night he called on me, and I started juggling two tennis balls with my right hand and played [the beat to Led Zeppelin’s] “When the Levee Breaks” with my left hand and bass drum. There was a photographer that just happened to get a bunch of great pics of that moment. It only happened one time. Other fun things that happened during this section include our bassist shooting his bass with a Nerf gun and our keyboardist playing ragtime piano with gloves on. It was always fun—we never knew what was going to happen!



# Power Triplets

## Putting the Roll in Your Rock

by Rich Redmond

**MUSIC KEY**



These exercises are inspired by the master jazz drummer Elvin Jones. In Elvin's world, *everything* was a triplet. Inspired by the rhythms of Africa, he had triplets flowing out of him with a controlled yet greasy execution. Taking the baton from Elvin, Bernard Purdie created the famous Purdie shuffle, using a beautiful flow of triplets within a half-time groove. Rock legend Ginger Baker, who was also inspired by African drumming, made great use of these rhythms as well.

For maximum creativity, expand on these patterns by using different voices of the kit. The ride hand can play either quarter notes (Example A) or a full shuffle rhythm (Example B) on the hi-hat, ride, crashes, rims, cowbells, and so on. Strive for control and power, and always make it *swing!* (Even if you only play in a rock band, there should still be an element of swing in your groove. Rock music developed out of jazz and R&B, after all.)

Practice these exercises with a click track or metronome, and then get out and apply them with real musicians. Have fun exploring the power of triplets!

**A**

**B**

1

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

2

3

4

5

6

7

Check out a video demo of these grooves at [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com).

**Rich Redmond** drums for country star Jason Aldean, is an award-winning clinician, and is an active session drummer in Nashville and Los Angeles. His recent book/DVD, *FUNDamentals of Drumming for Kids* (coauthored with Michael Aubrecht), is available through Modern Drummer Publications.

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# Samba Starter

## Part 4: The Mocidade School

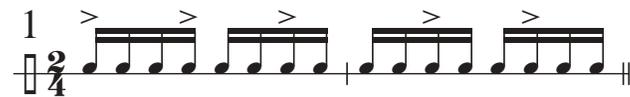
by Adam Osmianski

MUSIC KEY

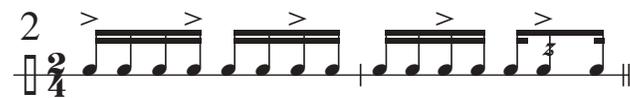
T.T.  
S.D.  
F.T.  
B.D.  
H.H.  
w/ foot

In the previous segment of this series on batucada-style drumming, we examined the unique rhythms of the Mangueira samba school. Now let's look at Mocidade. While not as old as Mangueira, Mocidade is nonetheless another crowd favorite. It has won multiple championships and often starts new trends in the batucada style. What sets Mocidade apart from the other samba schools is its caixa (snare drum) pattern and surdo (bass drum) parts.

Let's begin with the caixa. If you're familiar with a typical bossa nova rimclick pattern, then you already know how to play Mocidade's caixa part. Just play the bossa nova rhythm as accents on the snare and fill in the spaces with unaccented 16th notes.



One variation of that pattern includes a roll. Remember that the roll is a pressed buzz sound played with one hand.



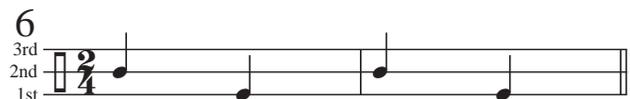
If you're not quite comfortable with the samba suinge (swing) just yet, or if you're playing at very fast tempos, the Mocidade caixa pattern is a great place to start, as it's phrased straighter than the caixa patterns in other schools. Mocidade's caixa part also works very well over the most common samba bass drum/hi-hat ostinato.



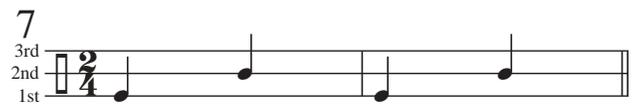
You can try the caixa rhythm over the other foot patterns that we looked at in the previous articles.



If you remember, last time I explained that most samba schools employ the following surdo pattern.



Mocidade reverses the pattern so that it looks like the following.



To achieve this reversed-surdo effect on the drumset, all you have to do is move the bass drum to beat 1 and play the floor tom on beat 2.



If you prefer to use the more typical samba bass drum/hi-hat pattern, you can replicate the Mocidade surdo sound on the toms.



Besides flipping the surdos, Mocidade also uses a third surdo that's tuned higher and generally plays a busier part. The story goes that a Mocidade member was messing around and playing fills in rehearsal. After giving up on trying to control him, the director (or "mestre," as it's called in Brazil) asked him to play fills throughout the song. Now a third surdo is found in nearly every samba school. This surdo has the most variation, often playing a different part for each section of the song. While there's an improvisatory element, there are some common patterns. The most frequently used one looks like the following.



Try orchestrating that pattern on the floor tom within a samba groove.



Or play the third surdo part with the bass drum while playing the full caixa pattern on the snare.



If you're looking for some video footage to play along to, search online for Mocidade or Mocidade Independente Padre Miguel.



# Groove Freedom

## Part 3: 32nd-Note Patterns

by Mike Johnston

MUSIC KEY

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

Welcome to the third and final installment of my “Groove Freedom” series. For those of you who missed the first two lessons, these articles are based on exercises from my latest book, *Groove Freedom*. The book is built from the very simple concept of combining a consistent pattern, like a repeated hi-hat and snare part, with a variable pattern played by another limb, like on the bass drum. Having the freedom to keep two or three limbs repeating an ostinato while another limb is free to improvise is a beautiful thing.

I want to first explain the difference between *simple* and *easy*. The concept of these articles is simple. You start with a groove ostinato, which in this case is a 32nd-note pattern between the hi-hat and snare. Then you work through various bass drum placements, such as the downbeats, the “e,” the “&,” and the “a.” You practice all the possibilities of single notes, doubles, and triples. After doing that, you’ll have the freedom to play the bass drum in any 16th-note combination. The process is simple to understand, but just because it makes sense in your head, that doesn’t mean it will be easy for your body to execute. This type of methodical practice will take hours of work and patience. Stick with it, and if it helps, write something on your snare head, like, “This page took Mike Johnston eleven days to finish, and he still struggles with it.” Know that we are on this journey together, and I have your back. Now let’s get down to business!

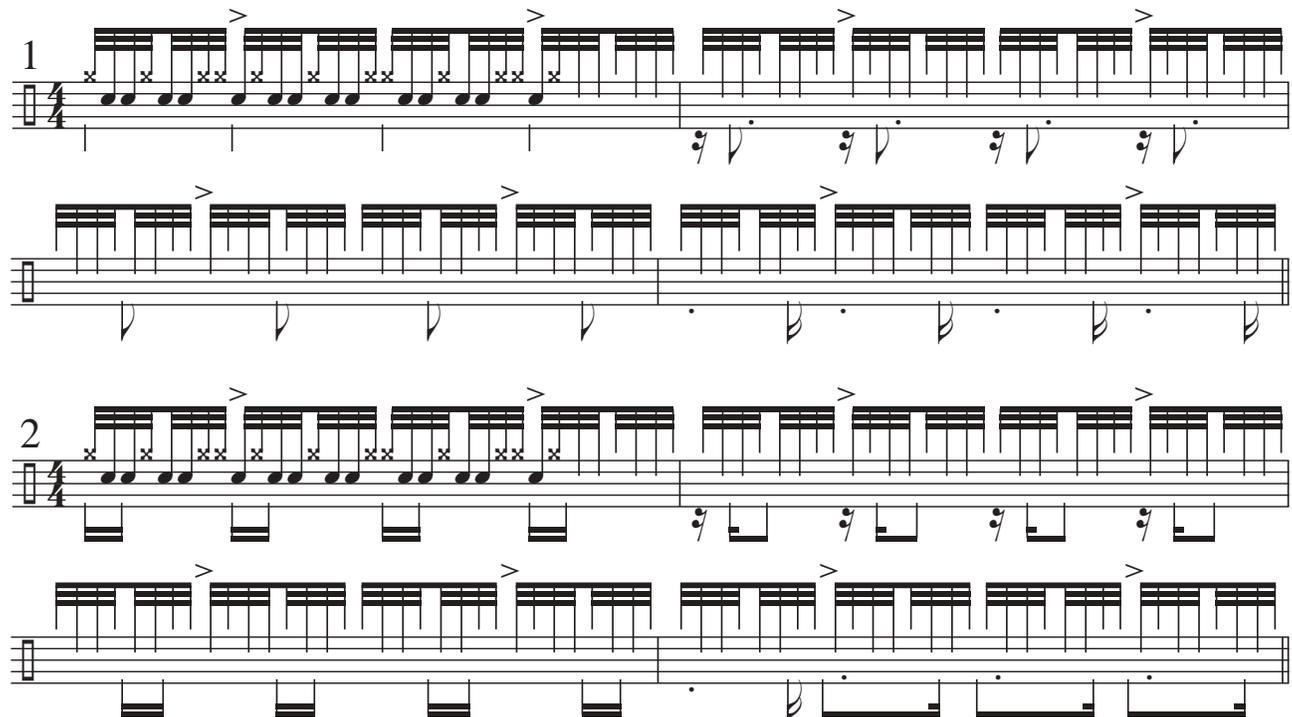
I figured that since this is the last article in my “Groove Freedom” series, we should go out with some fireworks: a 32nd-note groove. I wouldn’t recommend busting out this beast on your next pop gig, but when your buddy comes over to the house and asks you to play drums for him, drop this little biscuit on him and watch his eyes pop out of his head.

Here’s the hand ostinato by itself.

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



Here’s that pattern with all the bass drum permutations.



3

### The Heat Check

This section is designed to test the skills that you've built up through the permutation exercises. It gives you six syncopated bass drum patterns made up of downbeats, e's, &'s, and a's. If you were able to play all of the exercises from the permutations, then you have the physical ability to play everything here. The only thing standing in your way is your ability to hear the new pattern. Take each one very slowly—one note at a time if need be. Eventually your ears will kick in and you'll be able to hear the grooves in their entirety. When you get to that stage, you can take full advantage of your well-deserved groove freedom!

4

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9

Check out a video demo of these grooves at [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com).

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



# Syncopation Revisited

## Part 5: Afro-Cuban Applications

by Steve Fidyk

MUSIC KEY	
open	○
H.H.	○
T.T.	○
S.D.	○
F.T.	○
B.D.	○
H.H.	○
w/ foot	○
R.C.	×
Cross stick	×

Welcome to part five in our continuing series on ways to interpret the classic Ted Reed book *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*. This time we'll apply Afro-Cuban ideas to the written manuscript. The following applications can be used with any of the seventy-two repetitive one-measure examples from pages 29, 30, and 33–36, the thirty-two-measure rhythmic melodies from pages 37–44, or the accented-8th-notes section that begins on page 46.

At the core of Afro-Cuban music is clave. Check out the music of Mario Bauzá, Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo, Mongo Santamaria, Tito Puente, Eddie Palmieri, and Michel Camilo. Listening to Afro-Cuban music will help you recognize and feel the direction of the clave rhythm, which is critical when playing in this style.

Examples 1–4 show 3:2 and 2:3 son and rumba clave rhythms with the accompanying cascara (timbale-shell patterns) and tumbao (bass parts). Jazz drummers usually voice the tumbao rhythm on the bass drum to augment the sound of the acoustic or electric bass guitar. The cascara can be played on a cowbell, cymbal cup, closed hi-hat, or floor tom shell. This is dependent in part on the dynamic of the accompanying phrase. Under a piano solo, for example, one common textural choice is the closed hi-hat to help sustain a softer dynamic. The clave rhythm can be played as rimclicks on the snare, on the metal post of the hi-hat stand, or with the left foot on a woodblock.

Take time to internalize these patterns before moving on to the *Syncopation* applications.

### 3:2 son



### 2:3 son



### 3:2 rumba



### 2:3 rumba



### Foot-Pattern Variations

Practice the following eight Afro-Cuban tumbao foot patterns, and strive for consistency of sound and rhythm. Assign various

dynamic markings (p, mp, mf, f, ff) to each pattern, and practice with heel-up and heel-down techniques. Do this with a metronome to ensure that each subdivision is solid.



Now try adding the exercises on page 46 of *Syncopation* on the snare. Here's a two-measure phrase that utilizes Example 25 from page 48 and Example 18 from page 47 over foot variation 8, which mimics a common guiro pattern.

Next, try moving the accents to the toms while playing the unaccented notes on the snare. Below is Example 17 from page 47 and Example 12 from page 46 with a 2:3 rumba clave foot pattern.

Once you have control of the previous material, try filling in the unaccented 8th notes using 16th-note double strokes. Here's Example 27 from page 48 joined with Example 20 from page 47 over a 3:2 son clave foot pattern.

### Unison Exercise

Try practicing any of the one-measure examples that begin on page 29 as unisons with the ride and snare. Then add one of the eight clave/tumbao foot patterns. Below is the fourth foot pattern with Example 11 from page 33 and Example 20 from page 34.

Also try applying accents to the written material. Voice the accents on the cup of the ride and as rimshots on the snare. Below are the last four measures from page 37 with one accent interpretation.

Once you have control of the previous applications, practice the following hi-hat patterns with your dominant hand while reading the ink from *Syncopation* with your nondominant hand.

This next phrase combines the first four measures from page 41 with the fourth hi-hat pattern. For variation, I've added accents to the written line.

### Mambo Bell Variations

Here's a fun application that takes the written rhythms from *Syncopation* and interprets them as mambo bell patterns on the cup of the ride. These variations remind me of rhythms I've heard hard-bop great Art Blakey play on recordings with his group, the Jazz Messengers. Try accompanying each bell rhythm with one of the eight foot patterns from before, as the left hand imitates the sound and feel of a traditional conga part. Here are Examples 1 and 3 from page 29 with foot pattern 8.

Also try elongating the phrasing of the rhythm so that it becomes more triplet based. Here's Example 1 coupled with Example 5 from page 29.

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Finally, play a 3:2 or 2:3 cascara rhythm on the cup of the ride with a tumbao foot pattern, while reading the ink from *Syncopation*. Here are the first four measures from page 37 played beneath a 3:2 cascara. Experiment and come up with your own creative combinations. Have fun!

9

For a video demo of some of these patterns, visit [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com).

**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](http://stevefidyk.com). To read more about Steve, check out this month's Catching Up With... column on page 32.



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# Artistry Versus Commerce

## Balance Is Everything

by Russ Miller



For this month's column I've chosen to discuss the most-asked question I receive at shows, at clinics, and on the Web: "How do you balance finance and drumming?" The quote by the great Irish playwright Oscar Wilde sums up the basics of art versus money: We all need both! Since we're on the art side of this quote, we need to understand the balance between our playing (and lives) and money. On the other side, someone who is not involved with creativity needs to understand the release and joy that art provides.

Through my career, I've met players at every position on the money/art balance beam. Some have embraced the art form to an amazing degree. This type of player is obsessed with learning the art of drumming. Often this approach leads to being very involved in the physical aspects of playing the instrument and working on things like speed and independence. I've had countless drummers like this say to me, "I don't really do many gigs, so how do I get into the music business?" The fact of the matter is that you could be the next Vinnie Colaiuta, but if you're only practicing in the basement no one will ever know it.

On the flip side, several players have pitched me like a used car salesman, delivering a constant flow of marketing, press, and verbal information about what they could do. These guys represent the other side of the spectrum. When you finally see them at the kit, the impact of their playing often doesn't match the hype created by the sell.

I recently met a young man during a rehearsal for an awards show that I was playing. He was hanging around backstage. He had a T-shirt with a unique logo on it, plus buttons, a baseball hat, and a bag adorned with this symbol. I had to ask, "What's with the logo?" He said he was a producer and it was his personal brand. He went on to tell me that when he decided to be a producer he took several marketing courses to get started. I then asked, "What music courses have you

taken?" He said that he hadn't gone to school for music. I dug a bit deeper and asked if he'd taken private lessons on an instrument or had a mentorship of any kind with a musician. He answered no to all of it, while handing me a button. He said he had bought a computer and was making beats. At this point I decided not to push further. I'm not saying he won't be successful, but producers should have a

**"When bankers get together for dinner, they discuss art. When artists get together for dinner, they discuss money."**

—Oscar Wilde

vast musical understanding. They are usually great players on an instrument and have gained knowledge of composition, sonics, and songwriting. This young man was leaning too far into the commerce side.

The battle of artistry versus commerce needs to end in a draw. The more you can balance the two, the better off you'll be. Of course, the modern world is designed around trading currency. We need food, travel, shelter, equipment, and so on, but focusing too much on marketing, money, fame, or the politics of the music business can lead you to lose sight of why you decided to play drums in the first place.

### Create a Great Product

So how do we find this balance? Let's look at the scenario from the viewpoint of a more clear-cut industry: shoe manufacturing. First, you need to create a great product—you need to make shoes that fit well and that someone will enjoy. We musicians need to create our "product" (i.e., drumming) with this attitude; it has to be solid and effective. When someone buys from you (i.e., hires you for a gig), he or she needs to be happy with the "purchase" and therefore want to buy your product again. And make sure that when someone buys your product, it does exactly what it says it will do—and more. Don't oversell the product to be

something it's not. The customer will always be let down by that experience.

For instance, I had a young drummer come up to me after a concert and hand me his résumé. On it was a list of the artists he'd "worked with." This included Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and Marcus Miller. I said to him, "Wow, you've worked with some serious cats. Did you record with them?" He said, "No, I played live with

them." I was impressed, so I replied, "Those are some great tours." Then he added, "I didn't tour with them; they were guests with my school band in college." This young man had mislabeled his packaging, and he had set himself up for failure. When I see legendary names like that on a list, I expect that person to play at a world-class

level. Anything less than that will be a negative experience for me.

### Create a Product With Demand

The product you're selling must have demand in order to be successful. We can't make shoes that already exist in the marketplace, or else our only sales pitch is price. I see this problem running rampant in today's drumming field. There are way too many players selling the same product—in other words, sounding and acting the same. In the '70s, Buddy Rich was asked what younger drummers he liked at the time. He named Danny Seraphine and Steve Gadd. He said they had a "sound," and he liked that. I have the pleasure of being friends with both of these great drummers, and they are true individuals with unique playing and musical opinions. But what happens when you try to sell a product in a saturated market? Someone else will always sell it cheaper! The price goes down and down until everybody loses. When you have something that no one else has, you can charge whatever you want for it. And if people really want it, they will pay for it.

### Invest in Marketing

You need to market your product so that people can hear it and purchase it. We could make the best shoes in history, but if

no one knows about them, they won't sell. Every business in the world takes a percentage of its sales income and reinvests it into marketing. Marketing can include business cards, building a website, production costs for demo reels, ads for gigs, and even assistance with social media.

### Be the Best

Our "shoes" need to be one of the best pairs our customers have ever owned. You need to create a "way more than I expected" experience. Here are the basic rules of building a clientele for any business: Give them less than they expected and they will never come back; give them what they expected and they might come back; give them *more* than they expected and they will always come back. This relates directly to us as drummers. If you are better than expected when you do a gig, the band leader will hire you again. And not only that, but the guys in the band will start to recommend you, and people in the audience will come see you again. If you're "just good enough," all or none of that might happen. If you didn't cut it, none of that will happen, and you'll probably get a

bad reputation, which will make it harder to find work in the future.

In closing, there is no single path to success. If there were, everybody would be successful. This is why we can discuss only the principles and not exact details. The bottom line is that if you want to make money by playing drums full- or part-time, you're starting a small business. Work on your product, and make it the best it can be. Market your drumming and all of its subsequent products, including recordings,

books, videos, and T-shirts. Be sure to enjoy the process of owning your business, and always strive to find balance between your art and your money.

See you next month!

**Russ Miller** has played on recordings with combined sales of more than 26 million copies. His versatility has led him to work with a wide range of artists, including Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Nelly Furtado, and Andrea Bocelli. For more info, visit [russmiller.com](http://russmiller.com).



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# COLLECTOR'S CORNER

## Big Bertha

by Harry Cangany

This is the story of a grande old dame in American percussion, a leviathan-size bass drum made in 1922 in Elkhart, Indiana, at the old C.G. Conn plant. Conn was known as the largest manufacturer of musical instruments at the time, and company president Carl D. Greenleaf was a strong advocate of school bands.

Greenleaf's son Leland was a member of the University of Chicago band, and Carl, himself an alum of the school, had Conn donate a hundred instruments to the university in time for an October football game with Princeton. Along with those instruments, Conn sent a giant bass drum, dubbed Big Bertha, which was named after the German artillery piece made famous in World War I, fought not so many years before. What they had in common was the sound of a big boom.

Bertha was retired to storage in Chicago in 1939, when the university gave up its sport programs. The University of Chicago was involved in the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb, and during World War II there was concern that Bertha may have become contaminated. In 1946, the drum was examined with a Geiger counter and passed with flying colors.

Bertha's next adventure began when Conn took the drum back to Elkhart and used it as an advertising piece for the company. The drum was featured in the 1952 movie *Stars and Stripes Forever*, which tells the story of John Philip Sousa. There is a photograph from 1954 of Bertha with a paper sign on top of one of the heads promoting the movie, Conn, and the drum company Leedy & Ludwig.

Now let me dispel some incorrect information that has been floating around regarding this drum. Conn made Bertha in its woodshop in 1922. The nickel-plated tube lugs, original single claws, and thumb rods were made by Conn in its drum

department. Bertha is fitted with thirty-eight long tube lugs with center studs. Sometime in the 1920s Conn stopped making drums and used Leedy-made products. Because of a number of factors (the downturned economy as well as sound movies, records, and radio putting musicians out of work), Conn decided to emphasize school bands, and had the financial clout to do it. Greenleaf proposed buying two drum companies, Leedy and Ludwig, for the economies of scale in manufacturing and advertising. That acquisition went down in the third quarter of 1929. The companies were moved to Elkhart in 1930 and were run side by side but separately until a merger in 1951 created Leedy & Ludwig. When the University of Texas bought Big Bertha, it made sense to think Leedy & Ludwig had built the drum, but Conn was the manufacturer.

Former University of Texas band director Moton H. Crockett Jr. heard about Big Bertha and went to Elkhart to buy her from Carl Greenleaf for the princely sum of \$1 in December of



1954. Brave man that he is, Crockett borrowed a trusty Ford Fairlane, rented a trailer, got a tarp, and towed Bertha to her new home in Austin. A few months later, Bertha was spruced up with new white paint, bright-orange wood counterhoops, and new chrome plating on all of the metal parts. WFL/Ludwig T-rod's replaced the key rods found on the drum in 1954, which had replaced the original thumb rods seen in the initial Conn factory photo.

The original drumheads were bull or steer hide, which was available at the Chicago stockyards. The natural skins did their job until the advent of plastic heads. Remo made heads for Bertha in 1997, and a Texas sign company did the logos. J.P. Kirksey, an alum and percussionist, repainted the counterhoops a custom burnt orange and made a new mallet. In 2007, Bertha went back to Remo and got aluminum hoops, a fresh paint job, new heads, and new chrome. This time Remo did the graphics as large two-piece decals. Kirksey made two more 4'-long aluminum mallets. The original carriage made by Conn still carries Bertha, although it has undergone some restoration and sports burnt-orange-painted wheels.

Whether Big Bertha is sitting in the end zone, rolling through Pasadena for the Rose Bowl, or just resting in her display area at Darrell K. Royal Texas Memorial Stadium, she is a sight to behold. No wonder she's known as the Sweetheart of the Texas Longhorn Band.



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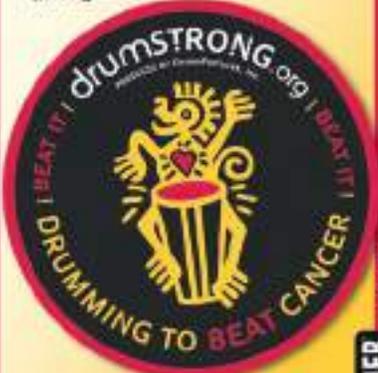
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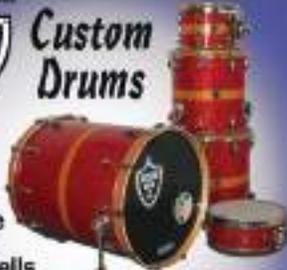
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# Maya Tuttle

by Adam Budofsky

The Colourist plays pop music—but it's pop with *teeth*. As you're drawn in by the group's sunny boy/girl vocals, you might miss some rather less-than-cheerful lyrics. And if you think the beatsmith at the back is politely ticking out the time, you've got at least one more surprise coming.

As the closing credits come up on the Colourist's "We Won't Go Home" Wilcox Sessions video, the band's guitarists, Adam Castilla and Kollin Johanssen, break into a familiar-sounding but decidedly *not* indie-rock guitar riff. Drummer Maya Tuttle and bassist Justin Wagner provide the three-note response to the metallic call, and for a moment you're thinking, *Wait...is that Slayer they're playing?*

"They said they needed us to do something over the end credits, and that we should get creative," Tuttle recalls. "We don't know a lot of covers, but we have this one that we like to do." It seems that for a few years the Colourist shared a rehearsal space with a somewhat longer-in-the-tooth metal band. "One way they influenced us," Tuttle says, "was to learn Slayer's 'Raining Blood.' Well, at least the first thirty seconds of it."



Is the performance cause for the thrash bands of the world to nervously check their rear-view mirrors? Probably not. But in terms of providing some unexpected insight into Tuttle's rhythmic charms, it's pretty instructive. Not since Stephen Morris and his bandmates in Joy Division broke out of Manchester, England, in 1978 has a drummer squeezed more out of the kind of alternating-hi-hat-16ths/four-on-the-floor-bass-drum pattern Tuttle falls into on "Raining Blood." She romps that beat—just check the first half of the Wilcox video on YouTube, or listen to "Yes Yes" and "Put the Fire Out" from this year's self-titled debut LP. And even if the Colourist's sunny Southern California home base may seem worlds away from Manchester's grim industrial post-punk environment, the spirit and dark energy of the legendary Joy Division single "Love Will Tear Us Apart" lives on in many of the group's incessantly catchy power-pop gems.

"A lot of the stuff we do is high energy, with four-on-the-floor patterns," Tuttle agrees. "On our current tour we're doing hour-plus sets, including encores many nights, and the hardest part for me is that I'm singing a lot as well." And with that we're reminded of another of Maya's strong suits—her voice. Tuttle and Castilla have crafted a complementary vocal approach, and Tuttle isn't simply providing backgrounds; she's singing lead much of the time. It's a powerful tool, and it's just one of the aspects of the Colourist that has driven the group's debut LP to crack the top one hundred of *Billboard's* album chart and the top twenty of its alternative and rock charts. It also effectively doubles Tuttle's workload.

"If I'm running out of breath, it affects my singing," Maya says, "so whenever I'm off tour I try to go running. It's hard on tour, because every night is such a workout anyway. I'm gasping for breath sometimes. [laughs] It's pure adrenaline that keeps me going. But I love being really active with the drums, and I'm having a good time up there."

Though Tuttle says she went through a strong Travis Barker phase ("Some of the stuff he played really wowed me; he's a showman, and I still use his sticks because they're long and my arms are short"), her first drum inspiration was a bit less rambunctious. "I'd always been intrigued by drums," Maya recalls, "but I remember this one moment when I was in junior high and I saw an archive clip of Karen Carpenter on a VH1 *Behind the Music* show. I'd never seen a woman drumming before, and it clicked for me:

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Tuttle plays a C&C Custom maple kit featuring an 8x12 tom, a 14x16 floor tom, and an 18x22 bass drum, plus a 6.5x14 Pearl Limited Edition Vintage SensiTone brass snare, Paiste Giant Beat cymbals (14", 18", 20"), and DW hardware.

someone who looks like me doing something really cool. And she was singing as well. So from that moment on, my parents couldn't get me to shut up about wanting a drumset. Finally my mom and dad got me a Tama Rockstar and let me set it up in the living room. I had strict rules, like don't play after seven. But my family has been extremely patient."

Tuttle, who had private lessons and played in marching band throughout high school, took a break from playing in college—dorm life made it impossible—but around the time she was finishing school, she met Castilla, whose band, Paper Thin Walls, was looking for a new drummer. "I came by their rehearsal studio once and set up the drums," Tuttle recalls, "and I started playing for them. All of a sudden Adam's like, 'Maya, get off the drums and just go sit in the corner!' I was like, 'What? Uh, okay.' Then their current drummer walks in... I didn't realize that they hadn't kicked him out of the band yet! He didn't take any notice of me—I was just a girl watching their practice. But over the course of the next week this drummer got kicked out, and I took his place.

"Neither Adam nor I sang in Paper Thin Walls," Tuttle continues, "and the band lasted maybe a year. But from that the Colourist was born. Justin used to come and hang out at Paper Thin Walls rehearsals too, and Adam knew Kollin through another band that he was recording. We could *not* find a singer, though, so out of necessity Adam and I started singing some of the ideas we had. We just found a cool vocal chemistry that really seemed to work. And the drums are sort of my safety blanket, so I felt more confident singing while I was at the kit."

Not that it was an easy process at the beginning—or even now. "I had the hardest time with it at first," Tuttle says. "People come up to me at shows, like, 'You're so talented... how are you doing that?' and I shoot back, 'I don't think it's talent.' Because if you've seen my frustrating practices trying to get this down, especially in the early days, it was just grinding hard work figuring out what my hi-hats are doing on what beat, and then, oh, this lyric comes in on the '&' of 3—just timing it all out. It was slow going at the beginning, but I've gotten more of a handle on it.

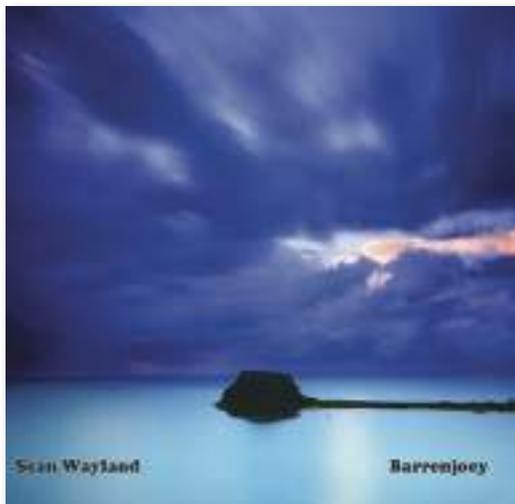
"I love watching other singing drummers," Tuttle continues. "Every time I discover someone new I get obsessed. Like I would watch Death From Above 1979, and the energy Sebastian Grainger has playing drums and singing.... Of course Phil Collins was a pioneer, Don Henley. And there's another band on our label, Papa, who I saw at South by Southwest this year. I'd been a fan, but watching them live and the way their drummer, Darren Weiss, commands an audience, was really cool. And for me, it's always a fun moment when people come up after a show and they're like, 'I didn't even realize you're doing the drums too.' I love those moments when you can surprise people, when they can see how we carry this out on stage."

A staunchly DIY outfit, the Colourist is uniquely poised to realize many of its creative ideas, which extend well beyond the music. Tuttle, who was an English major in college and subsequently worked on the public television show *Roadtrip Nation*, imagined a career editing and directing film. "When we were making our first videos," she says, "I could run the cameras, and I've edited stuff for us. Kollin was working in graphic design, and he's now doing all our album art. So we have this cool skill set, which makes everything more authentic. And an English degree helps you learn to think, which has been so helpful in terms of lyrics—and in every aspect of my life. So I feel like I wasn't really derailed from any career, but rather I found another extension of my interests and passions."





# CRITIQUE



## Sean Wayland *Barrenjoey*

**Two of modern fusion drumming's best show us how it's done.**

"Some of this music is corny fusion," keyboardist Sean Wayland writes in the liner notes to his latest CD, *Barrenjoey* (named after an island in his native Australia). Wayland's self-deprecation aside, **Mark Guiliana** and **Keith Carlock's** contributions are anything *but* corny, infusing the stylized electric-jazz tunes with dramatic polyrhythmic flourishes and taste-fulness. Wayland's vocals abound on the record, and Carlock's precise timekeeping on pieces like "Slide On Thru" and "What Do You Know" recalls his tempered approach with Steely Dan. Guiliana gets to sink his teeth a bit more into his featured numbers, breaking up the pulse on the syncopated ending vamp of "Designer Babies" and laying down a fun, offbeat double-time pattern for the chorus of "Under D Tree Restaurant." Also dig Guiliana's slick four-on-the-floor Afrobeat magic on "When Will I See You Again," complete with left-hand snare doubles in unison with the keyboards. (seanwayland.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



## OOIOO *Gamel*

**Ever wonder what it would sound like if Frank Zappa made a gamelan album in Japan?**

**Here's a possible clue.**

If you're a fan of such things as Indonesian gamelan, avant-garde percussion projects like Bang on a Can and Glenn Kotche's solo work, and cross-cultural fusions

of ideas—or simply if you dig music that takes unexpected twists and turns—then this album could very well be for you. On *Gamel*, the Japanese group OOIOO, led by Yoshimi P-We, a longtime member of the Boredoms (here billed as Yoshimio), focuses on incorporating gamelan into its vivid and varied aesthetic. As the metallophone-tinged pieces take their time unfolding in a thoughtfully planned sequence, it's anyone's guess what's coming next, whether it be a tasty drumset groove by **OLAibi**, a clattering hand-drum rhythm, a distorted guitar, or eerily stacked, hypnotic vocals. The music, true to form for the band, is gloriously, unabashedly weird, but it's also a percussion lover's delight. Say this at least: *Gamel* will take you places you've never been, places that exist only in the brightly colored world called OOIOO. (Thrill Jockey) **Michael Parillo**



## The Babys

*I'll Have Some of That!*

**Tony Brock's consistently inspired drumming is a highlight of this welcome if somewhat flawed comeback.**

Twenty-three years after breaking up, power-pop band the Babys ("Isn't It Time," "Every Time I Think of You") returns with original members **Tony Brock** on drums

and Wally Stocker on guitar, plus new recruits Joey Sykes on guitar and John Bisaha, often a reasonable facsimile of original

singer John Waite, on bass and vocals. The set suffers at times from an '80s commercial-rock approach (rocker/power ballad/rocker syndrome) and a somewhat generic sound. But Brock's big, ambient grooves support the tunes perfectly, particularly the funky, Small Faces–influenced "Sunrise and Goodbyes" and the power ballad "I See You There." Brock saves his best for last, though, on the album's title track, which (finally) replicates the classic Babys sound. Bisaha's voice is in great form and is complemented by a catchy melody, driving instrumentation, and a hook that could kill. Brock rips out great snare, kick, and cymbal work, as well as some beautiful tom builds that accent the guitar riffs. Welcome back, Babys. (Skyrocket Entertainment)

**Bob Girouard**

## The Winery Dogs *The Winery Dogs: Special Edition*

**If you're hungry for a shred fest, you've come to the wrong place. But that doesn't mean there isn't plenty to feast on.**

A power trio consisting of bassist Billy Sheehan (Mr. Big, Niacin), guitarist/singer Ritchie Kotzen (Poison, Mr. Big), and drummer

**Mike Portnoy** (no introduction necessary), the Winery Dogs ply raw retro rock featuring tight, instrumental unison lines and from-the-gut, bluesy vocals. Portnoy mostly plays it straight, though hardcore fans will appreciate the moments of flash ("We Are One") and fury ("Time Machine"), as he unleashes variations of his signature hand-foot combination fills. The recently released special-edition package of the group's 2013 self-titled debut contains the studio disc plus the live *Unleashed in Japan 2013* set. A document of the band's second-ever performance, the concert presents the majority of the studio tracks but with a bit more edge and extended jams. Kotzen adds material from his pop-metal days (Poison's "Stand" and Mr. Big's "Shine"), as well as the Elvin Bishop classic "Fooled Around and Fell in Love." (thewinerydogs.com)

**Mike Haid**





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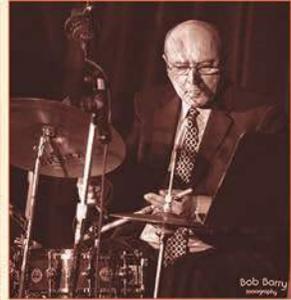
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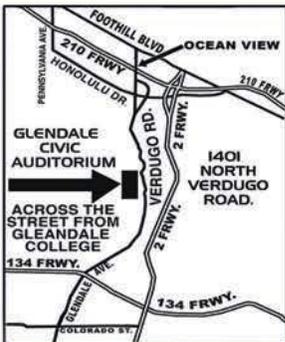
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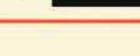
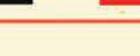
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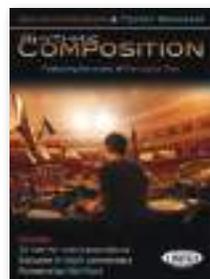


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### Zakir Hussain *The SFJazz Sessions*

The first ten minutes alone of this DVD could qualify as the must-see experience of the year. Filmed during four historic concerts at

the SF Jazz Center in 2013, this set finds host Zakir Hussain inviting Eastern and Western friends to a mammoth musical party and really mixing things up. Steve Smith transfers Indian rhythms to the kit, Giovanni Hidalgo unleashes his five-conga assault, Eric Harland smiles approvingly as he opens his dynamic bag of kit tricks, and Hussain takes the rhythms to another level on tabla. It's dizzying stuff (someone please put this out on IMAX!), and the vast range of Hussain's understanding is shown throughout, not least the ability to get serious and concentrate, along with patience in letting things come. Zakir's collaboration with Béla Fleck brings out an ancient side of the banjo. Equally impressive are fusion groups with George Brooks on sax, Niladri Kumar on sitar, and Ganesh Rajagopalan on violin. Between pieces, Hussain recalls the humility of one of his music teachers, who would say, "Let's see what the drum wants to say today," as well as advice his father, Alla Rakha, gave him long ago: "Just be a good student; don't try to be a master. You'll get by just fine." (\$22, Moment) **Robin Tolleson**



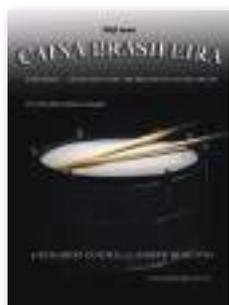
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four decades ago. And as Peart does in Rush, Harrison incorporates a technically dense yet highly musical approach with the veteran English progsters Porcupine Tree. Articulately transcribed by Terry Branam, this 128-page book features note-for-note drum transcripts of twenty songs from various PT recordings. Harrison offers insight into the creative process of each track, giving the reader a clear picture of his drumming approach. It's a heady catalog, so be prepared for serious shedding to capture the essence of Gavin's masterful rhythmic compositions. (\$19.99, Hudson Limited)

**Mike Haid**

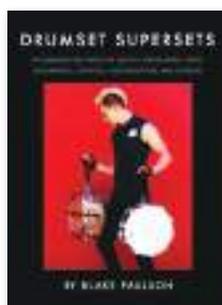


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### *Caixa Brasileira* by Eduardo Guedes and Joseph Ruscitto

On its surface, this book is basically a volume of 16th notes with varied accents. But as the old adage says, it ain't about the ink. The patterns, used in conjunction with the book's excellent demo CD, strongly emphasize the unique phrasing feel that the authors call Brazilian swing. Within is a catalog

of rhythms and exercises for the caixa, the Brazilian marching snare drum heard echoing throughout Rio's streets during Carnival. Thirty-eight snare patterns with sticking variations are featured within nine styles: samba, samba reggae, maracatu, frevo, marcha, ciranda, baião, coco, and caboclinho. Traditional bass drum parts for use in combination with the snare are included, as are brief historical texts (in English and Portuguese). Intermediate to advanced players will be rewarded with increased stick control and a heightened understanding of Brazilian rhythms that can be readily applied to the drumset. Even better, once you've got it, strap on a caixa, step out, and *parade*. (\$15, order by emailing caixabrasileira@gmail.com) **Jeff Potter**

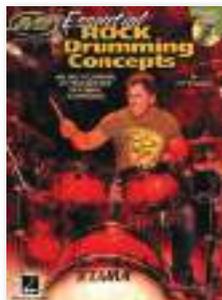


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### *Drumset Supersets: A Combined Method for Quickly Developing Speed, Endurance, Control, Coordination, and Reading* by Blake Paulson

Inspired by Gary Chester's popular tutorial *The New Breed*, Blake Paulson's *Drumset Supersets* quickly gets into the nitty-gritty by having students learn and memorize ostinatos for the

hands and then tackle a series of bass drum reading exercises to be played in combination. Divided into two sections, one for straight rhythms like rock, pop, and country, and the other for swung rhythms like the blues and jazz, the book can yield endless possibilities and permutations to get students to that next level of reading and coordination. And when you think you've got it licked, "vocal counting" is introduced to either make you rise up to the challenge or recoil in defeat. Paulson describes the book as having content that's easy to understand but difficult to master, so set aside some time for this one if your brain needs a wakeup call. (\$12.92, blakepaulson.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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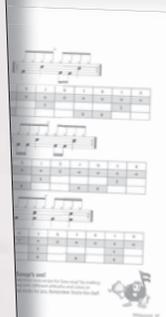
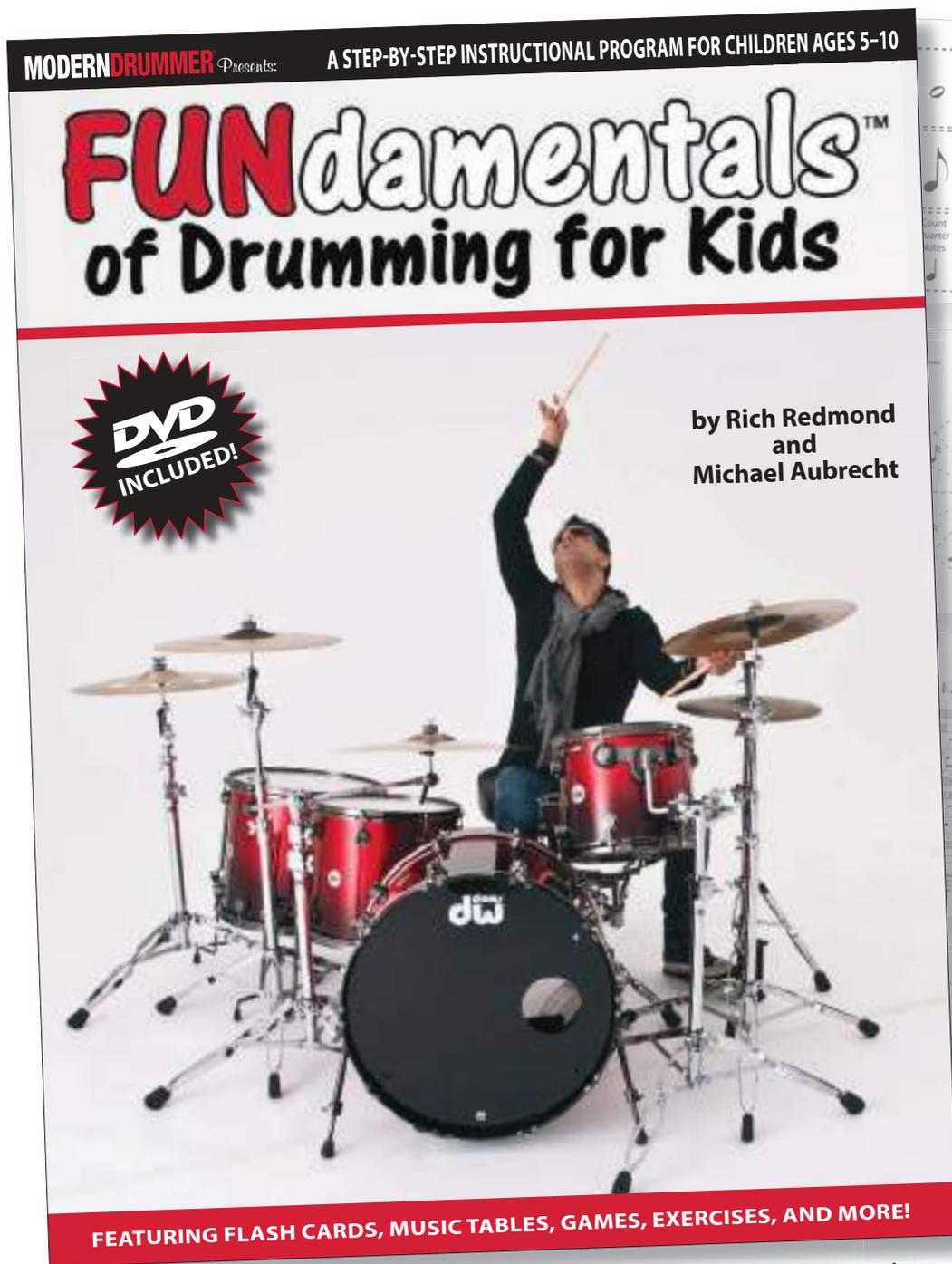
### *Essential Rock Drumming Concepts* by Jeff Bowders

This well-written, easy-to-read encyclopedia of progressive rhythmic techniques from Musicians Institute educator Jeff Bowders is packed with real-world concepts designed to help build your rock drumming vocabulary. There's quite a lot to digest by way of grooves, fills, and general technical

development on the drumkit in the 179-page instructional, but the focus is on the development of foot technique. Bowders declares that the bass drum is the "groove generator" of the kit, and to improve that function he presents students with challenging warm-ups, double bass patterns, synergistic grooves, 6/4 and 6/8 studies, and metric modulation exercises. Meanwhile, the accompanying CD offers seventy-two select examples from the book. There's a vast collection of thought-provoking ideas here for drummers ready to take the next step beyond the basics and develop "foot freedom." (\$24.99, Hal Leonard) **Mike Haid**



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## 2014 Chicago Drum Show

The 24th Annual Chicago Drum Show was held this past May 17 and 18 at the Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, Illinois. The event, conceived and organized by drum historian and author Rob Cook, combines a swap meet for buyers and sellers of new and vintage gear, a convention for manufacturers to display their latest offerings, and an in-depth educational experience with main-stage clinics and small-room master classes conducted by some of the finest drummers on the planet. This year, 120 exhibitors and more than 1,500 people came through the grounds throughout the weekend.

Big buzz on the product front at the show included the debut of William F. Ludwig III's new drum company, WFLIII Drums. Sabian and Crescent introduced their new Elements series of cymbals, which is said to be handmade by Sabian to Crescent's specs. Other strong showings included custom-shop newcomers Kumu from Finland, Outlaw from Georgia, RBH from Virginia, Cold Mountain Drums from Ohio, and Angel Drums, which makes block-shell drums in Hungary using exotic and rare timbers. Major-manufacturer exhibits included Zildjian, Pearl, Evans, Promark, Taye, and Ludwig, and smaller companies, such as Amedia, George Way, Craviotto, Dynamicx, Kelly SHU, and Cympad, were in attendance as well.

The 2014 clinic program included "Chicago's #1 Drum Lessons" owner Mike Semerau, L.A. studio great Curt Bisquera, New Orleans drumming expert turned brush enthusiast Stanton Moore, stick trickster Chip Ritter, versatile touring drummer Jason Sutter, and live electronica virtuoso Jojo Mayer.



Curt Bisquera



Jason Sutter



Stanton Moore



**Chip Ritter**



**Mike Semerau**



The conference room that was used for master classes by the main-stage clinicians was also used for special presentations. Drum historian Rick Gier conducted a seminar on dating Gretsch and Ludwig drums by serial number; Beatles expert Gary Astridge led two sessions on the drums that Ringo Starr used with the band; and Percussion Marketing Council co-executive director Karl Dustman moderated a roundtable discussion, Careers in the Percussion Industry, featuring jazz drummer/educator Paul Wertico, Taye's Todd Trent, and Conn/Selmer's Jim Catalano. The Rebeats Café, which is a small stage placed in the thoroughway between the two exhibit halls, was used for presentations; live interviews with drummer Daniel Glass, collector Mike Curotto, *MD Shop Talk* columnist Mark Cooper, and longtime Ludwig aficionado Bun E. Carlos; raffle drawings for thousands of dollars' worth of snares and other products from Ludwig, Gretsch, DW, Pearl, Yamaha, Taye, Sabian, and others; and a performance by the steel drum band Potts & Pans.

Cook will be celebrating the Chicago Drum Show's twenty-fifth anniversary in 2015. Artists already confirmed to appear include Will Calhoun, Cindy Blackman, Paul Wertico, and Dave Mattacks, and there will be a roundtable discussion on the drummers of the British Invasion, moderated by Argent/Kinks timekeeper Bob Henrit. For more on the 2014 and 2015 shows, visit [rebeats.com](http://rebeats.com). For product photos from the show, check out our Instagram gallery at [instagram.com/modern\\_drummer](http://instagram.com/modern_drummer).

**Photos by Michael Hacala**



**Jojo Mayer**





# Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

“I’ve always been enamored by the sound of the drums,” Kevin Milton of Minneapolis says. “I’ve come to find that every make and model has tonal qualities that others do not. This undying passion to hear new tonal qualities is what makes me continue to purchase many kits and percussion to this day. I’ve found that some concepts become clearer when I try to set up my kit like the artist I’m studying. While it might be unfeasible for some drummers to emulate a setup due to budget constraints, even if they get close—or borrow drums from friends—it could make DVD material easier to grasp.

“I have built kits in the spirit of Carmine Appice, Todd Sucherman, Marco Minnemann, Mike Portnoy, and, recently, Mike Mangini. Like Mangini, I always wanted to explore my lefty playing. When I was a child I was a natural lefty, but I was taught to be a righty. In recent years, however, I’ve been able to play my rudiments better left-handed, so when I found out that Mike’s clinic kit was righty/lefty, I was intrigued. When I was able to buy the Mangini Signature snare and also purchase a Pearl Masters kit, the idea came to try Mike’s clinic setup but also add Dream Theater–kit embellishments like Rocket Toms and Rhythm Traveler shells with electronic pads. It’s a blast to play patterns lefty on stage, and it’s comforting to know that if I start to flounder, I can play righty without moving the kit around.

“Thank you, Mike Portnoy, Todd, Carmine, Marco, and Mike Mangini, for continuing to inspire me and millions of others.”



Photos by Marcos Juarez-Gosselin of Infinitree Media

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



## Coming Up in Modern Drummer

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