

WIN! A \$3,695 BUCKS COUNTY/ZILDJIAN PACKAGE

MODERN DRUMMER®

THE WORLD'S #1 DRUM MAGAZINE

**6 WAYS
TO PLAY
SMOOTHER
ROLLS**

**BUILD YOUR OWN
COCKTAIL KIT**

**Jon Batiste and
Stay Human's**

Joe Saylor

Late-Night Deep Grooves

CLIFF ALMOND
CAMILO, KRANTZ, AND BEYOND

KEVIN MARCH
ROBERT POLLARD'S GO-TO GUY

HUGH GRUNDY
AND HIS ZOMBIES "ODESSEY"



APRIL 2016

\$5.99US \$5.99CAN



A BOLD NEW TWIST ON THE CLASSIC LUDWIG SOUND



KEYSTONE X USA SERIES

Ludwig's Keystone X Series delivers rich dark tones combined with punchy high-end attack. Its high volume aggressiveness and "Built-in EQ" tonality makes it an exceptional choice for both studio and live play.

Ludwig

BE A LEGEND. JOIN THE FAMILY.
WWW.LUDWIG-DRUMS.COM





XSR

BEST IN CLASS.

PERIOD.*

Crafted from pure Sabian B20 Bronze using trickle-down technology from our award-winning Evolution and X-Plosion cymbals, XSR delivers unprecedented sound and performance at a price designed to fit your cymbal budget. No other cymbal even comes close.

***NO DISCLAIMERS. NO RESTRICTIONS. NO BULL.**



WWW.SABIAN.COM/XSR

VATER

PERCUSSION
USA

.350"

.590"

.610"

.620"

.610"

.600"

.590"

.580"

UNIQUE TOP WEIGHTED DESIGN

.580"



"It is balanced, it is powerful. It is the Wicked Piston!"

Mike Mangini
Dream Theater

WICKED PISTON

L. 16 3/4" • 42.55cm | D .580" • 1.47cm **VHMMWP**

Mike Mangini's new unique design starts out at .580" in the grip and increases slightly towards the middle of the stick until it reaches .620" and then tapers back down to an acorn tip. Mike's reason for this design is so that the stick has a slightly added front weight for a solid, consistent "throw" and transient sound. With the extra length, you can adjust how much front weight you're implementing by slightly moving your fulcrum point up or down on the stick. You'll also get a fat sounding rimshot crack from the added front weighted taper. Hickory.

See a full video of Mike explaining the Wicked Piston at vater.com

270 Centre Street | Holbrook, MA 02343 | 1.781.767.1877 | info@vater.com

#SWITCHTOVATER

VATER.COM



TAMBOURINES

REDEFINING HOW DRUMS ARE MADE.
AND PLAYED.

Joe Saylor
Drummer for The Late Show Band
Playing Remo Eco Tambourine

Largest selection of affordable quality tambourines. Preferred by Professionals and Drum Enthusiasts.

remo.com

ALL NEW FOR PEARL IN 2016



GET THE ARTIST EXPERIENCE

With *Music City Custom* series, Pearl opens the USA Artist Custom Shop and invites you to create the kit of your dreams. Starting with Reference or Reference Pure shells, each kit is hand-covered, precision CNC drilled, assembled, and meticulously inspected in Nashville, TN from a choice of 43 drum size and 29 covered finish options. Completed and ready to ship within 14 business days of receiving your order.



TWO MASTERS SHELLS, ONE SONIC LEGACY

New Masters Maple options for the Pro Drummer. Choose the classic combination of reinforced 4-ply Maple shells with *Masters Maple Reserve* or the new EvenPly Six shell on new *Masters Maple Complete*.

Incorporating the sounds that made Masters a must for studio and stage, shell packs start at just \$1,249 and give the road-ready pro a complete percussive statement.





**ALL MAPLE SHELLS. LIFETIME WARRANTY.
5-PC SHELL PACK: \$699**

Introducing *Decade Maple* Series Drums. *Decade Maple* is the result of a 10 year process and manufacturing refinement project. Designed with the features every drummer demands, *Decade's* 6-ply lacquered, all Maple shell delivers boundary-shattering performance, sound, and value. Shell packs start at only \$559.



BIG GIG, SMALL RIG, HUGE SOUND.

The *Midtown* Kit, at home on the street and stage. The ultra-portable *Midtown* Kit delivers full-size play in a smaller footprint. At \$399 Street, *Midtown's* compact 16b/13f/10t/13s shell pack with added bass drum riser delivers full tonal punch and sets the pulse for the Metropolitan player on the move.



PORTABLE. CONVERTIBLE. DURABLE.

Starting at \$69 and weighing only 5 to 7 lbs. each, *150 Series* Cymbal, Snare, and Cymbal boom stands instantly convert from flat-based to traditional single-braced stands by simply flipping the tripod base. With the first swiveling flat-based Hi-Hat stand made for double bass drum pedals, *150 Series* is the highest-functioning lightweight hardware on the market.



**CHOOSE A CAM.
REDLINE YOUR PERFORMANCE.**

As the world's only bass drum pedal featuring the patented Interchangeable Cam System, the newly refined *Eliminator: Redline* is like having four pedals in one. Fusing the stunning power and flexibility of the original *Eliminator* with *NiNja* speed bearings and a host of improvements, *Redline* takes bass drum performance one step further. Single Pedal \$189, Double Pedal \$399



From our humble beginnings in 1946 to our worldwide network of drums and drummers 70 years later, Pearl's family owned-and-operated tradition of innovation and personal service continue forward to give a percussive voice to every player.

View the complete 2016 product lineup at www.PEARLDRUM.COM



Joe Saylor

by Jeff Potter

“The place you really learn how to play is on the bandstand. And it helps learning with people who can really play.”

If you’re wondering how Jon Batiste and Stay Human—including their real-deal drummer—can bring such an authentic, infectious vibe to *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*, all you need do is check out where the band members cut their teeth.

Cover and contents photos by Rahav Segev



FEATURES

16 Catching Up With...NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN and Tauk’s ISAAC TEEL

38 HUGH GRUNDY’s hook-filled playing on the Zombies’ “She’s Not There,” “Tell Her No,” and “Time of the Season” represents the epitome of sophisticated, swingin’ British Invasion drumming. Fifty years on, recognition of his talents is at an all-time high. by Dennis Diken

44 CLIFF ALMOND may be a self-described “ex-Weckl clone,” but the New York–scene vet has more than come into his own, with Michel Camilo, Wayne Krantz, and the popular Japanese band Quruli. by Ken Micallef

52 KEVIN MARCH made his name as a top-tier indie-rock journeyman with the Dambuilders, the Rentals, James Iha, and Shudder to Think. And for the past decade

he’s been the go-to drummer with Guided by Voices’ impossibly prolific frontman, Robert Pollard. by David Jarnstrom

58 GEORGIA HUBLEY and her beloved alt-rock band, Yo La Tengo, have been making magical music together for more than thirty years. *MD* sits down with the group’s founding drummer/singer to trace her unique history. by Patrick Berkery

62 Up & Coming LOUISE BARTLE starred on the popular British teen drama series *Skins* and backed pop starlets Selena Gomez and Eliza Doolittle. Now she powers the live shows of Brit-pop faves Bloc Party. by Ken Micallef

EDUCATION

- 66 Teacher’s Forum**
Building a Teaching Business
From Breaking Ground to Finding Students
by Jeff Salem
- 68 Basics**
Backstage Warm-Ups
A Rudimental Routine for Balanced Hands
by Rich Redmond
- 70 Strictly Technique**
A Twist on the Buzz
6 Exercises for Smoother Rolls
by Greg Sundel
- 71 Rock ‘n’ Jazz Clinic**
Squashed Sticks
Getting Creative With Rolls
by James Murphy
- 72 Jazz Drummer’s Workshop**
Crossovers
10 Exercises to Improve Drumset Facility
by Steve Fidyk
- 74 Rock Perspectives**
Progressive Drumming Essentials
Part 9: Switching Gears With the Double Bass Pyramid
by Aaron Edgar

EQUIPMENT

- 20 Shop Talk**
DIY Cocktail Drumset
A Step-by-Step Guide to Building Your Own Standup Kit
by Jordan Hill
- 22 Product Close-Up**
Bucks County Drum Company
Semi-Solid Bebop Drumset
Zildjian L80 Low Volume 468 Cymbal Pack
Ahead Switch Kick Quick-Release Bass Drum Beater System
Chicago Drum Maple/Poplar and Mahogany/Poplar Snare Drums
- 78 New and Notable**
- 76 Concepts**
Trolling
The “Greatest” Drummers and the Bliss of Ignorance
by Russ Miller

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 An Editor’s Overview**
Time for a New Face
by Adam Budofsky
- 10 Readers’ Platform**
- 14 News**
- 18 It’s Questionable**
Drum Tuning Technique
- 80 Showcase**
Featuring Drum Market
- 84 Critique**
John Coltrane, Panic! at the Disco, Bill Stewart, and more
- 86 Backbeats**
London Drum Show 2015, Rich Redmond’s Third Annual Drummer’s Weekend in Nashville
- 88 Kit of the Month**
The Frankenstein



page 83

ROCK OUT
IN COMFORT

Ringo Starr
RINGO STARR



RELAXEDFIT
// FOOTWEAR //

TM SKECHERS

- ROOMIER FIT
- SKECHERS MEMORY FOAM™
- INSTANT COMFORT

Time for a New Face

When I started my personal Facebook page a few years ago, my intent was mainly to keep up with music and politics and stuff that interests me on a daily basis. I also liked the idea of being able to easily share with my family and close friends the typical events of the day, including many of the interesting images, articles, and videos that I come across through my work at *Modern Drummer*.

This last activity is one that I particularly enjoy, since many of my pals and family members aren't in the music business and don't have the benefit (some would say *curse*) of being on hundreds of publicists' mailing lists. Like all the *MD* editors, writers, and other contributors, I'm inevitably a big fan of the drummers and bands that we cover in our pages, so I've always been proud and excited to be able to turn non-drummers on to music they might not know about—or even to just share a classic performance or track from the past that I think they'll love.

At some point I noticed that many of my new friend requests were coming from people I didn't recognize. A good number of them were drummers, and I figured they were expecting to see lots of cool drum content, and not necessarily photos of kids' birthday parties and such. So I decided to start up a separate, all-in *Modern Drummer* Facebook page where I could share nothing but great drum-related material. Of course, among the posts are links to the wonderful original content we produce for *moderndrummer.com* each month, such as product-review videos, educational tutorials, and exclusive Web features like my recent interviews with Fay Milton of Savages, John Demeski of Speed the Plough, Jeff Ryan of Pleasant Grove, and John Andrews of Quilt. (A quick search of the other *MD* editors on Facebook will lead you to their profiles, where you'll see lots more great content. Like me, you might enjoy keeping up with their unique takes on the drum world.)

I've really been digging managing my new page, which you can identify on Facebook by the profile photo that I use here in Editor's Overview. I've particularly enjoyed seeing what so many *Modern Drummer* readers are up to, as I flip through my news feed every day. I can't get enough of seeing photos and videos of you playing your drums—in your basement, at a gig... wherever.

I hope you'll stop by and that you enjoy what you see. You might even catch the occasional birthday cake—shaped like a drumset, of course.



Adam Budofsky

MODERN DRUMMER

Founder
Ronald Spagnardi
1943–2003

Publisher/CEO
Isabel Spagnardi

Senior Vice President
Lori Spagnardi

Vice President
Kevin W. Kearns

Associate Publisher
Tracy A. Kearns

Advertising Director
Bob Berenson

Advertising Assistant
LaShanda Gibson

Senior Art Director
Scott G. Bienstock

Editorial Director
Adam J. Budofsky

Managing Editor
Michael Dawson

Associate Editor
Willie Rose

Editor at Large
Billy Amendola

Business and
Content Development
Miguel Monroy

Digital Media Director
EJ DeCoske

The MD Pro Panel: Chris Adler, Gregg Bissonette, Jason Bittner, Will Calhoun, Terri Lyne Carrington, Matt Chamberlain, Jeff Davis, Peter Erskine, Bob Gatzen, Daniel Glass, Benny Greb, Matt Halpern, Horacio Hernandez, Gerald Heyward, Taku Hirano, Susie Ibarra, Jim Keltner, Pat Mastelotto, Allison Miller, Rod Morgenstein, Chris Pennie, Stephen Perkins, Dafnis Prieto, Rich Redmond, Brian Reitzell, Jim Riley, Antonio Sanchez, Gil Sharone, Chad Smith, Steve Smith, Todd Sucherman, Billy Ward, Kenny Washington, Paul Wertico

MODERN DRUMMER ADVISORY BOARD:

Kenny Aronoff, Eddie Bayers, Bill Bruford, Harry Cangany, Dennis DeLucia, Les DeMerle, Peter Erskine, Bob Gatzen, Danny Gottlieb, Jim Keltner, Paul Leim, Peter Magadini, George Marsh, Rod Morgenstein, Andy Newmark, Neil Peart, Steve Smith, Billy Ward, Dave Weckl, Paul Wertico.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Patrick Berkery, David Ciauro, John Emrich, Bob Girouard, Mike Haid, Dr. Asif Khan, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Martin Patmos, Jeff Potter, Will Romano, Bernie Schallehn, Ilya Sternkovsky, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, Paul Wells.

MODERN DRUMMER magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 271 Route 46 West, Suite H-212, Fairfield, NJ 07004. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Fairfield, NJ 07004 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2016 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: **MODERN DRUMMER Publications**, 271 Route 46 West, Suite H-212, Fairfield, NJ 07004. Tel: 973-239-4140. Fax: 973-239-7139. Email: mdinfo@moderndrummer.com.

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photographic material but cannot assume responsibility for them.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S. \$29.95, Canada \$33.95, other international \$44.95 per year. For two- and three-year subscription prices go to www.moderndrummer.com. Single copies \$5.99.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: *Modern Drummer*, PO Box 274, Oregon, IL 61061-9920. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Call 800-551-3786 or 815-732-5283. Phone hours, 8AM–4:30PM Monday–Friday CST, or visit Subscriber Services at www.moderndrummer.com.

MUSIC DEALERS: *Modern Drummer* is distributed by Hal Leonard Corp., 800-554-0626, sales@halleonard.com, www.halleonard.com/dealers

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE: Robert J. Abramson & Associates, Inc., Libby Abramson, President, 7915 Via Grande, Boyton Beach, FL 33437, abramson@prodigy.net.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Modern Drummer*, PO Box 274, Oregon, IL 61061-9920.

Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 41480017 Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: PO Box 875, Stn A, Windsor ON N9A 6P2

MEMBER: National Association for Music Development, National Association of Music Merchants, Percussive Arts Society

MODERN DRUMMER ONLINE: www.moderndrummer.com

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES

Music Key					
	R.C. bell	C.C.	China	Splash	Cowbell
open	○				
H.H.	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	▲
T.T.	⊗				
S.D.	●	⊗	●		
F.T.	●			●	
B.D.	⊗				●
H.H.	⊗				●
w/foot					
	Ghost note	Rim click	Add'l T.T.	Add'l F.T.	B.D. 2



Introducing Collector's Series® Cherry & Mahogany. Only from The Drummer's Choice®

Don Henley and Scott Crago have toured and recorded with DW Collector's Series® for well over two decades. Countless sold out shows, multi-platinum records and a set list of timeless hits. They're currently on the road with Cherry Mahogany drums and absolutely loving it. Customize the sonic personality of your next DW kit with all-new Cherry Mahogany VLT shells.



AMERICAN FORESTS
Every kit plants a tree.

For more, visit www.dwdrums.com
Find us at retailers nationwide and online.



FORWARD REBOUND

Choose Forward Balance models to optimize power and speed with a front-weighted feel.

Choose Rebound Balance models to optimize finesse and agility with a rear-weighted feel.

Select Balance now available in acorn tip.

PROMARK
BY D'ADDARIO

promark.com/selectbalance

READERS' PLATFORM

40th Anniversary

It is with great sentimental pride that I received the latest 40th Anniversary issue. Ironically, Neil Peart was featured in the very first issue that I ever received all those many years ago. I remember as a young drummer reading each issue from cover to cover and anxiously awaiting the next.

I remember when all of the drumming innovations that were featured in the anniversary issue were the latest, greatest thing. The industry has certainly evolved and exceeded the expectations of all of us in the drumming world who now find ourselves in the old-timer's club. Thanks for the trip down memory lane.

Rob Carter

First, I'd like to say congratulations to Dom Famularo on his recent cover and feature in *MD*. I met Dom in 1997, and he's still as energetic and enthusiastic towards our craft as he was then. He's definitely one of a kind! I also loved the 40th Anniversary issue with Neil Peart. What else is there to say about Professor Peart? He's a total class act! The rest of the issue was a home run as well. I immediately recognized the old *Modern Drummer* font and never realized how much I missed it until I saw it again. This fan wouldn't be upset if you brought it back (*hint, hint*).

Kennan Gilbert

40 Years of Innovation

It is with respect that I humbly submit corrections to a wonderful and informative article by Rick Van Horn in the January 2016 issue, "40 Years of Innovation: A Look at Drum Gear Then...and Now." In the interest of full disclosure, I've been a Paiste user/customer for over forty years, so perhaps I'm a bit touchy.

Paiste was responsible for the development of the flat ride cymbal in the 1960s in conjunction with Joe Morello, an endorser during the '60s and '70s. The Sound Edge hi-hat treatment was also developed in the '60s, being first applied to the Formula 602 line in 1967 and subsequently to the newly emerging 2002 line. It's been offered on most Paiste lines since.

Roger Hoinacki

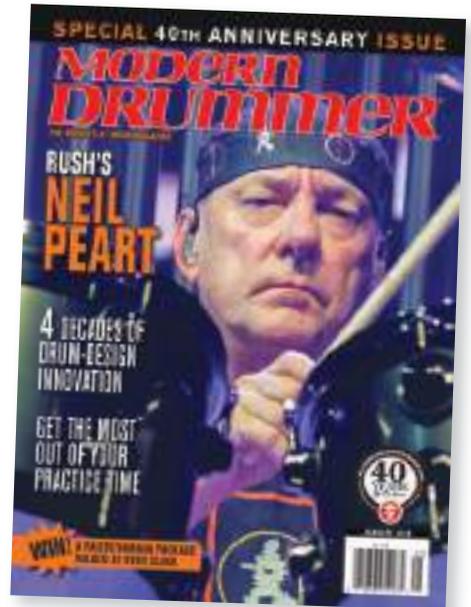
Rick Van Horn replies: "The focus of my feature was on innovative products that appeared in the pages of *Modern Drummer* during its forty-year history. I did not mean to imply that these appearances marked the actual debut of any such products, only that it was the first time that they were seen in *MD*. For example, when I said that Paiste's Sound Edge cymbals were "introduced in August of '79," I meant that they were introduced to *MD*'s readership in that issue, not that they were introduced to the market at that time. And while the Paiste Flatride was, indeed, developed in the 1960s, the Zildjian Flat Top ride was the first bell-less cymbal to appear in *MD*, in the inaugural issue, as stated.

A Warm-Up From Facebook

This month, Jason Aldean drummer Rich Redmond shares some of the warm-up exercises he uses before nightly gigs on Page 68. When we asked our Facebook followers how they prefer to get the blood flowing, this routine from **Pat Tibbetts** caught our attention:

Play two bars of single strokes, two bars of double strokes, and two bars of paradiddles, repeated for ten minutes. Then, using the last three fingers of each hand, repeat two strokes per hand twice, then three strokes per hand twice, continuing all the way up to twelve strokes per hand. Tibbetts says the exercise builds finger strength, and he suggests following along with your feet as well.

Want your voice heard? Follow us on Facebook and look out for next month's question.



HOW TO REACH US letters@moderndrummer.com



TUNE LESS

PLAY MORE

WITH THE SONICLEAR™ BEARING EDGE



WILL CALHOUN
LIVING COLOUR



SATURN V

MAPEXDRUMS.COM/SATURN-V

MUSIKMESSE

INTERNATIONAL PRESS AWARD

2015 WINNER

Tony Williams
TRIBUTE CYMBALS
— The 60's Era —

istanbUL
Mehmet Handmade Cymbals from Turkey

TONY WILLIAMS TRIBUTE CYMBALS

RECEIVED THE 16TH MIPA AWARD 2015
(MUSIKMESSE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AWARD 2015)



Istanbul Mehmet Cymbals Company is happy and proud to announce that Istanbul Mehmet Tony Williams Tribute Cymbals received The 16th MIPA Award 2015 in Cymbals category at Musikmesse Frankfurt 2015.



WHAT IS MIPA AWARD?

Journalists of more than 100 dedicated special interest magazines from all over the world (94 magazines from 24 countries) were called upon to nominate and vote for the best musical instruments and audio equipment of 2014/2015 in the 37 categories of the prestigious mipa ppa Musikmesse/Prolight + Sound International Press Award.

istanbUL
Mehmet Handmade Cymbals from Turkey

Now on **MODERN DRUMMER** .com

THE GREATS AT PASIC

Video interviews with Chad Wackerman, Rashid Williams, Larnell Lewis, Dave Elitch, Nir Z, Mark Collenberg, and other clinicians captured at the convention.



Q&A: COHEED AND CAMBRIA'S JOSH EPPARD

"I'm not this big prog guy. We grew up as *players*."

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



Bucks County Semi-Solid bebop kit, Zildjian L80 low-volume cymbals, and Chicago Drum's maple and mahogany snares tested.

BACKSTAGE WARMUPS

Rich Redmond offers a rudimental routine for balanced hands.

ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Prog Essentials 9: Switching Gears With the Double Bass Pyramid.

OUT NOW

Pleasant Grove's Jeff Ryan and Quilt's John Andrews take us inside two of indie rock's best new albums.

BUILDING A TEACHING BUSINESS

From breaking ground to finding students.

Plus the greatest drum-related prizes on the Net, news from around the world of drumming, and the most extensive selection of drummer posts online.



BLACK PANTHER
NEW DRUMS. NO JOKE.

WARBIRD
BY CHRISADLER

Possessing a mix of fury and deadly precision, this drum delivers an intense, dark punch when tuned low and an explosive pop when cranked high.

Size: 12" x 5 1/2"
Material: 6ply Maple/Walnut Shell
Edge: SONIClear™ Edge
Sound: Biting, Powerful, Quick

MAPEX
#PlayMore

NEWS

Out Now



Deneks Peniston

David Bowie *Blackstar*

Drummer/composer **Mark Guiliana**, celebrated for his straight-ahead jazz pulse and twisted drum electronics, has recorded one of the hottest—and most bittersweet—albums of early 2016 in David Bowie's *Blackstar*. "This record embodies David's masterful songwriting coupled with an openness to let the music go exactly where it needed to from moment to moment," Guiliana tells *MD*, adding that Bowie, who passed away on January 11, tapped Guiliana for what would be his last studio album after the drummer recorded a single for the career-spanning 2014 collection *Nothing Has Changed*. Tracks for *Blackstar* were recorded live in the studio; minimal percussion overdubs were provided by Guiliana and James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem. (Saxophonist Donny McCaslin, keyboardist Jason Lindner, guitarist Ben Monder, and bassist Tim Lefebvre also appear on the album.) "My goal was to bring the electronic drum parts [from Bowie's demos] to the acoustic kit in a musical way," Guiliana says. "He wanted all of us to inject our own personalities." **Ken Micallef**



Quilt *Plaza*

"The songs on our last few records were very open-ended and abstract," drummer **John Andrews** says of the Boston-based psychedelic indie band Quilt. "Our friend and producer Jarvis Taveniere pushed us to explore traditional songwriting on *Plaza*, which was...

not traditional for Quilt." Among Andrews' more appealing playing characteristics is his confidence in carrying grooves without always leaning on a ride source, a quality that comes to the fore on *Plaza*. "I remember reading an interview with Brian Wilson," Andrews explains, "and he said the Beach Boys almost never used hi-hats, because they sounded funny. I thought that was great, and it made me think that just because something is there, it doesn't mean I have to use it for every song." **Adam Budofsky**



Quilt, from left: John Andrews, singer/guitarists Anna Rochinski and Shane Butler, and bassist/singer Keven Lareau

Pleasant Grove *The Heart Contortionists*

The atmospheric and intimate indie rock band employed John Dufilho from the Apples in Stereo as well as Grammy-winning engineers John Congleton and Stuart Sikes to finish up its long-awaited third full-length album, which was started several years ago but delayed due to the band members' commitments to other projects. "We've all grown musically [since the recording began] and just wanted the best takes on every track,"



Peter Salschauer

drummer **Jeff Ryan** says, "to basically have that feeling that nothing was left on the table." Ryan employs all manner of sonic and coordinative approaches to flesh out the deep and detailed tracks, not unlike the approach he's taken with artists like St. Vincent and Sarah Jaffe, or on his own Myopic releases. "Whatever project I'm working on," Ryan says, "the drum patterns have to make sense both melodically and rhythmically. Paying attention to the melody first has always been rule number one for me. Normally, if I stick to that, it usually helps me come up with something interesting." **Adam Budofsky**

For more with Mark Guiliana, Jeff Ryan, and John Andrews, go to moderndrummer.com.

More New Releases

Cloud Cult The Seeker (Jeremy Harvey) /// **Anthrax** For All Kings (Charlie Benante) /// **Nada Surf** You Know Who You Are (Ira Elliot) /// **Chapell** The Redhead's Allegations (Prairie Prince, Jason Hann) /// **The Ruff Pack** Beats by TRP (Daru Jones) /// **Simple Plan** Taking One for the Team (Chuck Comeau) /// **Violent Femmes** We Can Do Anything (Brian Viglione)

Who's Playing What



Mike Mangini is using Vater Wicked Piston sticks, which he helped design.

Mike Johnston is using Audio-Technica microphones for his mikeslessons.com sessions.



Raul Pineda (Chucho Valdes, Michel Camilo), **Alberto Lopez** (Quetzal, Jungle Fire), and the **Broken Arrow Marching Band** are using Innovative Percussion gear.



Eliel Lazo (Michel Camilo, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter), **Jamie Oldaker** (Eric Clapton, Bob Seger), **Pablo Padin**, **Gerald Piloto Baretto** (Klimax), **Calixto Oviedo** (Arturo Sandoval, Gonzalo Rubalcaba), **Eduardo Rodriguez** (Miami Sound Machine), **Daniel Rodriguez**, **Elio Piedra**, **Christian Moraga**, **Johnny Belisle** (Tarzana Band), **Camilo Molina** (Eddie Palmieri), and **José Mangual Jr.** (Herb Albert, Rubén Blades, Dizzy Gillespie, David Byrne) have recently joined the Gon Bops endorser list.

Josh Eppard has been out with Coheed and Cambria in support of the alt-prog band's latest release, *The Color Before the Sun*. The new set takes a detour from the group's seven-album science fiction saga, *The Amory Wars*, and was tracked live in ten days at Neon Cross studio in Nashville. "This record is more live than a lot of bands' live records," Eppard says. "It was just us in the studio, doing one song a day, with hardly any edits at all. We were in the same room most of the time, in this giant church. There was no control room, so the engineers mixed right there in the room." Early 2016 saw the band playing European dates, and March finds Coheed headlining the U.S. with Glassjaw in support. For more with Josh Eppard, go to moderndrummer.com.

Stephen Bidwell



Eppard

Manuel Casanova

Jack DeJohnette is performing a series of concerts with tap dancer Savion Glover. To read about those unique shows, and about Jack's other current activities, look out for the upcoming May issue of *MD*.

Also on the Road

Matt Kelly with Dropkick Murphys
 /// **Chris Slade** with AC/DC /// **Jeff Simon** with George Thorogood and the Destroyers
 /// **Mike Mangini** with Dream Theater
 /// **Danny Herrera** with Napalm Death
 /// **Graeme Edge** and **Billy Ashbaugh** with the Moody Blues



DeJohnette

Jim Brock

Industry Happenings



MD editor at large Billy Amendola and Ginger Baker

Alex Solera

This past November, *Modern Drummer* hosted an afternoon Q&A at David Fishof's Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp with legendary drummer Ginger Baker. Later that evening, *MD*'s Billy Amendola led the camp's annual drum hang, with drummers Erik Eldenius, Matt Starr, Denny Seiwell, Frankie Banali, Thomas Lang, Hawk Lopez, Alvin Taylor, Ty Dennis, Danny Seraphine, Vinny Appice, and Cole Marcus, percussionist Pamela Seraphine, and bassist Rudy Sarzo.

The eighteenth annual Carlos Vega Memorial Birthday Concert was held last December 6 at the Alvas Showroom in San Pedro, California. Among the featured musicians were bassist/singer Will Lee, drummer Steve Ferrone, guitarists Michael Thompson and Denny Dias, percussionist Lenny Castro, saxophonists Larry Klimas and Jim Stevens, trumpet player Ron King, singers Alex Ligertwood and Leslie Smith, and keyboardist and musical director David Garfield, who was a bandmate of Vega's in the famed fusion band Karizma. Vega was one of the busiest and most respected studio and touring drummers of the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Among his most well-known gigs was James Taylor. The drummer had just come off the road with the legendary singer-songwriter in 1998 when he took his own life, shocking friends and fans who were unaware of his personal struggles. Students of the craft of studio drumming would be well served by even a quick study of Vega's recordings, and a search on YouTube will result in copious examples of his live prowess with artists including Taylor, Freddie Hubbard, and the GRP All-Stars.



Vega



Narada Michael Walden

The singer, songwriter, hit producer—and yes, superstar drummer—puts it all together once again on his latest solo album.

Narada Michael Walden is back with a new record, *Evolution*, and a show that takes us on a journey through his many major musical accomplishments. Walden's live band, which also appears on *Evolution*, includes Frank Martin on keys, bassist Angeline Saris, and Matthew Charles Heulitt on guitar. The unit has audiences dancing and singing along, then sitting back in awe of the group interplay and Walden's superlative drumming. "Whether it's a rehearsal, a soundcheck, or a show," Saris says, "Narada gives a hundred percent at all times. Getting to play with someone who brings that level of precision, chops, intensity, heart, and positivity to the table is unlike anything else I've experienced. It's a combination of the fiercest thunderstorm and the warmth of a ray of sunshine."

"I'm just still trying to perfect what Billy Cobham showed us all those years ago with his wonderful single-stroke rolls," Walden modestly offers. "I love rudiments, I love being clean, I love keeping my hand in that world so I can be sharp. I have to have good time, be able to play along with click tracks, and be intense and relaxed at the same time. In the old days I'd play intensely and rush, so now I'm trying to [control that]. What comes naturally to me are my double-stroke rolls and paradiddles. And to this day I very much like playing odd meters."

Walden recorded *Evolution* at his own Tarpan Studios in San Rafael, California, with his white DW drumkit in the main room. "It's the soul of the studio," Narada says, adding that his recording process is pretty much the same as it's always been. "I approach the drums very naturally. I'll cut a very basic track on my keyboards, along to a drum machine loop that I program, and then I'll put my drums on top of that. That's usually what I'll do, unless it's a live-in-the-studio thing. And even if that's the case, I'll still play to a loop of a handclap, a conga, or something like that, for good timing."

In regard to his writing method, Walden explains, "I usually go to the piano first, bang out some chord changes, and let the melody inspire my heart. I'm always gunning for the strong chorus first. Once I get that, I can throw in the verse and the bridge. The chorus to me is like a strong punch line to a joke; I always want to make sure I have a good punch line."

This spring and summer Narada is taking his show back on the road for a few short tours. "The plan is to get out and play live around the world," he says, "but not too much, because I have babies that I'm still raising. But I'd very much like to make a trip to the U.K., Europe, and a few other places. I just look forward to doing God's work. It's like a mission that I'm on. I'm very fortunate to make my living and make people happy with music." **Billy Amendola**



Joe-L. Angelo Margolis



Like Phil Collins, Narada Michael Walden, who appeared on the cover of *Modern Drummer's* October 1987 issue, is that rare drummer who created a sound that ruled the pop airwaves and whose playing skills put him alongside the greats of his generation. In 1974 Walden replaced drum god Billy Cobham in Mahavishnu Orchestra, and by '76 he'd appear on legendary fusion band Weather Report's *Black Market* album and Jeff Beck's jazz-rock classic *Wired*. Following a string of popular solo albums in the late '70s and early '80s, Walden cowrote and produced some of the biggest hits of the '80s and '90s for artists including Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, Aretha Franklin, Starship, Steve Winwood, and Diana Ross, earning him a Grammy in 1988 for producer of the year and landing him on *Billboard* magazine's list of the ten producers with the most number-one hits.

Isaac Teel

This year the drummer, known for his work in the self-described “heavy instrumental rock fusion band,” is introducing the world to his long-developed solo voice.



by Pierce Photo

Isaac Teel has always been into stretching out, and so far 2016 is giving him plenty of opportunities. Teel’s blazing instrumental band, *Tauk*, is back on the road with *Umpfhey’s McGee*, supporting a double live CD, *Headroom*, that captures the quartet’s dynamic playing.

Teel joined guitarist Matt Jalbert, keyboardist Alric “A.C.” Carter, and bassist Charlie Dolan in *Tauk* five years ago. “Walking into a chemistry that they had already established, it was pretty comfortable,” the drummer says. “All I had to do was be the rug under the table.

“Everyone in the band had some kind of encounter with music through their parents,” Teel adds, “[whether it was] rock, jazz, contemporary, funk, soul.... I think that helps us today. We’ll bring in some feel and then put something completely different on top of it that creates a whole new thing. We come from a lot of different places, but it makes it all the better, because it’s a smorgasbord of beautiful music.”

Both of Teel’s parents are, in fact, musicians. “I grew up playing in the gospel

music scene,” Isaac explains. “Initially my mom taught me. She played organ and my dad played bass. We all sang. And a lot of cousins and uncles played music in church. So it was a learning experience, to develop my ear first. The gospel scene trained me. The funk and soul and the heavy, funky backbeats—that’s the stuff that I really enjoy.”

The thirty-one-year-old Teel cites Dennis Chambers as his main inspiration, along with many gospel drummers, some familiar, like Gerald Heyward, but many not. “There are a lot of underground drummers that were amazing to see while I was growing up in the gospel scene and traveling to different churches,” Teel says. “People you’ve never heard of—and these guys are *hurting* every Sunday, *killin’ it*.”

While in high school on New York’s Staten Island, Teel played local jazz gigs with his music teacher. (“I was ‘Mr. Extracurricular,’” he chuckles.) He was then accepted at *Drummers Collective*, where he studied for three years while getting involved in an underground hip-hop scene and

helping form the unit known as *Nyle vs the Naysayers* (“Let the Beat Build”) in 2008.

“During that project,” Teel says, “I started creeping into my solo record, writing here and there, but I wasn’t really thinking about releasing anything or even recording.”

Teel, whose time has been filled for several years working with the increasingly popular *Tauk*, finally got around to officially releasing solo material in 2015, in the form of a video for the track “Down That Road.” And this spring he’s coming out with his full-length debut album, *Gentleman’s Day*, as well as a short film, *Funkumentary: Isaac Sinclair*.

“Music’s always been therapeutic in my life,” Teel says. “If you think about problems or situations that happen, you can always relate it to a song or a melody that has caught your ear and say, ‘Oh, yeah, I remember that.’ That’s how I want my music to feel. I want you to come back with your neck hurting because you feel the beat so hard, but I also want you to think about some of the things that I’m saying.”

Robin Tolleson



GET THE AHEAD CLASSICS



**OVER 3 MILLION
DRUMSTICKS SOLD
SINCE 1992.**

AHEAD Drumsticks provide everything you need with the perfect blend of power, control, consistency, durability and tone.

Get AHEAD.

AHEAD
#savingdrummers

www.aheaddrumsticks.com
818.727.1127

IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Drum Tuning Technique

Thank you for your in-depth and easy-to-follow product reviews. When you demo multiple tunings on snare drums, are you adjusting the resonant head as well? This same question also goes for the toms and kick.

Larry Johnson

"I start every snare review by first tuning the batter head evenly to a medium tension," says *MD* managing editor Michael Dawson. "That means the drumhead is tight enough so that I can play buzz rolls easily, but the drum still resonates fully. I've found that this usually falls around a reading of 84 or 85 on a Drum Dial or somewhere between C# and E when tapping lightly near the lugs. Once I settle on the tension of the batter side, I tune the bottom head a perfect fourth higher. So if the batter head is pitched to D, then the bottom will be pitched to G. I usually don't touch the bottom head from there, even as I test the extreme limits of the drum's tuning range. On occasion I'll lower the bottom head when testing lower tunings, but only if I feel like the drum isn't producing as much low end as it could.

"When testing toms, I always tune the top and bottom heads to the same pitch when going for high, medium, or low tunings. For bass drums, I usually tune the front head slightly higher than the batter to bring out the most low end. The free app from Tune-Bot has been a great resource for determining a good starting point for the pitches of the batter and resonant heads."



HOW TO REACH US iq@moderndrummer.com



BENNYGREB

The Time Machine



Vintage Onyx Finish
Made in Germany

The SONOR team, in cooperation with artists and collectors, worked tirelessly to bring the Vintage Series drums as close as possible to the look, feel, and sound of its predecessor from the 1950's and 60's. SONOR then combined this with its knowledge of modern drum building to create an instrument that will hold up to today's modern playing.

SONOR.COM



DIY Cocktail Drumset

A Step-by-Step Guide to Building Your Own Standup Kit

by Jordan Hill

Cocktail drumsets hold an unusual place in drum history. They were created during the post-WWII bebop era, and they became popular again in the '80s, when bands like Stray Cats brought rockabilly into the mainstream. Now many custom drum builders

are offering their own versions of the classic standup setup. In this article, I'm going to share a way to create your own cocktail kit using inexpensive concrete forming tubes and spare drum hardware.

1. Materials and Design

The main materials needed for this project are concrete form tubes (to be used for the drum shells), drumheads, rims, and hardware. Concrete-form tubes are thick cardboard cylinders used for pouring concrete. They are available from contractor supply warehouses.

The desired drum sizes will determine what size form tubes are required. The drum sizes for this project are a 28x15 bass drum/snare and an 8x8 tom.

The diameters of the concrete form tubes can vary greatly. They can be up to a half-inch smaller or larger than the stated diameter, so it's critical to bring along a tape measure to make sure you're getting the correct sizes. The tube diameter should be an eighth- or quarter-inch smaller than the desired drum size. A tube that's larger than that will prevent the hoop and drumhead from fitting properly. Conversely, if the tube is too small, the tension rods will be at too great an angle to thread evenly into the lugs.

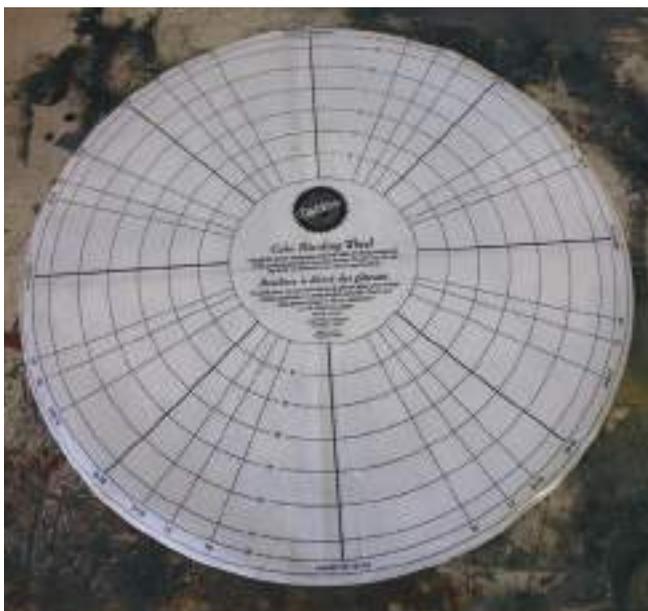
Concrete forming tubes come in 48" lengths, so they will need to be cut to the proper length. It's best to have the tubes cut at the store, since it can be difficult to cut a true circle by hand.



2. Construction

A cake-dividing wheel (available online from Wilton) will make laying out the lug pattern for each drum very easy. Set the cardboard shell on the correct diameter circle on the cake-dividing wheel, and mark the lines that correspond with the number of lugs you're planning to install.

Use a tape measure to help determine the placement of the mounting holes for the lugs, which should be placed 1.5" from the rim. Once all the holes are marked, use a .25" drill bit and drill them out.



3. Legs, Tom Mount, and Cymbal Arm

I used a set of old floor tom legs for this project. Decide what the playing height of the drum will be, and then mark the placement for the mount holes and drill them out. Be sure to space the legs evenly around the diameter of the drum.

The side tom can be mounted with a picture-hanging bracket. Install small wood spacer blocks so that the rims of the two drums have enough clearance and the shells don't rub against one another.

The cymbal arm should be mounted 4" to 5" below the top of the drum to put it at a comfortable playing level.



4. Baffle, Snares, and Covering

The next steps are to add a sound baffle, mount the snares, and cover the tubes. The baffle separates the lower bass section from the upper snare section of the



larger drum. To create the baffle, cut a plywood circle to fit the inner diameter of the drum. Use L brackets to mount the baffle inside the shell about two-thirds up from the bottom. Foam can be added on the plywood to add some dampening and to reduce sympathetic snare buzz.

The simplest way to mount the snares is to stretch them across the top opening of the drum so that when you mount the drumhead and rim, the snares touch the bottom of the head. Attach the snares with butt plates on either side of the shell. You'll have the best results if you use a set of snares that are 1" shorter than the diameter of the drum (14" snares for a 15" drum or 13" snares for a 14" drum).

Finish the drum with any color drum wrap or adhesive contact paper. After the drums are covered, attach all of the hardware and heads.



5. Bass Pedal Conversion

The final piece of the project is to create an inverted bass drum pedal that can play the bottom head of the cocktail drum. Start by disconnecting the tension spring and chain, and then remove the axle shaft, beater holder, and chain cam. (Make note of the orientation of these components!)



Now rotate the position of the chain cam and the beater holder. The other parts should be put back into their original locations. The chain will now wrap over the top of the axle shaft, and the bass drum beater will be angled toward the floor. Place the pedal beneath the cocktail drum, and you're ready to play!



Bucks County Drum Company

Semi-Solid Bebop Drumset

A winning shell combo blending the flexibility of ply with the power of solid.

Bucks County is a custom shop located thirty-five miles north of Philadelphia in the small borough of Perkasie. The company offers drums with just about any type and size of ply shell in any lacquer, satin, stain, or wrap finish. What sets Bucks County apart from general drum assemblers, however, is its unique patent-pending semi-solid drum shell, which fuses an interior solid steam-bent shell with a 5-ply maple exterior and 5-ply maple reinforcement rings. The bearing edges are cut so that the drumhead sits solely on the solid portion, which helps give the drums a strong, vibrant, modern tone, while the maple plies increase warmth as well as strength, consistency, and durability.

We were delivered a gorgeous bebop kit to review that comprised an 8x12 rack tom, a 12x14 floor tom, a 15x18 bass drum, and a 6.5x14 snare. All of the drums have a satin tung oil finish over a wenge veneer and black-nickel hoops and Gretsch-style lugs. The drums have solid cores of a different species, strategically chosen to make each drum as sonically balanced as possible. Let's take a look at each piece individually before we test them in action.

8x12 Maple/Granadillo Rack Tom

The six-lug rack tom on this kit fuses a 5-ply maple shell to an equal-thickness solid interior of granadillo, and it has 5-ply reinforcement rings. "Sonically, [granadillo] is comparable to Indian rosewood," says Bucks County's owner/head builder, Chris Carr. "But it's hard and denser, yielding a bell-like ring." Granadillo is often used to make marimba bars and classical guitars because of its tonal characteristic. This drum came with Evans Clear G1 heads on top and bottom and had a black-nickel suspension mount.

12x14 Maple/Yellowheart Floor Tom

This drum features a 5-ply maple exterior with a solid yellowheart interior of the same thickness and 5-ply maple reinforcement rings. Mainly sourced in Brazil, yellowheart is a dense species that Carr describes as similar to a hard mahogany that "will tune nice and deep. Its hardness lends itself to good volume sensitivity, making it a great choice

for all playing styles, from loud to soft." Like the rack tom, the floor tom came with Evans Clear G1 heads on top and bottom, and it has legs with floating feet that allow the shell to resonate as fully as possible.

15x18 Soft Maple/Maple Bass Drum

The interior soft maple solid shell of the bass drum is slightly thicker than the 5-ply maple exterior. Soft maple is an abundant species in the US, and it is best suited for the big, warm tones desired from floor toms and bass drums. "Not nearly as hard as hard maple, [soft maple] tends to be a little less bright, yielding a more 'vintage' tone with a softer attack," Carr explains. This bass drum came with a Clear EQ3 batter and a Black EQ3 resonant with no hole.

6.5x14 Ash/Maple Snare

The matching wenge-veneer snare features a 6-ply outer maple shell and a solid ash core of equal thickness. Ash is known to be a middle ground between the focused snap of birch and the broad, open tone of maple. This drum came with triple-flange hoops, ten tube lugs, a Trick GS007 three-point strainer, twenty-strand wires, a Coated Genera batter, and a Snare Side 500 bottom.

In Action

Tuning the Bucks County bebop kit was a breeze. I started by pitching both heads on the toms evenly and fairly high (12" to D# and 14" to G#). The bass drum was tuned with the resonant head about a 4th higher than the batter, and the fundamental pitch was an octave lower than the floor tom. The snare was tuned tightly to the note B, which completed a G# minor chord across the entire kit. At this higher tuning, the kit sang beautifully and had crystal clear pitch, long and even sustain, and ultra-crisp articulation.

The bass drum had some sweet sub tones as well. The snare and toms responded very fast with snappy attack, full sustain, and balanced overtones at all dynamics. The drums also projected very well.

For a medium tuning, I simply backed off the heads by three semitones (the snare bottom remained tight). The floor tom and bass drum were now at F, the rack tom was at C, and the snare was at Ab. This tuning had a fantastic balance of clarity and



projection, plus full, rich, and fat sustain.

The bass drum was impressively deep and powerful, and it had a ton of focused sub frequencies. The toms sounded as if they were being processed with the best studio gear. The snare had a strong crack, crisp sensitivity, and chunky overtones that filled out the sound nicely but died off quickly.

To test how low these smaller drums could go, I backed off the tuning by three more semitones until the floor tom and bass drum were at D, the rack tom was at A, and the snare was at F. The heads were

barely under any tension, yet the drums still produced big, fully resonating tones with clear pitch and articulate response. The floor tom became quite punchy, the bass drum sounded darker and had a less prominent note, the rack tom took on a more dramatic roll (longer decay and slight pitch bend), and the snare elicited an awesomely fat, power-ballad vibe.

While it may be categorized as a bop kit, this isn't a drumset meant exclusively for high Tony Williams-type tunings. Its range is vast (we were especially impressed with

its lower register), and all of the drums possessed strong and powerful yet warm and balanced voices that performed just as well acoustically as they did under the close scrutiny of the recording studio. Very impressive, indeed!

Michael Dawson

TECH SPECS

Shells: Semi-solid (ply maple outside, solid core, and ply re-rings)

Edges: Outside roundover and inside 45-degree

Finish: Tung oil wenge veneer

Heads: Evans

Sizes: 8x12, 12x14, 15x18, 6.5x14



For a video demo of this kit, visit modern drummer.com.

Zildjian

L80 Low Volume 468 Cymbal Pack

Authentic-feeling practice cymbals that won't kill your ears—or your neighbors'

Many drummers have had to go to extremes to tamp down the volume of their drumsets to make practicing less disturbing for neighbors, family members, and roommates, whether that's simply draping t-shirts or blankets over the kit or going all-in and spending a large chunk of cash to convert a bedroom, basement, or garage into an airtight, soundproof studio.

Different companies have introduced products over the years to help control volume, and some of those, like Remo's Silent Stroke mesh drumhead and Aquarian's Super Pad, are great solutions for quieting snares, kicks, and toms while retaining most of the authentic feel of striking an acoustic drum. But none of the solutions for reining in cymbals have been completely satisfactory. All of that changed, however, when Zildjian launched the new L80 Low Volume series.

The L80 Low Volume series comprises full-size alloy cymbals designed to be up to eighty percent quieter than traditional models. They are perforated with hundreds of small holes from the bell to the edge, and they feature a matte finish, both of which help eliminate high frequencies and reduce volume.

The L80 Low Volume series is available in several packs. We were sent the 468 configuration (\$500), which includes a pair of 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and an 18" crash-ride. There's also the 348 set, which includes 13" hi-hats, a 14" crash, and an 18" crash-ride, and there's a two-piece pack, called the 38, that consists of 13" hi-hats and an 18" crash-ride.

The L80 cymbals have a similar profile, weight, and feel to that of comparable

A Series thin models, which gave them a surprisingly authentic feel in terms of how they rebounded, moved, and flexed under normal playing styles. They also produce enough audible stick click and high overtones to maintain a sense of touch and dynamics within your practicing/rehearsing.

We tested the L80 468 cymbal pack in the recording studio on an acoustic drumset that included a 22" bass drum and a 14" snare. To establish a baseline, we first recorded a full-volume groove on a set of traditional 14" New Beat hi-hats, a 16" A thin crash, and an 18" A crash-ride. When I swapped in the L80s and played the same groove at the same dynamic level, it sounded as if the overhead channels had been muted. I can't say for certain whether or not the L80s were eighty percent quieter



TECH SPECS

Finish: matte

Sizes: 13"–18"

Configuration: three sets (13"/18", 13"/14"/18", and 14"/16"/18")

Price: \$400–\$500

than the regular crashes and hi-hats, but the drop in level is substantial. Yet they still produce enough musical tone that they can be utilized in unamplified rehearsals or in private lesson studios. Anyone in need of super-quiet but authentic-feeling cymbals should definitely check these out.

Michael Dawson

For a video demo of the L80 468 cymbal pack, visit moderndrummer.com.

Ahead

Switch Kick Quick-Release Bass Drum Beater System

Need to swap out your beater or adjust its height in seconds? Here's the solution.

One of the highlights of the 2015 Winter NAMM Show was an accessory item by Ahead, the Switch Kick, which allows you to adjust beater height to nine different positions without having to use any tools other than your hand. You can also swap out the standard two-way hard felt/plastic beater for alternative sounds, like a fleece-covered ball or a wire brush (sold separately). We were sent the complete range of Switch Kick products, which included the Two-Way Starter system (\$59.99) and the Sonic, Wire Brush, Felt, and Boom Kick replacement beaters (\$39.99 each).

Two-Way Starter System

The basic Switch Kick includes a lower assembly, which connects to a bass drum pedal just like any standard beater, and an upper section with a DW-style dual beater with hard felt on one side and hard plastic on the other. The upper shaft is made from aircraft-grade aluminum for durability and lighter weight. The lower section is made from stainless steel and is notched so that the upper portion can be locked into place.

Installing the system is super-simple. Just affix it to your pedal as you would any other bass drum beater, secure the lower shaft with a drum key, and then unlock the upper shaft by turning the beater head to either side by a quarter turn. Once unlocked, you can raise the beater to your desired position (there are nine options) and then twist the beater again to lock it back into place. The beater can be extended from 6.25" to 8.125", which gave me plenty of options for striking various-size bass drums (18"-24" were tested) at an optimal point.

Adjusting the beater height wasn't a completely smooth experience; you'll notice a bit of metal-on-metal friction as you move the top section up and down. But the Switch Kick operates very quickly, whether you're looking to change beater height or flip the beater from one side to the other. I use a range of beater types, including lightweight vintage round felts and heavier Danmar wood models, and the Switch Kick Two-Way beater is on the heavier side of the spectrum (106 grams). Because the Switch Kick is a bit heavier than a traditional felt beater, you might have to tighten the springs on your pedal a bit to give you the best response. Sonically, the Two-Way beater provides a big, solid punch, whether using the felt side for a slightly softer attack or the plastic side for increased snap.

Alternative Beaters

In addition to the Two-Way beater that comes with the Switch Kick, you can also purchase various others to provide a greater variety of sound choices. There's a basic round felt option, which weighs a few grams less than the Two-Way and produces a classic, fat, punchy tone (my personal favorite of the bunch). The Sonic Kick plastic beater has a reversible cup-shaped top that gives you a brighter, louder sound with extra attack.

The Boom Kick has a hard-felt core covered in a fleece jacket, which softens the attack and produces a rounded, fluffier tone that pairs perfectly with unmuffled bass drums when you want a boomier symphonic-style sound.

The most unusual beater for the Switch Kick features a stainless-steel wire brush top and an adjustable band that allows you to control the spread of the bristles. The Brush Kick provides a cool new texture that can be explored in a variety of creative ways, such as on quieter jazz gigs where you're playing on a tightly tuned bebop kit or when using a hybrid percussion setup that incorporates hand drums, shakers, and other ethnic instruments within the kit.

Michael Dawson

TECH SPECS

Materials: aircraft-grade aluminum removable top, stainless steel notched shaft

Range: 6.25" to 8.125" (nine positions)

Options: two-way reversible, round felt, fleece-covered felt, wire brush, and hard-plastic cup beaters

Prices: Starter System (with Two-Way beater): \$59.99, additional beaters: \$39.99 each



Chicago Drum

6.5x14 Maple/Poplar and 5.5x14 Mahogany/Poplar Snare Drums

Classic American drum manufacturing revised and reborn.

Chicago has a long history in American drum manufacturing, with two of the most prominent companies, Ludwig and Slingerland, getting their start in the Windy City. Newcomer Chicago Drum has a direct tie to the latter. Company founder Jim Moritz was a factory worker at Slingerland during its famed Niles era in the 1970s, as were his father and great uncle.

"I have a rich family history with Slingerland drums," says Moritz on the Chicago Drum website. "My great uncle Oswald worked for Slingerland and helped my father, Jack, get a job [there] when he emigrated from Germany to the United States. Dad was with Slingerland

for over thirty years. During Slingerland's heyday in the mid-1970s, I worked summers at the Niles plant and after school on the night shift."

Because of his strong ties to Slingerland, it should come as no surprise that Moritz's own company, Chicago Drum, incorporates many classic Slingerland concepts as well as the most current technology available. (Jack Moritz helped create Chicago Drum's original shell formula, just as he designed the first multi-ply drum shell system for Slingerland in the 1950s.)

We were sent two Chicago Drum snares to review: a 6.5x14 5-ply maple/poplar and a 5.5x14

5-ply mahogany/poplar. Both feature 30-degree round-over bearing edges, deeply cut snare beds, solid-maple reinforcement rings, Puresound twenty-strand snare wires, Remo Ambassador drumheads (Coated batter and Hazy bottom), and Slingerland-style inward-flange steel hoops and large-lever throw-off. Those familiar with the Niles-era Slingerland oval badge will notice a similar look to those used by Chicago Drum. But the company states that these aren't simply replica drums, but are rather contemporary

TECH SPECS

Shells: 5-ply/.375"-thick 6.5x14 maple/poplar, and 5.5x14 mahogany/poplar with solid maple re-rings

Bearing Edges: 30-degree round-over

Lugs: 10 beavertail

Hoops: Slingerland-style inward-flange steel

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador batter, Hazy Ambassador bottom

Wires: Puresound 20-strand

instruments with their own unique voice built on the classic sound of great American drums from the 1950s to '70s. Let's check them out!

6.5x14 Maple/Poplar

The makeup of this drum's shell consists of three plies of thin maple on the inside, outside,



6.5x14 Maple/Poplar



5.5x14 Mahogany/Poplar

and center with two thick plies of poplar sandwiched between them. This combo makes for a rich, warm sound with plenty of clarity and cutting power.

The rounded edges help soften some of the bite off the attack and provide a pleasant, soft feel, which gives the drum a vintage flavor, but the tone doesn't suffer from any of the "boxiness" often associated with imprecisely built vintage wood snares. In fact, both Chicago Drum snares we checked out were built flawlessly, which resulted in resonant, full tone, crisp

snare response, and smooth tuning.

I felt that the 6.5x14 maple/poplar sounded best when tuned medium or lower. That was where it had the most open tone, the heftiest punch, and the deepest low-end response.

5.5x14 Mahogany/Poplar

This drum also features a 5-ply shell, with three plies of thin mahogany sandwiching two plies of thick poplar. It has a rich, warm, crisp sound that's similar to the maple drum's, but with a slightly

darker tone that becomes most noticeable at medium and lower tunings. Despite its shallower depth, this snare actually outperformed the 6.5x14 when going for a super-low Don Henley-type fatback sound. And it excelled at tighter jazz/funk tunings, where it produced a strong "snap" without sounding choked or harsh. Medium tuning brought out the most "honk," which could be great when you want a snare sound with a lot of personality and tone.

The two Chicago Drum snares each stood strong on

their own, and they proved to be a great pairing, with each eliciting classic warm wood-shell tones that aren't overly dark and vintage or so specialized and esoteric as to limit their applications. I liked the 5.5x14 mahogany/poplar best for tight, crisp sounds as well as for a detuned fatback, and the 6.5x14 maple/poplar produced absolutely killer tones that were big and punchy in the medium to medium-low range.

Michael Dawson

Check out video demos of these snares at modern drummer.com.



Joe



Saylor Rise Up!

They say comedy is all about timing. So, of course, is music. Stephen Colbert certainly recognized something familiar in the grooves of Jon Batiste and Stay Human when he took over *The Late Show* from David Letterman, hiring the unusual and uplifting group as his house band, and in so doing hippping millions to its tantalizing, super-talented drummer.

Story by Jeff Potter • Photos By Rahav Segev



What awaits us down the road? Or around the very next corner? Ask Joe Saylor that question. He has an uncanny tale about a moment of seeming predestination.

It happened back in 2004, as the drummer's high school graduation approached. Weighing the option of moving to New Orleans in order to continue his music studies, Saylor took a week off from school to travel to the Crescent City and scope things out. He recounts the moment, opening with two emphasized words: "True story."

Saylor continues, "I was just walking down the street one day, kind of aimlessly, because I didn't know where I was going. And Jon Batiste was standing on the street. I had my stick bag in my hand. He saw me and said, 'Hey, man! You play the drums? I play the piano. Let's go play!'"

"So I followed him into a building, which happened to be his high school. In a classroom, there was a piano and a drumset. That's the first time we played together. We exchanged phone numbers, and then we both moved to New York a few months later."

Fast-forward to today. As a member of Jon Batiste and Stay Human, the thirty-year-old drummer has landed one of television's hottest drum seats, grooving on his minimalist kit in the house band for the new post-David Letterman *Late Show With Stephen Colbert*.

On that fated New Orleans day, the friends-at-first-sight clicked on multiple levels. "We have a musical and also a personal and spiritual connection," Saylor explains. "As far as musical connections, Jon's favorite drummers at that time just happened to be drummers that I was also listening to very heavily, especially Jason Marsalis, Adonis Rose, and Shannon Powell. They're all New Orleans drummers that Jon had played with a lot when he was in high school.

"Those drummers have a certain feeling and groove. Shannon has such a deeply soulful feeling in anything he plays, especially when he plays just the snare drum and bass drum. It has this funky but *uplifting* spirit to it. I was drawn to that. And Jason Marsalis and Adonis Rose both have a very serious, intense ride cymbal swing beat that I was drawn to. These are some of the things that brought Jon and me together. Also, I got to play and hang with Ellis Marsalis when I was fifteen years old, so I started listening to a lot of his music. And Ellis was one of Jon's teachers, so [Jon] was heavily

influenced by him as well.

"So, even though Jon and I grew up in completely different parts of the country, in completely different cultures, we were listening to a lot of the same music." With a laugh Saylor adds, "The only difference is that he was from New Orleans and was *in* it; I just had the records."

Saylor's hometown, far north of New Orleans' prolific music scene, was Indiana, Pennsylvania. With a population of merely 14,000, the small town could hardly be called a bustling arts center. But Saylor found abundant inspiration and guidance within his humble environs and just beyond. His trumpeter father and flautist mother were music educators in the public school system. And their local church, the Full Gospel Assembly of God, was a musical nucleus for the entire family. Saylor's mother was the choir director, while his father played in the band.



“Every Sunday my dad would let me sit up next to the drummer at church,” Saylor recalls. “I was fascinated watching him play. He used to let me sit in from time to time. When I didn’t play drums, I’d play percussion, tambourine, woodblock, or shakers. I just wanted to be involved.”

The telltale signs of Saylor’s rhythmic inclinations emerged early in childhood, with the classic activity of banging on pots and pans. Recognizing his son’s undeniable genes, Joe’s father purchased his three-year-old a toy drumset. At age eight, Joe began lessons with local college students, and within four years his quick advancements inspired his father to seek out the best pro guidance available.

He found it sixty-seven miles away, in Pittsburgh, with Roger Humphries, a jazz drummer who’d worked with the heavies, most notably in a stint with Horace Silver that produced many a classic recording. Young Saylor had found his mentor.

“My dad would drive to Pittsburgh every Saturday to drop me off at Roger’s house,” Saylor says. “I was taking lessons, but it was often more just about spending time with him and watching him play. Sometimes the whole lesson would be just Roger sitting at the drums and playing a solo for two hours straight. Or sometimes the lesson was him taking me across the street to his uncle’s house. At that time, the entire street was occupied by members of the Humphries family, including Roger’s mother and some of his uncles and aunts. Some of them had gone to elementary school with people like Art Blakey, Mary Lou Williams, and Billy Strayhorn, all jazz legends.

“So I’d sit and listen to them talk about growing up with those people, and they’d show me old black-and-white photos of young Art Blakey. I couldn’t believe I was so lucky to experience being around those people. I remember going back to sixth grade on the following Mondays and thinking to myself, *I had an experience this weekend that none of my classmates would understand.*”

Ironically, the drumming resource Saylor did bypass was the one closest within reach. “Indiana is a small town, but it’s a college town,” Joe explains. “And they had a great drum line in the marching band at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I loved watching the drummers in the marching band. When I got to high school, I joined,



mostly because I had to—my dad was the band director! I hated it, though. I wasn’t into it. I just wanted to play drumset. Now, when I look back at my younger self, I wish I had taken it more seriously. But at the time I thought, *Aw, this is dumb—I want to swing out!*”

The young Saylor can be forgiven—in his household, jazz LPs, largely big band music, were constantly spinning on the turntable. And Humphries initiated Saylor into another facet of jazz. “He exposed me to bop, and especially hard bop with artists like Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard, Max Roach, Clifford Brown, Coltrane, and Miles Davis.”

The upstart was hooked. Eager to form his own group, Saylor recruited his two best friends, pianist Angelo Versace and bassist Philip Kuehn. Seeking to raise the bar for all, Saylor tapped

Humphries' musician/teacher connections so that his buddies could also study with jazz pros. With their collective initials as a moniker, the trio launched paj3 (pronounced "page three"). Improving by leaps and bounds through their high school years, they picked up local gigs, eventually graduating to more substantial dates in Pittsburgh. And they even rubbed elbows with legends.

"Having my dad as the high school band director was great," Saylor says. "He brought in guest artists for us to play with, like Jon Faddis and Slide Hampton. And he would set up gigs for us to play with them—outside of the high school—when they were in town. He would set up gigs in Pittsburgh at clubs, with the paj3 rhythm section accompanying various artists."

The young friends also performed with Ellis Marsalis when he came to town to teach a master class. "That's where I learned how to play with people," Saylor recalls. "The practice room is different, especially in jazz music. The place you really learn how to play is on the bandstand. And it helps learning with people who can *really* play.

"My advice to younger players is to get around older musicians," Saylor emphasizes. "Be around them as much as possible, and try to play with them. That's where you really get the essence and the feeling of the music. You can get it somewhat from listening to recordings. But there's a difference between listening to a recording and actually being with the *spirit* of those people in person."

Saylor studied with Humphries for six years, eventually advancing to the level where the teacher subbed out some of his own gigs to the fledgling player. By the time Saylor was seventeen years old and covering dates with Humphries' band, he remembers realizing, *Okay, I can do this professionally.*

Soon after that first fortuitous meeting with



Saylor's Setup

Drums: Tama Star Walnut

- A. 5.5x14 snare
- B. 16x16 floor tom
- C. 12x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 15" prototype Fat Hats
- 2. 20" prototype Bounce ride

Sticks: Vic Firth, including mallets and brushes

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador snare and tom batters and Coated Powerstroke 3 (or Coated Emperor) bass drum batter

Percussion: Remo tambourines and cowbell



Batiste in New Orleans, Saylor packed his bags for New York City to attend the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied closely with John Riley and Justin DiCioccio. Subsequently, he earned his master's at the Juilliard School under the guidance of jazz greats Carl Allen and Kenny Washington.

Once engaged in their conservatory studies, Saylor and Batiste gathered freelance gigs, and Batiste recruited Saylor to form a trio. Rounding out the unit with Saylor's longtime bassist friend, Kuehn, the Jonathan Batiste Trio gigged regionally for several years and in 2006 released the independent CD *Live in New York: At the Rubin Museum of Art*.

When Kuehn left town for a summer, the band found itself adrift. But the temporary setback turned out to be a serendipitous open door. "We were left with no bass player and no gigs," Saylor recalls. Tuba player Ibanda Ruhumbika stepped in to fill the gap, along with saxophonist Eddie Barbash. The new unit set upon a grassroots strategy—or perhaps a *pavement* strategy—that would change its future.

"It's wild how it all happened," Saylor says. "We really wanted to bring the music to the people in a different way. So we racked our brains, saying, 'How can we play for people if we don't have any gigs? We could play in the street or the subway station.' Then we figured, 'Why don't we play on the subway cars? But not like typical buskers. Let's literally play a concert in the subway car for the whole ride.'

"So we'd set up in the subway car and play for an hour, the whole way from uptown to downtown. We did that every single night for an entire summer. We ended up getting so many fans. And we eventually realized that this is how we could build a fan base."

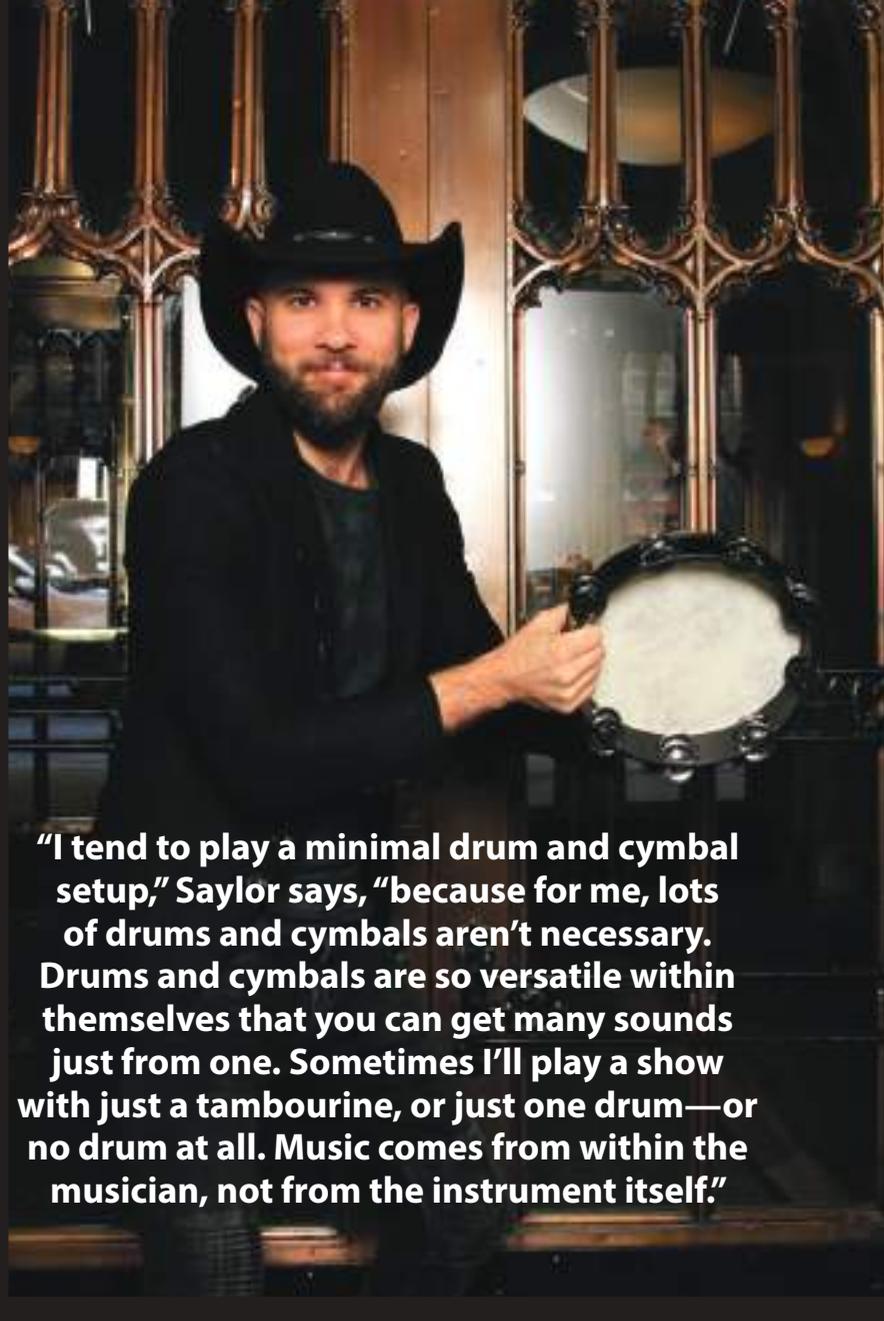
The commuter concerts caused normally blasé New York straphangers to drop their defenses, clapping, cheering, and even boogieing on the swaying and literally rocking subway dance floor. Saylor often grooved the crowd with only his lone tambourine at hand. "When we started getting gigs," he says, "all these people would show up there.

Our fan base just grew and grew. We became known for doing this kind of mobile concert. And that mobile band became known as Jon Batiste and Stay Human." Embracing its gritty venue, in 2011 the band self-released the album *MY NY*, which features takes from the train concerts.

At its club gigs, the band would often harken back to its street roots, parading audiences through venues and out into the streets, with Batiste leading the way, wailing on his melodica and followed by tuba, sax, and Saylor providing some impressively funky tambourine playing. The pied-piper unit gained visibility, leading to a stroke of luck: an invitation to appear on Comedy Central's *Colbert Report*.

For a July 2014 appearance, Colbert featured the band in support of its album *Social Music*. While interviewing Batiste, Colbert asked him to define the meaning of the title. Echoing the band's credo, Batiste responded, "It's music that's meant to be shared. It's meant to be danced to, cried to, laughed to.... The world is global right now. I draw from all styles."

The group then took the stage, slamming into "Express Yourself," with Batiste on vocals. Saylor laid down a shimmying, pumping N'awlins groove sparked with cowbell syncopations. As the tune



"I tend to play a minimal drum and cymbal setup," Saylor says, "because for me, lots of drums and cymbals aren't necessary. Drums and cymbals are so versatile within themselves that you can get many sounds just from one. Sometimes I'll play a show with just a tambourine, or just one drum—or no drum at all. Music comes from within the musician, not from the instrument itself."

shifted into the bridge, the camera framed Saylor as he fired off hellacious fills over the deep pulse. Batiste tore it up behind the keys, then kicked the stool out from under him and grabbed his melodica. With Saylor close behind, now strutting while playing a snaky tambourine pulse, the surging march was on. The audience—plus Colbert—jumped to their feet. Forming a human train, they low-crouch strided out the doors, surging onto 54th Street and into additional crowds that merged with the celebration. It was the kind of New Orleans–block-party-meets-Manhattan–street scene that the band calls a "love riot."

"They liked having us on the show," Saylor says in an understatement. "Then, when Colbert got the *Late Show* gig, he remembered us. He got together and had a conversation with Jon, and they found they had similar beliefs, philosophies, goals, and intentions in what they were all about. It's just that Jon was doing his thing through music and Steven was doing his through comedy."

With Colbert's *Late Show*, the band had found a forum where it could continue to exercise its street philosophy of freely mixing jazz, funk, R&B, blues, pop, and rock, all buoyed by a New Orleans undercurrent. And the core unit could also experiment with diversity, varying its sound with a roster of guest members.

Joe Saylor

"We in Stay Human tend to not necessarily endorse or embrace a genre as much as to embrace the *intention* of the music," Saylor explains. "That's why we call our music 'social music.' It's not about whether we're playing jazz or blues or rock. Whatever it is, it's about the intent, the spirit of the music. It's social music: music for and *with* people."

The passing of the *Late Show* torch from David Letterman to Colbert was one of last year's biggest buzzes in the entertainment world. And the selection of Stay Human for the revered house-band position was a colossal coup for a lower-on-the-radar indie group. Saylor and company realized they were filling the shoes of late-night royalty, so they appreciated the opportunity when former musical director Paul Shaffer met with them to offer his blessings and plenty of good advice.

But it was soon clear that Batiste's group would approach its new high-profile gig by taking a different tack from its predecessors, employing much the same ethos that it had nurtured from the start. The band leans toward originals rather than cover-tune snippets and embraces an in-the-moment vibe, often joyfully winging it.

"There are no charts," Saylor says with a smile. "This band has never depended on reading music. Usually Jon writes the music according to the guest. We pretty much learn everything by ear the day of. It's half and half: Jon either writes the music beforehand and brings it in and teaches it to us, or he comes up with it the day of. I personally hate reading sheet music while playing. I always have. It distracts me from making *music*. Some people are great at it; I never have been, partly because my focus is somewhat on the piece of paper rather than fully inside the music. Thankfully, this band has a similar theory

about that.

"It's a balance," Saylor continues, "because there's no pressure as far as having to sight-read. But there *is* the pressure of having to remember a whole lot! These guys have gotten pretty good at that. A lot of times we'll figure out the arrangement collectively, although the general idea of the song will come from Jon. He may also have a very specific concept and ask me for a particular beat."

On the occasions that Stay Human is slated to accompany a featured musical guest, the artist will normally supply MP3s beforehand. But the rehearsal approach can vary widely. "We played with Willie Nelson together with John Mellencamp," Saylor says by explanation. "They sent a recording and said, 'Learn this song and we'll play it.' Nothing very specific. We got to rehearsal, played it down, and they said, 'Cool, we'll see you at the gig!'"

"On the other hand, some artists are more specific. The most specific so far was Don Henley. It was really cool working with him, because he's a drummer himself. So he was very specific as to what he wanted from everybody, but especially from the drums. He was even specific to what size drums he wanted me to play and how he wanted them tuned. At rehearsal, he came over to me and said, 'Yeah, man, it's great, but it's not the *sound* that I want. Could you get a 7"-deep snare drum and tune it to a certain pitch?' I keep extra equipment there, so I asked my drum tech and he got me what Don asked for.

"Playing with Yo-Yo Ma was special too," Saylor says. "He actually sat in with us for the whole night. We did six or seven songs with him. We recorded one full-length song that's up on YouTube and on the Internet as a webcast. It was a classical piece, 'The Swan.' It was fun



Keith Moon **THE WHO**

Medium shaft with a fast-sloping medium taper for optimal balance.



Ray Luzier **KORN**

Thick neck with a short taper. Great for heavy back beats with the perfect sound and feel.



Jen Ledger **SKILLET**

Unique medium-length taper flanges back out for excellent response and sound clarity.



Chris Coleman

Short taper with an oval tip. Bold design for a full tone on drums and cymbals.



to collaborate and figure out how to play that classical piece in the setting of the Human band.

“That was really cool, because one of the things I love to do is collaborate in other genres—not just other genres of music but other genres of art. For instance, we accompanied and collaborated on the show with a tap dancer, Michelle Dorrance, who recently won the MacArthur genius grant. Playing with Ed Sheeran was also fun, because we played with him in the original Stay Human format of tambourine, melodica, sax, and tuba while he played guitar and sang.”

On a typical workday for *The Late Show*, Saylor arrives at the newly renovated Ed Sullivan Theater, located on Broadway in Manhattan’s theater district, between 11 A.M. and 1 P.M., depending on whether the band is needed for a rehearsal with a featured musical guest. The members get their own rehearsal time for approximately thirty to forty-five minutes, during which they determine what to play for the “bumpers” into and out of commercials, the numbers they’ll perform for the studio audience during commercial breaks, and the guest walk-on material.

Next, they hit the stage for a comedy rehearsal, providing any cues needed for Colbert’s monologue or bits at his desk. After running down the theme song as a balance check for the sound engineers, the band heads down to the hair and makeup department where, Saylor jokes, “We all get pretty.” Next stop is their dressing room for the night’s wardrobe and a return to the stage to warm up the already-stoked studio audience with a high-spirited number or two. After Colbert makes his entrance and answers a few questions from the audience, the official taping begins at 5:30 and wraps roughly at

7. Post-show, Saylor often finds the energy to head out for freelance dates.

In the course of Saylor’s jazz freelancing, he’s played with numerous notables, including Joe Lovano, Steve Wilson, and Wynton Marsalis. But he cites a particular former engagement as being surprisingly influential to his drumming foundation. The gig, spanning a two-year period (2013-14), was with the New York City institution Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks, a band specializing in authentic re-creations of pre-swing jazz music from the ‘20s and early ‘30s.

“I learned so much about drums from Vince and playing with those guys,” Saylor says, “because the drumset was *invented* by the guys that played that style of music. The roots of the instrument we play are based in that music. So I learned so much about timekeeping, feel, sound, dynamics, and orchestration, because on that gig, Vince actually brings the drumset. His drums are from the 1920s. You play a 28” bass drum, a snare drum, a couple of choke cymbals, a China cymbal, some woodblocks, cowbell, and additional pieces like timpani and chimes. It’s almost like a percussion section rather than a typical drumset with tom-toms, a ride cymbal, and crash.

“Playing with them on their steady gig twice a week, along with additional dates, was really an education for me. I’d listened to and played a lot of New Orleans music. And the music Vince plays is based in early New Orleans music and the big band music that came out of that, such as the early Duke Ellington band, Fletcher Henderson, and Paul Whiteman.

“Vince is cool because he’s very specific about the music he

MAKE IT A SIGNATURE YEAR

With New Signature Sticks from VIC

For full specs, descriptions and more go to vicfirth.com/new-products



Joe Saylor

plays; he doesn't play any music beyond the mid-'30s. You've got to be dead on with that music. Vince played with Sonny Greer. He caught the tail end of playing with the original guys who played that music.

"If there's anything I'd pass on to younger musicians," Saylor says, "it's that it is so important to know the history and the origins of the music you're playing. When you ignore that, it's almost as if you're ignoring your grandparents. Check out

where your parents came from; check out where your grandparents came from. It will give you so much insight and wisdom into what's going on right now.

"I studied early jazz in school classes," Joe goes on, "and I'll admit it, I was ignorant. I didn't pay much attention to it. I literally thought to myself, *I'm never going to be playing this kind of music—people don't play this*. Lo and behold, nine years later, I was in the top band in the country that plays that

type of music. You never know."

In addition to the frequent live dates, Saylor played with the Nighthawks on several seasons of the smash series *Boardwalk Empire*, in which the group often appeared on camera. In the last half of 2014, Saylor's touring commitments with Batiste increased, forcing him to move on from the Nighthawks. [Check out next month's issue of *Modern Drummer* to learn all about Giordano's current drummer, Paul Wells.]

The uplifting quality that Saylor cites as a core musical value is evident in his energized, deep-pocketed, band-supporting drumming. And the Stay Human band reflects that value in its penchant for high-spirited, positive music and in its animated stage presentation. The quartet wholeheartedly embraces the value of entertaining its audience, showing them a good, rousing time while simultaneously upholding musical values. Batiste's beaming smile and brightly colored suits light up the stage, and when the pianist jumps to his feet to dance about with the melodica, saxophonist Barbash just may leap on the piano. And Saylor's physical, impassioned showmanship exudes a fully natural showmanship. They're sincerely having a ball, and they're charged when audiences share that.

Make no mistake: Stay Human takes its musicianship very seriously. But the group places a high premium on fun too, much like the early marching bands of New Orleans, which brought their communities out into the streets to celebrate life together.

Reflecting on the many ingredients of musical artistry, ranging from heart to intellect to showmanship, Saylor says, "It's a balance. I think you have to have it all. But everybody has to figure out their own balance of how they do it. For me, I play music because I believe that the *spirit* of the music is more important than the music itself. And I believe that music is a tool, just as a hammer is a tool. You can either break something down or you can build something up. What I want to do is to build up and to uplift.

"I also believe that the spirit of the basis of jazz music is the blues, and the blues is joyful in the face of adversity. That's the spirit of jazz, and that's the spirit that I want to embody."



REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR BASS DRUM IN SECONDS

Introducing the NEW Switch Kick™ Quick Release Bass Drum Beater System

Enables Drummers to 'Switch' Beaters **F.A.S.T**

- Flip the beater 180 degrees
- Adjust the height to 9 different levels
- Switch to over 10 different beaters
- Tool-less design



See it in action!

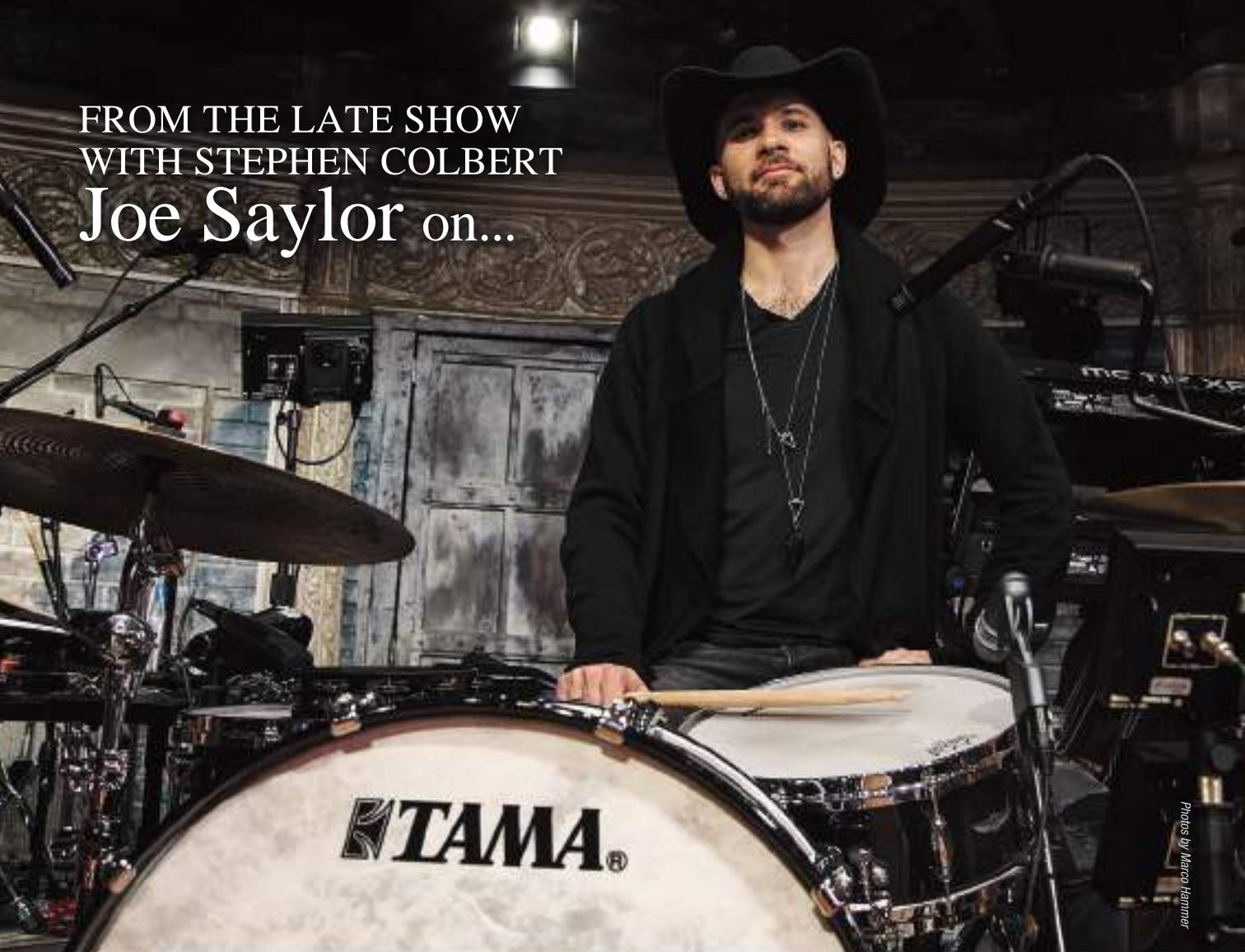


SWITCH
KICK

BY AHEAD

AheadDrumsticks.com 818.727.1127

FROM THE LATE SHOW
WITH STEPHEN COLBERT
Joe Saylor on...



Photos by Marco Hammer

...TAMA STAR Walnut

"A warm, round sound with incredible range. These drums feel like they are part of my body. The best I've ever played!"



TAMA



TAMA STAR DRUMS

HUGH GRUNDY

Highly influential beat group the Zombies separated in 1968, then reunited decades later to finally receive their fair share of accolades. Today an unusual personnel arrangement allows the surviving core members, including the band's impeccable founding drummer, to carry on where their premature swan song, "Time of the Season," left off.

Story by Dennis Diken

Photos by Rahav Segev

Hugh Grundy is one of the coolest drummers to emerge from the British Invasion of 1964. As a cofounder of the Zombies, he used his inimitable sense of style to help fashion the group's forward-thinking music into one of the most revered and respected bodies of work in pop's golden age. His strengths are enviable: His time is solid but soulful, he knows exactly when and what to play, and he does it with great imagination.

The drummer came out of the box swinging, literally. Like his peers, including the Kinks' Mick Avory, the Hollies' Bobby Elliott, session great Bobby Graham, the Animals' John Steel, Manfred Mann's Mike Hugg, and the Spencer Davis Group's Pete York, Grundy dug on American jazz and rock 'n' roll and helped reinvent "cool" in popular music, with a decidedly English accent.

Grundy's uncommon rhythmic inventions drive the Zombies' two U.S. number ones: "She's Not There," their maiden single, and "Time of the Season," which closes *Odessey and Oracle*, the group's 1968 farewell album, ranked by *Rolling Stone* magazine at number one hundred on its 500 Greatest Albums of All Time list. Grundy reunited with the surviving members of the original band to perform the LP in its entirety to rapturous crowds in 2008 and 2009 in England, and again in 2015 in the U.S. (Recent recruits, bassist Jim Rodford, drummer Steve Rodford, and guitarist Tom Toomey, perform the group's current material.) In the spirit of rediscovery of a band whose recorded output and musical skills are far too often overlooked, let's turn our attention to Mr. Hugh Grundy and how he magnificently made the Zombies tick.



BEGIN HERE

Hugh Birch Grundy was born on March 6, 1945, in Winchester, England (celebrated in a hit 1966 novelty song for its famous cathedral), and brought up in Hatfield. His musical interests were sparked in the '50s by the American rock 'n' roll records he heard on Radio Luxembourg. "There was a lot of talk at school about what was obviously a new type of music coming in," Grundy recalls. "My father played violin and wanted me to learn, but I thought, *This is not the way forward in modern music.*"

Shunning sports, Grundy took up the bugle in the school corps. "But from a vanity point of view," he says, "I realized the drummers who were in front were getting much more attention from the spectators—the young ladies—so I changed to drums and realized that to me they were easy to play. Life-changing moment, I think.

"I really learned by watching any group I saw on TV and listening to everyone with complete enthusiasm," Grundy goes on. "I started copying the drummers' movements, on the tables and chairs at home. I used to drive my mum mad." With a few theory exams

behind him and a bit of coaching from Jim Rodford—future bassist for Argent and the Kinks in addition to the reconstituted Zombies—Grundy switched from his military method to a basic rock 'n' roll feel. "As Rod says," the drummer shares, "within an hour I had coordinated independence."

The Zombies formed in 1961 in St. Albans, a town forty minutes north of London, where the original members attended school together. Their collective countenance was not unlike a jolly, bookish chess team—with several bespectacled boys in the lot—but their sound was smart and modern, thanks in large part to the jazz and classical leanings and prowess of keyboardist Rod Argent, Rodford's cousin. Argent and Chris White, a fluid, melodic bassist, were the chief songwriters. Lone guitarist Paul Atkinson concocted lyrical lead and rhythm parts, while frontman Colin Blunstone sang with a



highly expressive voice that ranged from gossamer and breathy to wailingly yearning. Underneath it all, Grundy forged well-constructed architecture, played impeccable fills at all the right spots, and deftly addressed the renowned minor-major key shifts that graced many of the group's songs.

Several years of playing R&B, early rock 'n' roll, soul, and Beatles covers at college dances, youth-club socials, and the like whipped the players into shape, and in 1964 they won the prestigious *London Evening News*-sponsored Herts Beat competition that sought "the top beat group of the country." Decca Records offered a contract on the spot.

The Zombies soon joined the scores of young British groups that were making their bones on the concert stage as their songs climbed the charts. Debut single "She's Not There" was released in July of '64. Stark and haunting, and highlighted by Argent's frenetic Hohner Planet solo, White's sinister bass line, Blunstone's urgent delivery of the intriguing lyrics, and the ensemble's spirited group harmonies, the song stood apart from many of the era's more typically guitar-driven recordings.

The overdubbed drums doubtless caused some head scratching for young sticksmen of the day. A verse snare/hi-hat bossa nova pattern is met by flammed snare accents on beat 4, followed by a straight but groovy feel on the B section, with 2-and-4 snare overdubs. The C section is fired by a snare riding four to the bar, and the solo part rages with Latin-flavored tom-tom fills. It's a breathtaking example of thrilling dynamics and textbook song drumming.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Grundy's original Zombies four-piece Ludwig kit was typical of the time. "I thought if Ludwigs were good enough for Ringo," the drummer recalls, "then that's what I wanted. I still have my original snare signed by all five of us, and it's now in storage. [In the early days] I had one Zildjian cymbal, a 20" ride—which I still have and use all the time. It's mellowed with age, I think. I also had Paiste custom Formula 602s [including a 20" crash/ride], which I still have, but I've bought many various Zildjians since then. Currently I have 14" hi-hats, an 18" China, and a 16" crash, as well as some Paistes, though I'm going to treat myself to 16" and 18" Medium A Zildjian crashes, which I played on our tour of the States in 2015 and loved."

"She's Not There" is one of the earliest fusions of jazz and rock stylings created by a pop group, and it helped open the door for the experimental bent of Pink Floyd, Genesis, Procol Harum, and other progressive bands that came along later in the '60s. The song would see many covers, Santana's 1977 version being among the most popular.

Despite George Harrison's praise for the tune on the BBC's *Juke Box Jury*, "She's Not There" made it only to number twelve in the U.K. However, in the U.S., where it was released on the London Records subsidiary Parrot, it topped the *Cashbox* chart in late '64. This warranted the guys a trip to New York to play the influential DJ Murray the K's Christmas show at the Brooklyn Fox, where they shared a bill with some of their American idols, including Chuck Jackson, Ben E. King, the Drifters, and Patti LaBelle and the Blue Belles. Grundy was "blown away" by a compliment on his bass drum work paid by the event's house drummer. "I thought, *These are the guys I got it [from], and he's saying this to me!*"

The following year saw the rise of Zombiemanía in America, with the number-six single "Tell Her No," a debut LP (in England it was titled *Begin Here*, while in the States a modified version called *The Zombies* was issued), and major TV appearances on *Hullabaloo*, *Shindig!*, and *The Red Skelton Show*. On the Dick Clark Caravan of Stars tour, the group was mobbed by rabid fans, recalling the hysteria that surrounded the Beatles' stateside visits.

While an additional stream of live dates in the U.K., Canada, and Europe proved exhausting, the work helped to tighten the combo's playing considerably. And with Argent and White's proficiency as ascending songwriters, the band set estimable standards for the pop gentry with consistency and excellence in its recordings. Some say it took the Beatles a few beats to catch up to the Zombies' compositional and harmonic sophistication.

Certain cuts that illustrate Grundy's versatility are well worth checking out. The band's fêted ballads, such as "Leave Me Be," "Nothing's Changed," and "The Way I Feel Inside," are studies in understatement. (On "The Way I Feel Inside," in fact, Grundy lays out entirely.) Meanwhile, irresistible rockers "Is This the Dream," "Don't Cry for Me," and "She Does Everything for Me" stomp and roll with purpose and controlled abandon. And Grundy's natural-sounding but well-studied swing elevates numbers like "Remember You," "I Want You Back Again," and an airy take on Gershwin's "Summertime." "We used to go to the jazz club in Hatfield," Grundy recalls, "and I'd listen, keeping an eye on the drummer."

Another '60s English beatkeeper who had a jazz flair cast his spell on Grundy. "One of my early influences was Bobby Elliott of the Hollies," Hugh explains. "He was really good and always looked the part when he was playing, always had a flashy move or two. To this day he is top

of my list of favorites." Grundy also still holds Buddy Rich, "all of the great jazz players," and Ringo Starr in high esteem—though his admiration extends well beyond drummers he discovered back in the day. "Thomas Lang, Mike Portnoy, Steve Gadd—there are too many to mention," Grundy says.

END HERE...AND BEGIN AGAIN

Though the Zombies continued to ride a creative high and receive exposure on British TV programs as well as Otto Preminger's feature film *Bunny Lake Is Missing*, the band was unable to light any real fires in its native England after 1965. In '66 the Zombies saw falling fortunes in the States, dwindling recordings, choice gigs becoming scarcer, and a fiasco with an unscrupulous promoter in the Philippines.

In 1967 the band members decided to call it quits, amicably, but first they would make their second and final LP. Sessions were held in London at Abbey Road—directly following the Beatles' recording of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—and at Olympic Studios. In April 1968 British CBS released the self-produced *Odessey and Oracle*, a kaleidoscopic song cycle rife with adventuresome writing, ornate harmonies, pensive themes, and vital playing.

Grundy is firmly at the helm, with a crisp, commanding, orchestral presence amid the Mellotron-led baroque landscape. His lock with White, though well established from the get-go, had matured. "What can I say about Chris—he was and still is my best friend," Grundy says. "We played off each other and somehow became the best rhythm section you can get." "Care of Cell 44," "Brief Candles," and "Hung Up on a Dream" bear witness to this claim. The celestial "Changes"



STEVE RODFORD

The new-era Zombies drummer can boast direct lineage to authentic British Invasion musicality.



There's nothing like a good Zombies apocalypse. Especially when it's led by Rod Argent and Colin Blunstone, who just won't let the heart of a legendary band they cofounded in 1964 stop beating. In 1999—some thirty-two years after the original lineup dissolved—the keyboardist and singer enlisted some new blood and went on to tour with great success. Highlights included an L.A. Santa Monica Pier show attended by a crowd 20,000 strong and a headlining gig at New York's Central Park. The band's latest CD, *Still Got That Hunger* (the fourth featuring the revamped lineup), was recorded live in the studio and saw the Zombies triumphantly return to *Billboard's* Top 100 album charts in 2015.

While Hugh Grundy manned the throne on select dates for the *Odessey and Oracle* tours with the re-formed combo, the pulse has otherwise been kept alive by Steve Rodford. His father, Jim Rodford, also happens to be the Zombies' current bassist. Jim held the bottom end for another renowned ensemble that made waves in the '70s. "Being that my dad was in Argent," says Rodford the younger, "I got to watch their amazing drummer, Bob Henrit, at rehearsals and gigs, starting when I was about nine years old. It was then that I knew I just had to be a drummer! For years I tried to copy everything he did, eventually depping [subbing] for him occasionally when I was about sixteen. He and John Bonham remain my main influences."

Rodford's rhythmic versatility is informed by his myriad other talents and activities. "I also play bass, guitar, and piano," Steve explains. "I've had small successes with stuff I've written and produced for TV, and I've produced and engineered other bands and writers. I love the studio and have been writing and recording since I was a teenager." Rodford's impressive résumé includes Rio, Mick Abrahams, Obsession, Kick (with Leo Lyons of Ten Years After), Don Airey, and John Verity.

And, of course, the Zombies. "It's a total privilege to be part of such a great band," says Rodford, who's joined in the current lineup by guitarist Tom Toomey. "On stage we play the classics along with their newer material and a few of Colin's solo hits. Plus we include a few Argent things. With my dad in the group it feels like a continuation of both bands to me."

Rodford uses a Yamaha 9000 Recording Custom set, with a 20" bass drum, a 12" rack tom, a 14" floor tom, and a standard-size snare. "It's a small kit," he says, "but it sounds amazing miked up through a big PA. I have a D6 mic mounted inside the bass drum, and I absolutely love my Porter and Davies BC2, which goes everywhere with me. Changed my drumming life, that thing! And Zildjian cymbals always!"

Unsurprisingly, Rodford has high regard for his predecessor. "Hugh is such a lovely guy and a great drummer," Steve says, "more towards the Mitch Mitchell jazzier style than me. And he gives those early records such a unique feel. On the *Odessey and Oracle* tour in the States, we closed the show with us both playing "She's Not There," two kits side by side, which was *such* fun."

finds Grundy on bongos and features his only vocal (low notes) on a Zombies record.

Despite its eloquent majesty, the album tanked in the U.K. and saw release in the U.S. only thanks to the urging of "musical Zelig" Al Kooper, then an A&R staffer for Columbia. While the LP met a similar fate stateside, its closing number, "Time of the Season," was released as a single, and in the spring of '69 it topped the *Cashbox* chart. Grundy's tom-led groove, in lockstep with the bass, furnished the million-seller with an unshakeable rhythmic hook. "I dubbed an extra low tom-tom during the last keyboard solo," the drummer reveals, "to fatten it up." Blondie's powerhouse drummer, Clem Burke, who recalls the smash from his first combo's repertoire, says, "Hugh's playing was elegant and hugely influential, in a band with a high level of musicianship among all its members."

"At the time," Grundy recalls, "I don't think any of us thought that *Odessey and Oracle* was going to be huge, but of course now it's one of the most highly respected albums of all time." This most enchanted and timeless encapsulation of the Summer of Love, a work often mentioned in the same breath as pop masterpieces like *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society* and the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, is revered by the likes of Tom Petty, the Foo Fighters, Fleet Foxes, Weezer, Wilco, Matthew Sweet, the Bangles, and so many others. Paul Weller says it's his favorite album and claims it was the reason he pursued songwriting.

But, alas, the Zombies were no more. Rod Argent and Chris White formed Argent, which scored a top-five smash with "Hold Your Head Up" in 1972. Paul Atkinson eventually became an A&R man (and, sadly, passed away in 2004), and Colin Blunstone sold insurance before embarking on a distinguished solo career. As for Grundy, "I went to work with CBS Records and played on quite a few sessions, which was great fun."

Though, remarkably, Grundy never had any formal drum lessons, during a particularly trying period while he was in his thirties, he decided to take the plunge. "I studied for two years with a guy called Mike Grigg," he says, "which focused me through those troubled times. After that I played in several local dance bands, including the Kingfishers, Tongue 'n' Groove, and then Fugas—'four ugly gits and a singer!' I'm now living in Menorca, one of the Balearic Islands, happily married to my wife, Tracy, with four wonderful daughters. I play with a top local band called the Flaming Geckos, so happily my chops are up to scratch." All one need do to validate this last statement is check Grundy's drumming on the Zombies' *Odessey and Oracle (Revisited): The 40th Anniversary Concert* CD and DVD releases—the man has totally still got it.

Since 1999, Rod Argent and Colin Blunstone have been gigging and recording new music as the Zombies, with Jim Rodford on bass and his son Steve on drums. The group's sound continues to captivate listeners old and new.

For the *Odessey and Oracle* "reunion" dates, musical wizard Darian Sahanaja of the band the Wondermints, who's also acted as Brian Wilson's musical director since 1999, was enlisted to play additional keyboards and help bring the album's essence to life for the stage. Not surprisingly, he has high regard for Mr. G: "Hugh comes from a generation where the ultimate appeal of a drummer was his ability to swing," Sahanaja explains. "Even when playing the steadiest of rock grooves, he swings *hard*. His fills on even sparse tracks like 'Beechwood Park' are unique and burst with personality. And that personality couldn't be any more humble; I asked him how his first tour meet-and-greet with fans went, and he said to me with an astonished look, 'I can't believe these people want my autograph.'"

And how cool is that?

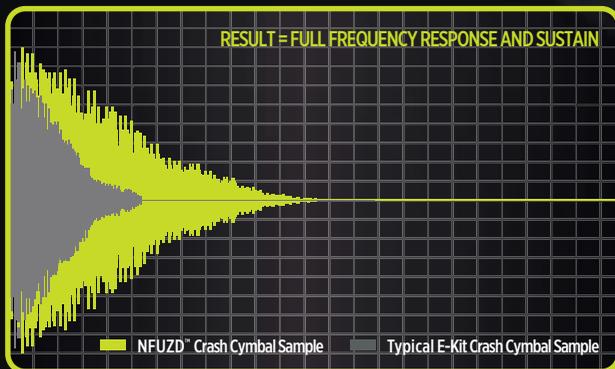
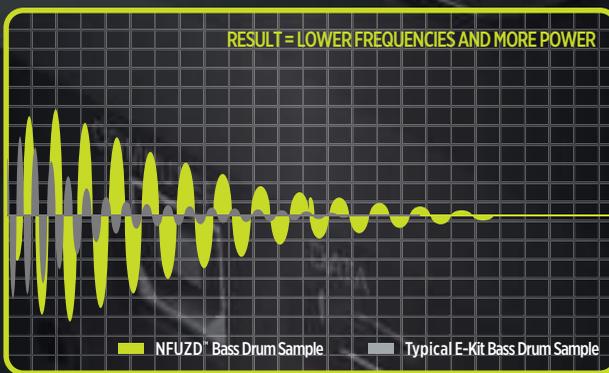


Uncompressed Sounds



16-Bit / 44.1 KHz On-Board Samples produce **Advanced Drum Emulation (A.D.E.)** by utilizing true WAV sample playback for superior acoustic drum sounds with a wide dynamic range

NSPIRE Bass Drum Samples Sustain More Low Frequencies throughout the length of the note compared to typical electronic kit sounds, resulting in fuller frequencies and more power



NSPIRE Cymbal Sounds Feature FULL Stereo WAV Samples with Full Frequency Response instead of a short sample with loop points and a false fade to create sustain commonly found in other electronic kits resulting in a smoother and more realistic sound

NSPIRE SERIES // ADVANCED DRUM EMULATION

Get

NSFUZDTM
AUDIO

AVAILABLE NOW

www.NFUZDAUDIO.COM

Cliff Almond

Story by Ken Micallef

Photos by Shinnosuke "Danny" Natsume

San Diego native Cliff Almond had special advantages as a young drummer banging his way through the business. Surrounded by a family of professional musicians, Almond learned early the value of sight-reading, good time, and showing up to the gig fully prepared. After becoming a self-described Weckl clone in his teens, Almond pursued what he calls "the unraveling," wherein he mindfully freed himself of technical expectations and prescribed drumming rules in order to expose the singular player that resided within his unique soul and psyche.

Years later, an extremely varied skill set and a list of recurring employers prove this approach has paid off. After playing in orchestras, pit bands, and various recording situations in California, Almond studied and taught at the Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT). He relocated to New York City in 1989, where letters to Dave Weckl resulted in his first (and ongoing) gig with pianist **Michel Camilo**. Almond regularly travels to Japan, where he holds down the throne with one of that country's most popular rock bands, **Quruli**, as well as its hottest J-pop star, **Utada Hikaru**. Back stateside, Almond is one of a small group of drummers regularly called upon by guitarist **Wayne Krantz** to improvise beyond borders.

"Cliff Almond has been at the center of the storm in my band on and off for years," Krantz says. "He's an incredible drummer with great hands and an airy touch, and he can get down. He has impeccable time, and he always comes to play. Cliff has his *thing*, plus a truly soulful rock feel—a serious asset. He has that intangible something that lets the music move forward creatively. Cliff Almond, Zach Danziger, and Gary Novak were the three junior musketeers when I started gigging in the early '90s. Now they're masters, each in his own way."

Almond offers lessons on his popular website, CliffAlmond.com, where he also pens a thoughtful blog. "Many of us don't realize that the same elements that are required for us to progress musically can be as constricting as they are beneficial," the drummer wrote in a post titled "Fundamentalism, Musically and Otherwise." "Many of us adhere to fundamentals that may no longer be beneficial to our growth. And we often have concepts that go unexplored because of [expectations] in how we think music should be performed."





MD: Your approach with Michel Camilo and Wayne Krantz is very different from that of the drummers who came before you. It reminds me of Zigaboo Modeliste, if he played percussion. More air between the notes.

Cliff: I come from a family of classical musicians, and I played orchestral drums and percussion originally. I did pit work when I was young, a lot of orchestral music. My brother is concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony. My father is a conductor, and my mother is a piano teacher. So my approach is coming dynamically, hopefully, from a classical background. I'm not a huge fan of classical music, but my parents started me on piano and violin, and I kept going with drums. They finally gave in!

MD: How does that classical background influence the way you interpret music now?

Cliff: At first I was very rigid. I'm a type A personality—

everything has to make sense. There's no improvisation in the classical world. And I didn't improvise until I started getting into Rush and the Beatles. Then jazz really opened that up for me. I tried to bring some of my classical sensibilities to that as well.

MD: How does your approach differ when playing rock with Quruli?

Cliff: After Rush, I got into fusion, then I cloned Vinnie and Weckl and landed Michel's gig. But I've always loved 8th-note, straight-pocket music. And it wasn't until I tried to go back to playing a pocket that I realized how hard it is to play straight time that doesn't move, like Steve Jordan, and time that feels good and is consistent. That's what Quruli is all about. I like to be a versatile musician, though that approach isn't always reflected in my work with Quruli. But it does affect how I approach that music compositionally and section-wise, and how I orchestrate things.

MD: Camilo and Krantz demand a lot of improvisation. What else do those two gigs share?

Cliff: Camilo's thing is more notated in terms of the specifics of what he wants. He will tell you specifically, and that allows you to lock into more of a formalized approach. You can assemble a group of ideas and pattern them out. Wayne's gig is the opposite. The modulations in his music are tough, but the hardest thing is to really write a song, and his are amazing. The bass player is the star of Wayne's gig, really. If that gig is done right, even people who don't know anything about music will feel it, and it will make sense to them. In the end it's about Wayne's compositions.

MD: If the beat is pushed on Camilo's gig, which is how it sometimes sounds, what does that force you to do?

Cliff: It depends on who's playing bass. That music has an edge sometimes; that's just where Michel feels it. I tend to play on top too, so it's about finding a balance. Often I will tape the gig and make sure it's not pushing too much. The Latin thing swings best when it's relaxed, but with an edge. Most of Michel's tempos, especially for drum solos, are very bright. Very fast tempos. The key is to have a groove in there so it doesn't sound frantic. My favorite traditional Latin drummers, like El Negro [Horacio Hernandez], they've got the swing, the facility, plus they're relaxed and loose at the same time. It can be hard to mix that in when the music is really syncopated, like Michel's. I try to broaden it up and stay back. Sometimes it's a matter of pushing and pulling.

MD: Your approach with Camilo is more like original Brazilian guys such as Milton Banana and João Palma. It's

"There's only one you. If you figure out what that is and start molding it, then you can offer something nobody else can."



Almond's Setup

Drums: Yamaha Club Custom series

- A.** 6.5x14 Yamaha Vintage snare
- B.** 6.5x14 Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Maple
- C.** 7x12 tom
- D.** 13x14 floor tom
- E.** 14x16 floor tom
- F.** 18x22 bass drum

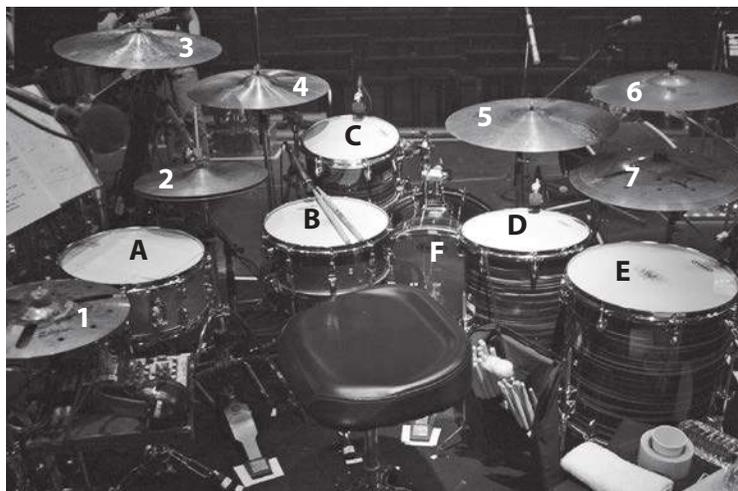
Heads: Evans G2 or G Plus Coated snare batters and 300 series snare-sides, G1 Coated tom batters and resonants, EQ2 bass drum batter and EQ3 Reso

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** two 14" A Custom EFX stacked in a hi-hat configuration
- 2.** 15" New Beat hi-hats
- 3.** 18" Constantinople crash with rivets
- 4.** 17" A Medium Thin crash
- 5.** 22" Kerope ride
- 6.** 18" A Medium crash
- 7.** 20" Kerope ride with an 18" A Custom EFX cymbal stacked on top

Hardware: Yamaha

Sticks: Vic Firth SD4 Combo, 5A, and 5B





TOP PICKS

OUR BEST DEALS—ON SALE MARCH 1 THRU MARCH 31

EXCLUSIVE[™] PEARL EXPORT SERIES SHELL PACK WITH 830 SERIES HARDWARE AND 900 SERIES KICK PEDAL

(EXX725S/C703) (EXX725S/C704) LIST: \$999.00

CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY
SELECTION VARIES BY LOCATION

YOUR CHOICE
\$649⁹⁹

ALSO AVAILABLE
IN THIS COLOR



EXCLUSIVE[™] AGAZARIAN TRADITIONAL CHINA CYMBALS

(AGTC12) (AGTC14) (AGTC16) (AGTC18) LIST: \$99.00-\$178.00

MODELS VARY BY LOCATION

12"
STARTING AT
\$34⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE[™] OCDP 14x7" 25-PLY VENTED MAPLE SNARE DRUM IN SILVER SPARKLE FADE

(OCSN714V25SSF) LIST: \$499.99

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$259⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE[™] LUDWIG 14x8" USA CLASSIC SERIES MAPLE/BLACK OAK SNARE DRUM

(LKS784MXBH) LIST: \$460.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$299⁹⁹



YAMAHA 600 SERIES DOUBLE-BRACED HARDWARE PACK

(HW680W) LIST: \$555.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

REG. \$269.99

\$40 OFF

SALE

\$229⁹⁹



ZILDJIAN DRUM STICK PACKS

(SDSP221) (SDSP179) (SDSP181) (SDSP184)

LIST: \$46.50-\$51.75

REGULAR
\$22.99-\$26.99

\$5 OFF

STARTING AT
\$17⁹⁹



FOR MORE GREAT DRUM SHOP DEALS OR TO FIND A STORE NEAR YOU, VISIT GUITARCENTER.COM.

Cliff Almond

lighter and more percussive.

Cliff: It's also a lot of trial and error. I trade off the gig with Dafnis Prieto and Mark Walker. I've taped a lot of the gigs to figure everything out, which I do on every gig. I try to find the sweet spot.

MD: Krantz's gig is more open-ended. What's your process there?

Cliff: Wayne's thing is the most unique gig on the planet. It takes guts to say, "We're going to play in D minor," and just play. Wayne has cues, from "up" and "way up" to "down" and "way down," and a "shhhh" cue. And "cut," which is on the last 8th note, a stop. But his is an incredibly loose framework. Wayne just picks a tempo and we go. If it's done right, it turns

into a color that everyone—the band and the audience—can feel. It's like a wave. I've seen Tim Lefebvre and Keith Carlock and Zach Danziger do it with Wayne. It's deep. It's incredible.

MD: Wayne is a great musician.

Cliff: Totally. Even in what he wants to hear. He's told me, for instance, "If it feels like you should go to funk or samba there, do the opposite." He's always searching.

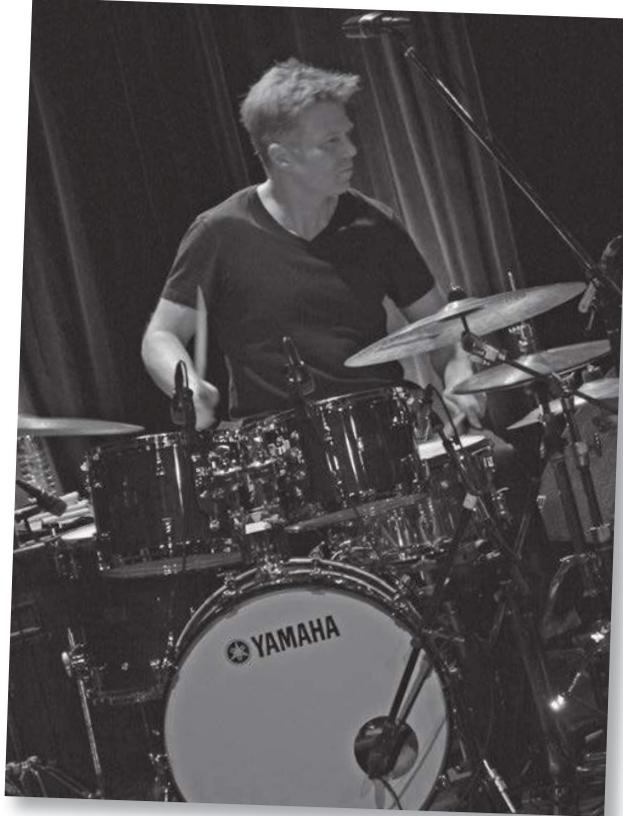
MD: You have an interesting rim language with both of those artists, similar to Antonio Sanchez, but in a different context.

Cliff: It's just an attempt to find different sounds to play. I've consciously tried to get away from the technical side of things. When I play now, I think of the sound palette. When everything works, ideas come out of that. I've been doing things with my fingers on the snare drum head. It's like playing a tabla: triplet ideas, little accents and variations in between the notes.

When I find something I like, I work it out later and stuff starts to happen. That's another thing Krantz has taught me: Just go with it. I'm generally very methodical. So I'm consciously trying to get away from that. And I sound better for it. I was too clean. I had basically cloned Dave Weckl through his *Contemporary Drummer + One/Dave Weckl All Star Band Music* [Alfred] package. Then I got one of Weckl's gigs through Weckl. I met him at one of his gigs and he asked me to play his set. God bless him, he recommended me for Michel's gig.

MD: How did you break out of the clone stigma?

Cliff: I began listening to Antonio Sanchez, Bill Stewart, and other guys. I was stuck in that linear, "everything must be clean" approach. I didn't want to stay there. So I moved from San Diego to New York to get my ass kicked. I threw myself back into the fire and tried to absorb things, and slowly it came together. I still sound like a bad version of Dave Weckl. [laughs] But if you can develop that



Influences

Rush Hemispheres, Moving Pictures, All the World's a Stage, A Farewell to Kings (Neil Peart) /// **The Beatles** Live at the Hollywood Bowl, Revolver (Ringo Starr) /// **Al Di Meola** Elegant Gypsy (Steve Gadd, Lenny White), Casino (Steve Gadd), Land of the Midnight Sun (Steve Gadd, Lenny White, Alphonse Mouzon) /// **Wynton Marsalis** Black Codes (From the Underground) (Jeff "Tain" Watts) /// **Branford Marsalis** Trio Jeepy (Jeff "Tain" Watts) /// **John Scofield** Meant to Be (Bill Stewart) /// **Nik Kershaw** The Works (Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff Porcaro) /// **Chick Corea** Elektric Band (Dave Weckl) /// **John Coltrane** Impressions (Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes)

clean thing, you can un-develop it. You've got the ears to do it.

MD: Regarding the rim language, you heard something you liked and worked on it?

Cliff: Right. I heard Brian Blade do it on a Wolfgang Muthspiel duo record, *Friendly Travelers*. That's breathtaking. His touch is so great, with all this finger action. Brian is really great on slow tempos. I also watched Shawn Pelton and tried to absorb his movement on the drums.

MD: Your arms move like whips. Sometimes you move your forearm sideways, which looks like bad technique.

Cliff: It probably is. I used to have all these perfect technical practices, but I didn't like the way I sounded. I had to dump all that stuff. When I hear something, I figure out how to do it, and I don't care if my arm sticks out weirdly or not. I don't care. If that's what it takes to get what I'm hearing...that's the bottom line. Antonio Sanchez and I have talked about consciously unlearning things to get to our own sound. It's really hard. All that [perfect technique] can lock you in; I didn't want to be locked in.

MD: You wrote in one of your blog posts, "Being an individual in music requires tremendous amounts of self-examination. You must trust that you have a valid set of ideas even if the world doesn't acknowledge them." That's scary.

Cliff: It *is* scary. Keith Carlock, for instance, puts his drums at such odd angles: flat toms, his floor tom is at an off angle, his snare drum angle is unusual. We shared a practice space for years. I would often play on the kit after he did. I thought, *What are you doing?* He was trying to play things differently.

MD: Given these radical ideas, how do you instruct students?

Cliff: I try not to teach from muscle memory. I was taught that you learn everything, assemble the information, and that's your skill set. When playing, I would connect licks, and if I didn't connect them in the right order, I couldn't get them out. My vocabulary was locked in. Playing should be like speaking. You're not thinking about what you're going to say—you're thinking about the topic. That was part of the unraveling for me. I didn't want to play from licks anymore.

I'll ask students to assemble a song and solo over it, like on the Max Roach album *Drums Unlimited*, where he composes a song on two toms and then solos over it. Casey Scheuerell pointed out

Recordings

Various Abstract Logic New Music Festival 2010
/// **Quruli** Antenna, Nikki
/// **Michel Camilo** One More Once, Thru My Eyes
/// **Wayne Krantz** Your Basic Live 2006
/// **Utada Hikaru** In Budokan 2004
/// **John Tropea** Gotcha Rhythm Right Here
/// **Akiko Yano** Reverb
/// **Michel Camilo Big Band** Caribe: Live at Altos de Chavón

Serious KAT



As Drummer/Programmer for DR. Dre, Trevor Lawrence Jr. knows a thing or two about crafting beats. He's done it again and again for the most notable names in Hip Hop and most recently for the soundtrack to the hit film *Straight Outta Compton*. Trev's new weapon of choice is the all-new KAT kt4. A sound module packed with over 700 expertly-sampled drum, cymbal, DJ, EFX and percussion sounds, integrated sequencer, play-along tracks and USB connectivity to incorporate your unique sound library. Big on pro features for today's serious kats.

See it at katpercussion.com/KT4

The all-new KAT kt4 E-Drum Set —
Advanced Percussion Technology



KAT
DIGITAL PERCUSSION



Cliff Almond

that approach to me when I studied at PIT in 1987. After PIT I went back to San Diego and practiced eight hours a day for a solid year. Then I wrote letters and sent tapes to Dave Weckl, and when he came to town he invited me to play his drums. Dave is a very generous cat.

MD: You also tune your drums differently. It's a very open and resonant sound.

Cliff: I tune the 12" tom like a straight-ahead tom, a lot of overtones, almost like a timbale. I tune the floor tom really deep. I use a deep snare with an open ring and no padding. My small cymbal stack is the opposite of the deep snare sound. The kick is a standard 20".

MD: What are the other concepts you stress in your online teaching practice?

Cliff: I developed my approach after seeing endless gospel-chops videos from guys who don't have gigs but who are teaching. I wanted to have a teaching option for drummers who actually want to work and not necessarily cram in every last note on every tune. My concept is to help a drummer develop his or her own voice, how to not get locked in, and how to trust yourself.

There's only one you, and if you figure out what that is and start molding it, then you

can offer something nobody else can. Today there are so many guys with unbelievable facility. The only thing that will make you unique is your voice. And it's not about chops.

MD: What do you practice now if you have a day?

Cliff: I usually just play along with Elvin Jones records or with something that gives me difficulty. Or I might use Peter Erskine's *Afro-Cuban Essentials* app. I'll work on my hands, sometimes grouping paradiddles in groups of fours, fives, sixes, sevens, and eights. I play paradiddles with those groupings over a steady pulse ["The Paradiddle Grid"]. It's tough. That separates my hands from my mind. And I play free over a click.

MD: Long-term goals?

Cliff: I want to do my own record where I play all the instruments. I can't sing, so I'll hire singers. I admire Nate Wood, who also plays everything. He's a possessed player. And he plays entirely in the moment. That's something to really aim for every time you play. If you can let go of control and play in the moment, after you've done all your homework, that's when the best things happen.



The Official Drums of Cliff Almond

Yamaha artist since 2000, Cliff Almond continues to be one of the most in-demand drummers in New York City. With his infectious energy and his dynamic combination of pop, jazz, Latin, and a myriad of other styles, Cliff can most often be found in the studio or performing the world over with great artists including Wayne Krantz, John Pattitucci, Mike Stern, and Trey Anastasio.

Get to know Cliff here:
4wrd.it/OfficialAlmond

 **YAMAHA**

SHARING PASSION & PERFORMANCE

www.yamahadrums.com

THE FINAL WORD ON SNARE DRUMS



**CHICAGO DRUM...
BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS™**

Chicago Drum produces a vintage style 14" snare that starts with our own high-quality 5-ply shell, a nearly 3/8" thick lay-up of Maple/Poplar or Mahogany/Poplar.

Solid steam bent maple reinforcement rings, ultra-smooth bearing edges with 30 degree round overs, and deep, flat, wide cut snare beds are standard to enhance sensitivity.

As former Slingerland® employees from 1955 through 1986, we built some of the finest drums for the best players in the world.

Now it's time to experience our versions of a timeless classic... from our skilled hands to yours.



DISCOVER TRUE VINTAGE™

Classic Styling • Legendary Sound • Made in the USA
We built them back in the day. We're building them again.™

www.chicagodrum.com
Dealer inquiries welcome.



EVANSDRUMHEADS.COM

IT'S TIME TO PLAY FOLLOW NO LEADER



The sound you want should always be the sound you get. That's why Evans Level 360 offers the most consistent fit for all drums, so you can get greater tonal range, effortless tuning and the freedom to express yourself any way you want.

SET THE TONE

JAY WEINBERG | SLIPKNOT

Kevin March

**Guided by Voices/
Ricked Wicky leader
Robert Pollard's
go-to drummer avoids
cliché at every turn—
even down to the way
he's managed his career.
For him it's all about
living in the moment,
in the studio
and beyond.**



Story by David Jarnstrom
Photos by Paul La Raia



When Kevin March graduated from Berklee College of Music in the early '90s, "indie rock sideman" was likely not one of the school's recommended occupational pursuits. But thanks to a solid mix of talent, timing, perseverance, and people skills, the now forty-seven-year-old drummer/producer has enjoyed a long and successful career working with a veritable who's who of alternative A-listers, including Guided by Voices, Shudder to Think, the Dambuilders, Jeff Buckley, James Iha, and the Rentals, among countless others.

As a player who prides himself on understated musicality and the ability to blend in with a bevy of different bands, March doesn't come out swinging with atomic chops or confounding polyrhythms. Rather than unload his entire toolbox, this savvy timekeeper is chiefly concerned with the nuts and bolts: feel, pulse, and supporting the song—i.e., the things that keep getting him called back for more work.

Yet March is a drummer's drummer at heart. A balanced amalgam of Jim Keltner and Keith Moon, the guy can hold down the fort *and* storm the castle. For proof, look no further than his recent deluge of material with Robert Pollard, Guided by Voices' principal creative force and impossibly prolific frontman. In 2015 alone, March played on Pollard's excellent solo effort *Faulty Superheroes* and no fewer than three full-length releases by the post-GBV outfit Ricked Wicky—a self-proclaimed "sophisticated arena rock band."

MD recently caught up with March to discuss his myriad projects new and old, his rewarding new "day job" in music education, and how studying with a legendary jazz drummer changed his life.

MD: People don't typically equate Berklee-trained musicians with indie/alt-rock types. How did you come to find your particular niche?

Kevin: I love all kinds of music, but I always wanted to be in a rock band. I grew up on a farm in York, Pennsylvania, and my dad—who studied a little jazz—had a '50s Gretsch kit that I started on when I was six. I'd bring out all his Miles Davis and early Chicago records and play along to them. In grade school I discovered Peter Dinklage, Phil Rudd, and John Bonham, and it was like, *This is what I want to do with my life*. And then in high school someone turned me on to R.E.M., early U2, and the Smiths, and I thought, *I want to be in a band like this*.

At Berklee my contemporaries were people like Jim Black, Dan Rieser, and Abe Laboriel Jr.—guys who could play jazz *really* well. I would do *Stick Control* exercises with one of my teachers, Ian Froman—another phenomenal jazz drummer—and he'd comment on how I kept excellent time. Knowing I wanted to play rock anyway, and that these other guys were so good at jazz, I decided to focus on my passion and concentrate on what I did really well.

MD: You're a very unselfish, musical player. You rarely do anything super-flashy, yet your parts are always interesting. You always make the right choices.

Kevin: I don't think I was ever meant to be a soloist. I understood early on that I wasn't going to be *that* kind of drummer. I get most excited when I'm thinking of a drum part from a producer's perspective. That means more to me than playing rudiments at a certain speed. I always think of Jim Keltner and Hal Blaine—those are two of my favorite drummers, and those guys *work*. Why? They always do right by the song. As a working drummer, you need to put your ego aside and ask yourself, *What if this was my song?*

MD: Your career began with the Dambuilders. Was that right after you graduated?

Kevin: Yeah, they were recording with my friend and fellow Berklee alum Rich Costey [Muse, Weezer], and they needed a drummer. They had just moved to Boston from Hawaii—Daniel Glass actually played drums on their first record. So I auditioned, joined the band, and went to Europe shortly after. It all happened really fast. It was fortunate timing, because Nirvana had just opened the door for college rock bands like ours to get signed to major labels.

MD: The Dambuilders had interesting instrumentation.

Kevin: We had a very different sound because of Joan Wasser [aka Joan as Police Woman], our electric violinist. She was very punk rock. She was



friends with the guys in Shudder to Think, and we would play with them a lot, so I got to know Nathan [Larson, guitar] and Craig [Wedren, vocals] really well. That's the story of my career, really—it's built on the relationships I made with all these amazing artists I was meeting at that time. We toured with Weezer right when they were starting to break, and their bass player, Matt Sharp, asked me to do [his side project] the Rentals. And Guided by Voices opened for the Dambuilders when they were starting to get some notoriety, so I met Robert [Pollard] way back then.

MD: Did your bandmates feel threatened when you started playing with other artists?

Kevin: They couldn't have been more supportive. Joan was actually in a couple of those side projects with me—Those Bastard Souls and Mind Science of the Mind with Nathan from Shudder to Think. The latter is how I first started working with Ted Niceley, who was producing bands like Fugazi and Jawbox and Girls Against Boys. When Shudder was recording *50,000 B.C.* and needed a drummer, I was brought in because of my relationship with Nathan and Ted.

MD: Adam Wade, who played on the preceding Shudder album, *Pony Express Record*, told us that Ted Niceley is pretty exacting when it comes to drums.

Kevin: [laughs] I'm sure he mentioned the "Russian Dragon." Ted had this machine that could detect if you were rushing or dragging the beat—like down to the millisecond. He had it going when we did the Mind Science record, and he was impressed at my ability to really bury the click. I'd worked hard at that kind of stuff at Berklee, and it paid off!

But yeah, we were going for perfection on *50,000 B.C.* From what I

understand, it's what working with Mutt Lange must be like. I had to hit my drums the same way *every time*. The note values had to be consistent. And Shudder's music is some of the most challenging stuff I've ever played. Craig's vocal hooks are so amazing, but the music is all in odd times. I had to chart out the songs to learn them. That's another thing Berklee taught me—how to write and read music—so that when I'm in the studio, I'm able to deliver with minimal rehearsal time. You can spend weeks on the drums if you have the money, but a lot of people don't, especially nowadays.

MD: When did these bands end?

Kevin: Both were pretty much done by '97 or '98. It was a tough time. Our good friend Jeff Buckley had just passed away. That was a devastating blow to everyone. [Buckley and Wasser were dating at the time.] He'd brought the Dambuilders to Australia to open for him, and Shudder was the backing band on a song he sang called "I Want Someone Badly." The shine started wearing off all the bands that had been signed in the early '90s that weren't really "making it."

Ultimately, Nathan and Craig decided to pursue movie scoring, and they've been very successful. They both still hire me for projects all the time. I also play in a band called A Camp, which is Nathan and his wife, Nina Persson, who is the singer of the Cardigans, and I produced and played drums on Craig's solo record *Lapland*. As far as the Dambuilders, I still play with Dave Derby [vocals, bass] and Joan in a project called Gramercy Arms. So even though bands break up, your friendships endure—that's powerful stuff in this business. You never know what's going to happen next and who's going to do what.

MD: Right about this time you started studying with Joe Morello.

Kevin: I'd moved from Boston to Brooklyn because I was doing so much session work in New York. I really wanted to rededicate myself to studying the drums, and lo and behold, Joe Morello actually had an ad for lessons in the back of *Modern Drummer*! So for a few months I would drive out to his place in New Jersey and work with him.

Nothing against the great teachers I had before, but my music education started all over again with Joe. His understanding of the physics of drumming helped me unlock the mystery of technique—how to hold the sticks properly, how to control the bounce, how to relax and not fight your own body. You can really hear the difference between somebody who's stiff and squeezing the sticks too hard,

Recordings

The Dambuilders Encendedor, Ruby Red, Against the Stars /// **The Rentals** Seven More Minutes /// **Shudder to Think** 50,000 B.C., Velvet Goldmine soundtrack and film score, Live From Home /// **Those Bastard Souls** Debt & Departure /// **A Camp** A Camp, Colonia /// **Craig Wedren** Lapland /// **Guided by Voices** Earthquake Glue, Half Smiles of the Decomposed, Live From Austin TX (CD and DVD), Cool Planet /// **NowhereNauts** NowhereNauts, Warned You /// **James Iha** Look to the Sky /// **Robert Pollard** Faulty Superheroes /// **Ricked Wicky** I Sell the Circus, King Heavy Metal, Swimmer to a Liquid Armchair



and someone who's loose and drawing the sound out of the drums, letting them ring out. Those lessons changed my life. Without them I never could've done the Guided by Voices gig, because we'd do high-energy, three-hour sets every night on tour. I was able to play these shows at full-on volume without getting tired, thanks to Joe. It was a night-and-day difference.

MD: When did the GBV opportunity come about?

Kevin: I was playing with a singer-songwriter named Leona Naess in 2001. She was great to work with, but it was the first time I truly felt like a hired gun, like music was just a job. I missed being in a band. I was thirty-three, and I'd just decided that I was going to go to school to be a chef—change my life completely. That's when I got the call from GBV, and it reignited my whole spirit. I mean, this was one of my favorite bands of all time!

They sent a set list and I immediately started learning about sixty to sixty-five songs.

MD: GBV's live shows are legendary, not only for the length of the sets but also for the amount of alcohol consumed on stage.

Kevin: That was definitely part of the band's identity. But honestly, there wasn't really any time for me to drink even if I'd wanted to. [laughs] The songs just kept coming, and Robert is such a showman. It's like those stories of James Brown just going, "One, two, three, four!"—boom—into the next song. I was the anchor of the band, and I had to have my wits about me for sure.

MD: What is it like to work with such a prolific

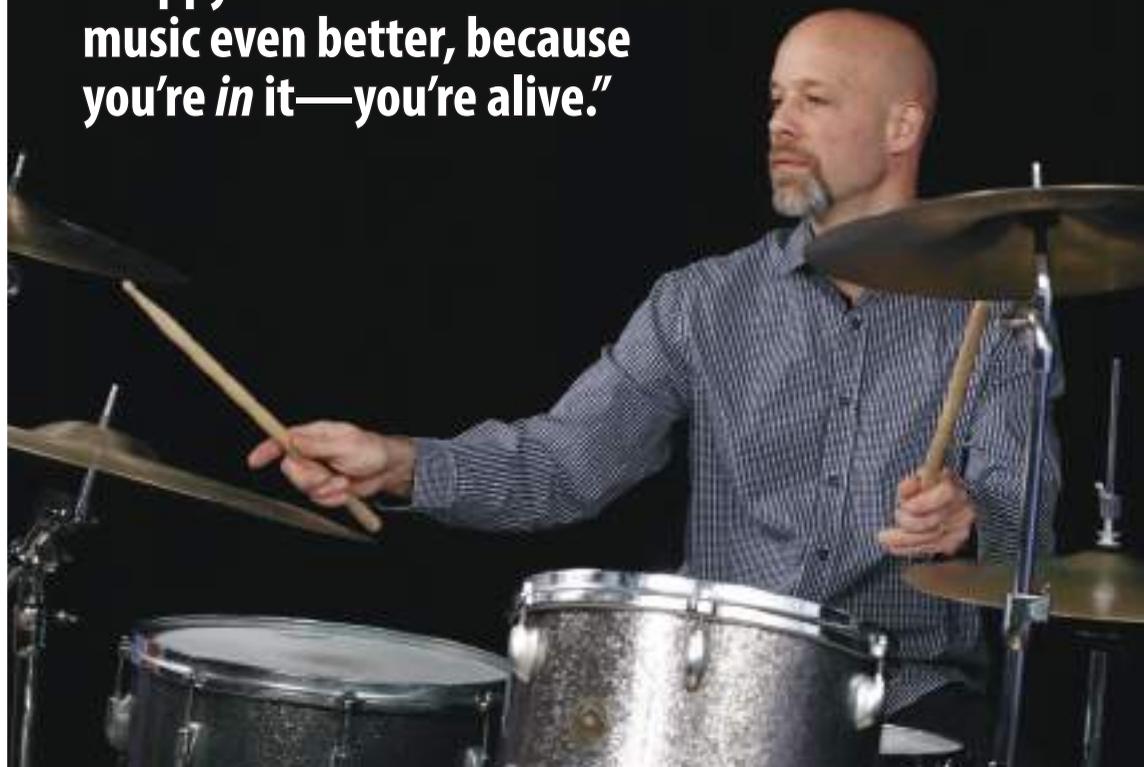
songwriter as Pollard?

Kevin: He's the most professional person I know in terms of work ethic. He does it every day. It's who he is—he's so creative. When he has an idea, it's all encompassing. He has a title, he writes lyrics and melodies and chords, he does all the artwork for all the albums. I don't know anybody else like that. And he's always pushing forward to the next thing. It's inspiring to be around—he makes you want to work that much harder yourself.

MD: When recording with GBV and now Ricked Wicky, are you tracking most everything live?

Kevin: Yeah, it's like the old way of making records. It's human beings playing music together. I was used to the more clinical way of doing things, being hyper-focused on just the drums. On the Rentals

"Happy accidents make the music even better, because you're *in* it—you're alive."



Kevin March

record I did, I literally recorded to nothing but click track. It's such a different feeling when you're actually playing a song live as a *band*. There's natural movement, some speeding up and slowing down, like on the records from the '60s and '70s. It's very loose sounding, but that's what's so great about it.

I mean, basics for the Ricked Wicky records are done over the course of a weekend. Most songs are one take. It's a very fast process. Bob sends out acoustic demos, I learn the song form, drive out to Ohio, set up my drums, mike them up, and

we just try to capture the band in that moment. It's exciting. You're actually playing along to the music that people are going to *hear*, you know?

MD: Do you ever worry about making mistakes in those situations?

Kevin: You're definitely on the edge of your seat, like, *Are we going to make it through this next part?*

Tools of the Trade

March owns a number of kits, but his go-to drumset is a 1965 charcoal-sparkle Gretsch, featuring a 14x22 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5x14 snare. His preferred cymbals include 15" '70s Zildjian A Medium Thin hi-hats, 16" Sabian Paragon and 18" Sabian Evolution crashes, and a 22" Sabian prototype medium-heavy ride. He uses a DW 5000 kick pedal and an assortment of DW, Pearl, and Yamaha hardware, plus Remo heads (Pinstripes, Coated Ambassadors, or Coated Emperors on top, depending on the project, and Clear Ambassadors on the bottom). His stick of choice is Vic Firth's SD1 General wood tip.

But I find when you get proficient enough with your instrument, even mistakes—like the right hand stays on the rack tom but you meant to move it to the floor tom—you're able to *move* with those things and make them part of the music, like jazz players do with improvisation. Those can be happy accidents. They make the music even better, because you're *in* it—you're alive. I'd rather do something that's expressive than try to re-create something I may have done on a demo or whatever.

MD: You've had a pretty cool "day job" in recent years, first as a teacher and now as creative director at the School of Rock.

Kevin: I was a drum instructor at the Brooklyn location back in the GBV days, and I was just blown away by how cool it was. School of Rock is all about getting kids to perform music *together*. They can play individually, but put them together and they don't always jibe rhythmically. I grew up in a rural area, so I remember how different it was playing with people for the first time after playing along to records for years. I'm like, *Wow, I wish I'd had this!* [laughs]

My involvement with SOR led to me producing and managing a band of teenage alums called the NowhereNauts. I coached them up, put them in a real studio with a real engineer [Carl Glanville, U2], and they made a couple of really awesome records before they split up and went to college. Right about the time that ended, I'd moved to Montclair, New Jersey, and started working at the School of Rock here.

MD: What's it like coming full circle on your career and passing on all your knowledge and experiences to these kids?

Kevin: It's so rewarding when you see the smiles on their faces when they've succeeded in doing something, even if it's just playing quarter notes. Or when they come off stage for the first time and say, "I want to keep doing this!" I'm like, "I know exactly how that feels."

The advertisement features a man, Jost Nickel, standing in front of a red background. He is wearing a dark jacket over a plaid shirt. To his left is a large, black, circular drum head with the Ahead logo. The text "THE NEXT LEVEL IN PROTECTION" is written in large, white, distressed letters at the top. Below it, "Jost Nickel" is written in a cursive font, and "JOST NICKEL" is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a large Ahead logo with the text "DISTRIBUTED BY BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION" and "878.727.1127 AHEADARMORCASES.COM".





A SOUND CHOICE

Gregg Bissonette
Ringo Starr and His All-Star Band

FUSE ARTIST PROFILE MAPLE

Inspired by

Gregg Bissonette's Tour Configuration

FS424AMCR5FG

Bass Drum 18 X 24"

Tom Tom 10 X 12"

Floor Tom 16 X 16"

Snare Drum 6.5 X 14"



playDIXON.com

/dixondrums

/dixondrumsusa

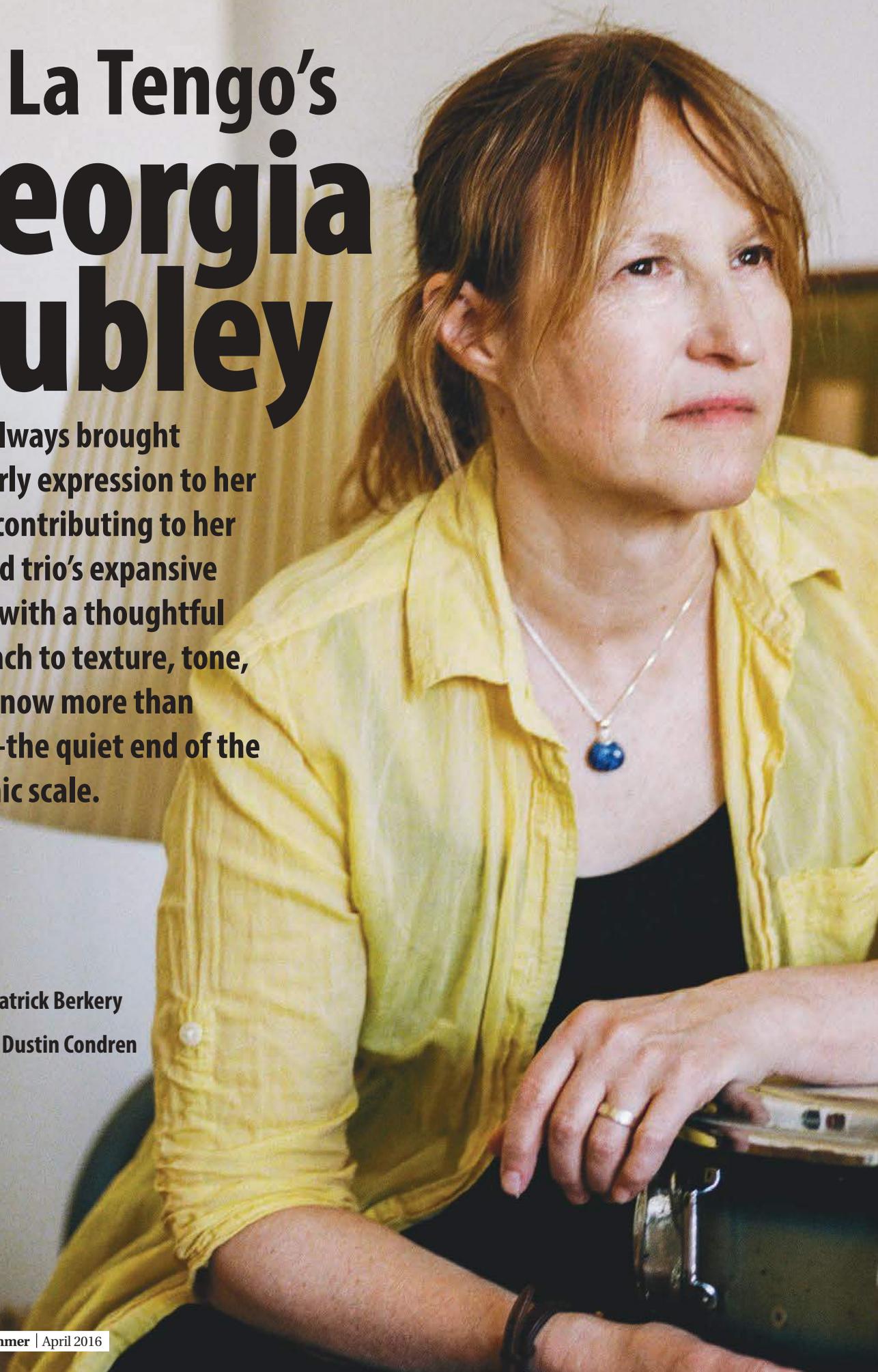
/dixondrums

Yo La Tengo's Georgia Hubley

She's always brought painterly expression to her work, contributing to her beloved trio's expansive sound with a thoughtful approach to texture, tone, and—now more than ever—the quiet end of the dynamic scale.

Story by Patrick Berkery

Photos by Dustin Condren



One of the highest compliments you can pay a musician is that you can't imagine anyone else occupying their role in a band. And such praise shouldn't be reserved for those shredders whose jaw-dropping playing is a group's calling card. Think also of the artists whose unique styles make such a positive impact on a band's sound that they become an irreplaceable piece of the musical puzzle.

Take Georgia Hubley. Her loose and minimalist manner on the traps—with brushes, mallets, and hand percussion never too far out of reach—plays like a groovy synthesis of Charlie Watts and the Velvet Underground's Moe Tucker. Hubley, the daughter of noted animators John and Faith Hubley and the sister of animator/filmmaker Emily Hubley, is herself an accomplished painter who has designed many of her group's album covers. And, indeed, Georgia possesses skills that seem as shaped by her background in the visual arts as by her musical experiences. Hubley's tastefully deconstructed style makes her the perfect fit for Yo La Tengo, a band that has always sounded under the influence of an intimidatingly deep record collection full of choice psychedelia, punk, country, garage, jazz, and pop.

Throughout Yo La Tengo's thirty-year existence, Hubley has proved

a versatile rhythmic foil to singer-guitarist (and husband) Ira Kaplan and longtime bassist James McNew. She's rattled and smashed her way through epic guitar jams like "Pass the Hatchet, I Think I'm Goodkind" (from 2006's *I Am Not Afraid of You and I Will Beat Your Ass*), propelled psych-pop gems like "Ohm" and married syncopated kit work and overdubbed percussion on string- and horn-adorned productions like "Before We Run" (both from 2013's *Fade*), and brushed alongside vintage rhythm box accompaniment to exotic effect on "Center of Gravity" (1997's *I Can Hear the Heart Beating as One*).

Oh, and Hubley sings beautifully too—maybe better now than she ever has, as evidenced by Yo La Tengo's most recent effort, the covers collection *Stuff Like That There*. It's a deliberately quiet album that finds Hubley playing with brushes and stripping down her already spare kit even further to just a snare, a tom-tom, and a couple of cymbals—both in the studio and on the subsequent tour—while taking advantage of the reduced volume to sing Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and the Cure's "Friday I'm in Love" in sweetly hushed tones.

Modern Drummer caught up with Hubley several days after the Philadelphia-area stop on the *Stuff* tour to discuss just how quietly she's playing these days, along with the roots of her drumming career.

MD: This is such a delicate show you're playing on this tour—and so different from what you typically do. Everyone in the band has to alter their approach in a setting like that, but it's probably most different for you. You're standing the entire time and there's no kick drum, just two drums and two cymbals.

Georgia: It does feel different. Not so much from a drumming point of view, but from a singing point of view. I feel like I'm more focused on singing—I do a lot in this version of the band. The drumming isn't just scaled down physically, but also style-wise I wanted to keep it really simple. I'm already a simple drummer—now I'm even simpler! [laughs] I just wanted to keep things chugging in a delicate way. When we started practicing to do the record we spoke about how James would almost be the kick drum with his upright, and I would provide a little backbeat. It's cool. I like it.

MD: At the end of the night, does it feel like you've been working as hard as you would during a full-volume show?

Georgia: It's definitely not as taxing. Mentally and physically, there's an ease to it. That's one of the more enjoyable aspects of doing these shows. It's really fun. It's soothing. It's nice to be up front with everyone; I'm never really in that position. You can hear better. And not just your own voice. You can hear everything in a more intimate way.

MD: Your brushwork has always been a signature element of the band's sound, and it's really present on this album and tour. But it's never really the "stirring" kind of jazz snare approach. You're playing rock drums with brushes. How did that develop?

Georgia: I can't quite remember when I started using brushes the most. Almost every record has brushes on there. Even in the full-volume shows, there are certain songs that are more rocking with brushes. Then there are other songs where I'm barely touching anything or I'm just doing something more textural on the batter head—I like the scraping sound. I'm hearing it a certain way because the drum is eighteen inches from my head.

MD: How long did it take you to get a handle on the playing-and-singing thing?

Georgia: I've been doing it long enough that it's fairly second nature at this point. There are definitely certain songs where it's weird [to play and sing simultaneously]. Not having a kick drum on this tour is a

Georgia Hubley

Tools of the Trade

"On this tour I use a 5x14 C&C snare that I asked them to make for me," Hubley says. "I picked out the color myself. It's like a weird pea green. I found a Slingerland drum online from the '40s or '50s in that color, and I said, 'Match that!' I have an old 14" red-sparkle Ludwig floor tom [that I mount] on a snare stand because I needed it to be taller than the legs allowed. It's the first time I've had that drum on the road—it's seeing the world, finally! I have coated Remo Emperor heads on both.

"The cymbals are old Paiste 602s," Hubley continues. "I got them from someone in Michigan a couple of years ago. The ride is a 20" and the crash is an 18". I have three different kinds of brushes, and I try to remember which songs I like the different ones for. One set is the Regal Tip Clayton Cameron model with the rubber handle, one is the Regal Tip nylon model with a wooden handle, and one is a Promark plastic retractable nylon model—they're cool because you hit them hard and they don't sound papery. The rubber-handle brushes have a weight to them that's cool, and the wire brush is a more shimmery sound. I also use Promark MT3 oak mallets."

weird thing, because it's so central to playing drums. So I often kind of stomp my foot to remind myself to be in the groove with the song.

When we play in full-on rock mode, I feel more like the drumming is the central part, even though I still sing lead on a lot of songs. Here I feel like the singing is the central part. It's to the point where I have to remind myself, *Don't ignore the drumming part*. Sometimes I focus too much on it. For the most part it's all one thing and you check in with everything that you're doing at the same time. And make sure it's all together.

MD: When you play and sing live, is it challenging for you to keep the tempo in check, playing against the cadence of the vocal melody?

Georgia: If you get caught up in the excitement or start thinking, *Are they going faster or am I pushing?*, you can start having mind games where you can't quite figure out what's happening. Speeding up is definitely one of those things, especially in a live situation, that can be too much. But for the most part you expect it's going to happen. We all decided it can be appropriate—especially on an eight-minute song. You don't want it to slow down.

MD: You came to the drums relatively late, at nineteen. What was the attraction?

Georgia: I went to art school. At some point I started getting interested in bands, new wave and punk bands of the era [late '70s/early '80s] in New York. You'd see a lot of bands made up of people that you could relate to, in that way of, *That looks fun. I think I could do that*. It wasn't like going to a big concert where you can't imagine being in that [kind of band]. The smallness of some of the clubs around New York City was exciting, and it got me interested. I just kept watching the drummers. And I think I had a friend that had a kit... it was one of those things. Someone would show me a couple of things on the drums. The very first drumbeat I ever learned how to play was "Get Off of My Cloud." That was really, really exciting. [laughs]

MD: How do visual art and drumming coexist in your life? Does one inform the other? Is one a complete release from the other?

Georgia: It's hard to say. I really couldn't pinpoint anything specific about how they inform each other. The closest thing I could come up with is that I'm the same person in each discipline. Emotionally, and feel-wise, how I approach the drums on feel is probably how I think of myself as a painter. I respond artistically to something, as opposed to technically. The art I've done is not based so much in technical ability. It's similar to my drumming.



NATAL'S CAFÉ RACER OFFERS FOCUSED TONE WITH A HINT OF VINTAGE SWAGGER.

The four lacquer finishes recall classic speedsters and vintage drums sure to turn the eyes and ears of everyone on the other side of your bass drum.

The Café Racer's tulip shell is dry and focused with the perfect amount of warmth and projection for any mic'd or unmic'd gig.

Gig to stage, stage to studio, or café to café, Natal's new offering is sure to please.

NEW FOR 2016



Shown in Champagne Sparkle Lacquer and featuring Natal's new flat based boom and snare stands.

NATALDRUMS.COM | #DREAMITDRUMIT

NATAL DRUMS & PERCUSSION. Part of the Marshall Amplification Group of Companies.
Natal Drums is distributed by U.S. MUSIC CORP, a division of Jam Industries, Ltd.
1000 Corporate Grove Dr, Buffalo Grove, IL 60009 | 800.877.6863



JAM, RECORD,
& PERFORM
WITH TODAY'S TOP
TOURING MUSICIANS!

ROCK 'n' ROLL™ FANTASY CAMP LOS ANGELES

BOOK NOW!

U.S.: 888.762.2263
ROCKCAMP.COM

PRODUCED BY DAVID FISHOF

ASK ABOUT OUR
TEAM BUILDING PROGRAM



PERFORM LIVE AT THE
WHISKY A GO GO
WITH ZAKK WYLDE!
HOLLYWOOD, CA

MODERNDRUMMER

GRAMMY WEEKEND / PRESIDENT'S DAY WEEKEND

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11th - SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14th, 2016



FEATURING ROCK STAR COUNSELORS:

RUDY SARZO (QUIET RIOT), VINNY APPICE (DIO), TRACII GUNS (L.A. GUNS),
VIC JOHNSON (THE BUSBOYS, SAMMY HAGAR AND THE WABORITAS), FRANKIE BANALI (QUIET RIOT),
KANE ROBERTS (ALICE COOPER), BJORN ENGLER (YNGWIE MALMSTEEN, ULI JON ROTH),
BRIAN TICHY (WHITESNAKE, FOREIGNER), TEDDY ANDREADIS (GUNS N' ROSES), GARY HOEY

DRUMMERS
WANTED!

"Greatest
experience ever"

-People Magazine

888.762.2263

ROCKCAMP.COM

SPACE IS LIMITED - BOOK NOW!

PRODUCED BY DAVID FISHOF

"Every musician must
do this at least once"

-Billy Amendola
(Modern Drummer
Magazine)

Bloc Party's Louise Bartle

by Ken Micallef

Bartle on stage with Bloc Party at the Roxy in Los Angeles last August 20.

Twenty-one-year-old Louise Bartle engaged her role as the new drummer for the crafty English pop band Bloc Party with equal parts intuition and inspiration. Though she doesn't appear on the group's fifth album, *Hymns*, her excitable spirit is notable at every performance.

"It was a big challenge coming into a well-established group that was used to its former drummer," says Bartle, who replaced longtime band member Matt Tong. "My approach to the older material is to play it exactly as it was recorded, but adding some of my own personality, like in the drum fills. The original parts are like riffs in themselves; I wouldn't feel comfortable changing them. The band has said that they want me to be myself, but to a certain extent I feel I should play the patterns as they were originally recorded."

Prior to joining Bloc Party in 2015, Bartle completed a four-year program at London's Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, earning a bachelor of music degree in popular music performance. "I wanted to learn about the industry and improve as a drummer," she says, citing influences including Ronald Bruner, Steve Jordan, and the Strokes' Fabrizio Moretti. "The school's focus is contemporary, and I had lessons on style, performance, different genres of music.... I also had teachers outside of the school [including Dave Weckl protégé Selim Munir], and they were really inspiring. I tried to keep myself out and about during school, so people would see me play."

In a country as small as England, word of

the talented young drummer spread fast. As well as working with several U.K. pop stars prior to joining Bloc Party, Bartle performed on the British teen drama series *Skins*, appeared on the BBC's Radio 1Xtra with the group Rough Copy, and was featured as a drumming double on an episode of the comedy series *Toast of London*. Her love of drumming pours forth in conversation, and she says she particularly enjoys playing live, on gigs such as her recent Maida Vale BBC appearance with Bloc Party, plus side work with pop singers Selena Gomez, Eliza Doolittle, and Terri Walker.

Mature beyond her years, Bartle is a natural drumming talent, her multiple online videos showing excellent command of press rolls, single-stroke rolls, and crossovers—though the term *crossovers* is new to her. "I don't know!" she laughs when asked about her prowess with 16th-note crossovers between snare and floor tom. "I like to mess about a lot, and I also have time to just play alone. I enjoy not always having structure when I practice, just improvising and having fun and seeing where it leads me."

Although she considers herself lucky to have a shed in her garden where she can practice, Bartle also cites playing with fellow

drummers in improvisational settings as being profoundly beneficial to her creativity and technique. "I've done that a lot," she says, "and it really pushed me because I was learning from other musicians. When it was time for me to play, I had to think outside the box, and that really benefitted me technically. Time spent away from other drummers can help creativity as well, but I advanced technically the most when I was around other drummers and playing with them."

Bartle began drumming when she was twelve; not long after, she entered jam sessions at London's Troy Bar and fabled Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. Her time at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance prepared her well for the Bloc Party audition, and her enthusiasm for woodshedding continues unabated today. "I'm practicing tons, because I love it," Louise says with customary enthusiasm. "I play to the click a lot, and at slower tempos. I do enjoy playing free, to be as creative as possible. I'll work with a metronome for a while and then play the kit free for enjoyment. I'm working with some rudiments as well, flam exercises now. And on different grooves too."

Today Bartle figures that success in the music industry is, as ever, largely about skill, but, just as important, it's about networking. "It's important to play out," she insists. "I improved more playing live than just on my own. You experience different things when playing live—like nerves! There are things to overcome playing live. But you *have* to get your name out there."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Bartle plays a red-sparkle Natal Ash Fusion kit featuring a 5.5x14 snare, 10" and 12" toms, 14" and 16" floor toms, and a 22" bass drum, plus Dream cymbals ("They're quite washy-sounding," she says, "which I like"), Promark 5A sticks, and Evans heads.





Red Mist

PREMIUM TONEWOOD ...STRAIGHT FROM THE LAB



Black Mist



Silver Mist

The new **Unity Birch** drum kit from Sound Percussion Labs starts with **all-birch shells** for exceptional tone, and then adds SPL's new **Arch-Tech™ bearing edge** design for a warmer, richer sound and easier tuning. You'll also find a matching, **solid wood bass drum hoop** and world-renowned **Remo heads**. The result is a complete, 5-piece drum kit

that produces a satisfying, resonant tone while keeping all of its attack and punch, **and all under \$500**. Includes chrome plated, double-braced stands, chain drive pedal, cymbals and throne. Check one out today, and experience the new SPL — **straight from the lab**.



Available exclusively at:



Musician's Friend



EXCLUSIVE[™] MEINL HCS 7-CYMBAL SUPER SET

(HCSSCB) LIST: \$647.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$299⁹⁹

FREE

16" HCS TRASH CRASH INCLUDED IN BOX
A \$59 VALUE



EXCLUSIVE[™] MEINL CLASSICS CUSTOM MEDIUM CYMBAL SET

(CC14162018) LIST: \$930.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$499⁹⁹



MEINL 18" BYZANCE DARK CRASH

(B18DAC) LIST: \$540.00

\$289⁹⁹



MEINL 20" BYZANCE TRADITIONAL MEDIUM CRASH

(B20MC) LIST: \$650.00

\$349⁹⁹



MEINL 20" BYZANCE BENNY GREB SAND RIDE

(B20SAR) LIST: \$650.00

\$349⁹⁹



MEINL 21" BYZANCE MIKE JOHNSTON SIGNATURE TRANSITION RIDE

(B21TSR) LIST: \$710.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$379⁹⁹





TOP PICKS

OUR BEST DEALS—ON SALE MARCH 1 THRU APRIL 30

MEINL HEADLINER SERIES FIBERGLASS BONGOS

(HB50BK) (HB50R) LIST: \$116.00

YOUR CHOICE
\$69⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A MEINL PROFESSIONAL AFRICAN-STYLE DJEMBE

(PROADJ2L) LIST: \$339.00

\$199⁹⁹



MEINL STANDARD CAJON BAG

(MSTCJB) LIST: \$45.00

\$24⁹⁹



MEINL 6" CHING RING JINGLE EFFECT FOR CYMBALS

(CRING) LIST: \$23.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$14⁹⁹



BEST-SELLER MEINL ARTIST SERIES LUIS CONTE SHAKER

(SH4BK) LIST: \$23.00

\$14⁹⁹



MEINL PERCUSSION PACK WITH COMPACT FOOT JINGLE TAMBOURINE, CLASSIC HARDWOOD CLAVES AND ARTIST SERIES SHAKER

(PPI) LIST: \$48.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$29⁹⁹



BRING THIS COUPON IN AND
GET AN EXTRA



dclmae459c

\$20 OFF*
YOUR PURCHASE OF
\$99 OR MORE

OR

\$50 OFF
YOUR PURCHASE OF
\$199 OR MORE

*\$20 OFF PURCHASE OF \$99 OR MORE, \$50 OFF PURCHASE OF \$199 OR MORE. NOT TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER COUPONS, PROMOTIONS OR OFFERS. EXCLUDES DISCOUNTED AND CLEARANCE ITEMS, PRICE MATCHES, USED GEAR, TAX/SHIPPING CHARGES, SCRATCH AND DENT, VINTAGE EQUIPMENT, GIFT CARDS, STRING CLUB AND STICK CLUB MEMBERSHIPS, AND MUSICIAN SERVICES (PRO COVERAGE, GUITAR CENTER REPAIRS, GUITAR CENTER RENTALS AND GUITAR CENTER LESSONS). NO CASH VALUE. EXCLUSIVE^A: PRODUCTS SOLD EXCLUSIVELY AT GCI RETAIL BRANDS. COUPON IS REDEEMABLE IN-STORE, ONLINE OR AT 866-563-0741, ONLY WITH VALID COUPON CODE. PARTICIPATING BRANDS: YAMAHA, SABIAN, LATIN PERCUSSION, TOCA, GRETSCH, OCDP, SIMMONS, SPL, PROLINE, ROAD RUNNER, TAMA, ZILDJIAN, AHEAD, DRUM DIAL AND AQUARIAN. OFFER VALID 3/1/2016 THRU 4/30/2016.

FOR MORE GREAT DRUM SHOP DEALS OR TO FIND A STORE NEAR YOU, VISIT GUITARCENTER.COM



YAMAHA STAGE CUSTOM BIRCH SERIES 5-PIECE SHELL PACK

(SBP0F50NW) (SBP2F50RB) (SBP0F50CR) LIST: \$1100.00

HARDWARE SOLD SEPARATELY
COLORS VARY BY LOCATION

YOUR CHOICE
\$649⁹⁹



ALSO AVAILABLE
IN THESE COLORS



INCLUDED

PURCHASE A YAMAHA STAGE CUSTOM
BIRCH SHELL PACK AND RECEIVE A
FREE ZILDJIAN ZBT 3 PACK (ZBTS3P-9)



YAMAHA DTX-MULTI 12 DIGITAL PERCUSSION PAD

(DTXM12)

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$100 OFF

SEE STORE
FOR PRICE



EXCLUSIVE^{EA} YAMAHA DTX430K ELECTRONIC DRUM SET

(DTX430K) LIST: \$899.99

REG. \$599.99

\$100 OFF

SALE
\$499⁹⁹



YAMAHA DTX522K ELECTRONIC DRUM SET

(DTX522K) LIST: \$2200.00

SELECT STORES &
GUITARCENTER.COM
KICK PEDAL SOLD SEPARATELY

\$999⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^{EA} YAMAHA 14x6.5" STAGE CUSTOM STEEL SNARE

(SD266A) LIST: \$260.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

REG. \$149.99

\$50 OFF

SALE
\$99⁹⁹



YAMAHA 700 SERIES HARDWARE

(SS740A) (CS755) (HS740A) (FP7210A)

LIST: \$110.00-\$200.00

\$15 OFF

FOOT PEDAL
STARTING AT
\$64⁹⁹





NEW SABIAN XSR SERIES CYMBALS
 (XSR1407B) (XSR2112B) (XSR2012B) (XSR14021B) (XSR1607B) (XSR1807B) (XSR1816B)
 LIST: \$182.00-\$326.00

INDIVIDUAL PIECES ONLY, NO PREPACKS
 SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

SEE STORE FOR PRICE

\$25 OFF
 \$25 OFF ON 16" OR LARGER
 OR PAIR OF HI HATS



EXCLUSIVE^{SA} SABIAN 22" BIG AND UGLY SERIES AAX MUSE CYMBAL
 (22280XM) LIST: \$550.00
 SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$329⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^{SA} SABIAN AAX X-PLOSION CYMBAL SET
 (2500587XBGC) LIST: \$1199.00
 SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

REG. \$699.99

\$100 OFF
SALE \$599⁹⁹

FREE

18" AAX X-PLOSION CRASH
 INCLUDED IN BOX
A \$239 VALUE



EXCLUSIVE^{SA} SABIAN HHX EVOLUTION CYMBAL SET
 (15005XEBCG) LIST: \$1599.00
 SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

NEW \$899⁹⁹

FREE

18" EVOLUTION 0-ZONE CRASH
 INCLUDED IN BOX
A \$329 VALUE





LP MATADOR TIMBALES

(M257BNG) LIST: \$690.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$449⁹⁹



LP AMERICANA GROOVE CAJON

(LP1427) LIST: \$299.00

\$189⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE[™] LP PERFORMER SERIES QUINTO, CONGA AND TUMBA DRUMS

(LPP311BFLC) (LPP312BFLC) (LPP313BFLC) LIST: \$396.00-\$440.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

11"
STARTING AT
\$269⁹⁹



TOCA STREET SERIES DJEMBES

(TSSDJ-SB) (TSSDJ-MCD) (TSSDJ-LC)
LIST: \$75.00-\$240.00

MODELS VARY BY LOCATION

SMALL
STARTING AT
\$49⁹⁹



LP QUBE STUDIO SHAKER

(LP460S) LIST: \$31.00

REG. \$20.99

\$11 OFF

SALE
\$9⁹⁹



LP ROCK COWBELL WITH SELF-ALIGNING MOUNT

(LP007N) LIST: \$65.99

REG. \$43.99

\$10 OFF

SALE
\$33⁹⁹





EXCLUSIVE^A GRETSCH ENERGY 5-PIECE DRUM SET WITH HARDWARE AND SABIAN OR ZILDJIAN CYMBALS

(GEXE825VPRED) (GEXE825VPKGS) (GEXE825VPKBK) (GEX825VZW) (GEX825VZG) (GEX825VZB) (GEX825VZR) LIST: \$1080.99

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$699⁹⁹



ALSO AVAILABLE IN THESE COLORS



GRETSCH CATALINA CLUB 4-PIECE SHELL PACK

(CC1J484GVMP) LIST: \$1045.99

HARDWARE AND CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY
SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$679⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A GRETSCH MARQUEE 5-PIECE SHELL PACK WITH 22" BASS DRUM

(GME825GB) LIST: \$2155.99

HARDWARE AND CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

REG. \$1399.99

\$150 OFF

SALE

\$1249⁹⁹

FREE

MATCHING SNARE DRUM
INCLUDED WITH GRETSCH
MARQUEE PURCHASE
A \$279 VALUE



GRETSCH 13x6" MARK SCHULMAN SIGNATURE SNARE DRUM

(S0613MS) LIST: \$535.99

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$349⁹⁹



SIMMONS®

SPL™

ORANGE COUNTY
DRUM & PERCUSSION®

NEW SPL UNITY BIRCH SERIES 5-PIECE COMPLETE DRUM SET WITH HARDWARE, CYMBALS AND THRONE
(DBX5522BKM) LIST: \$699.00

\$499⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A SIMMONS SD500 ELECTRONIC DRUM SET
(SD500) LIST: \$699.99

\$499⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A SIMMONS ELECTRONIC DRUM SET MONITORS
(DA50) (DA200S) LIST: \$419.99-\$539.99

DA50
STARTING AT
\$209⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A OCDP 14x6" MAPLE/ASH SNARE
IN BLACKBURST LACQUER
(OCSN0614NBBA) LIST: \$399.99

\$209⁹⁹





EXCLUSIVE[™] REMO MONDO DESIGNER SERIES KEY-TUNED DJEMBE

(DJ001239) (DJ001440)
LIST: \$375.20-\$448.10

12x24"
STARTING AT
\$229⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE[™] REMO 10" TABLE TOM WITH MALLETS

(TU508016) LIST: \$57.25

\$41⁹⁹



REMO 14" CONTROLLED SOUND REVERSE DOT COATED SNARE HEAD

(CS011410) LIST: \$35.00

REG. \$17.99

\$3 OFF

SALE
\$14⁹⁹



REMO CLEAR AND COATED EMPEROR HEADS

(BE010800) (BE030800) (BE011000) (BE031000) (BE011200) (BE031200) (BE011300) (BE031300) (BE011400) (BE031400) (BE011600) (BE031600) (BE031800) LIST: \$25.20-\$43.90

8"
STARTING AT
\$12⁹⁹



REMO 14" COATED POWERSTROKE 77 SNARE HEAD

(P70114C2) LIST: \$36.50

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$16⁹⁹



REMO 22" EBONY POWERSTROKE 3 RESONANT BASS DRUM HEAD WITH 5" PORT HOLE

(P31022ESDM) LIST: \$95.30

\$42⁹⁹



REMO BA PRO PACK WITH FREE 14" HAZY

(PP1990BA) LIST: \$90.20

REG. \$46.99

\$7 OFF

SALE
\$39⁹⁹



Zildjian

NEW ZILDJIAN 10" A SERIES FLASH SPLASH CYMBAL

(A0310) LIST: \$208.00

\$119⁹⁹



NEW ZILDJIAN L80 SERIES LOW VOLUME 4-CYMBAL BOX SET

(LV468) LIST: \$600.00

SELECT STORES AND GUITARCENTER.COM

\$299⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^A ZILDJIAN K SERIES 5-PIECE CYMBAL PACK

(KP110) LIST: \$2282.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$899⁹⁹



FREE

18" CRASH INCLUDED IN BOX
A \$309 VALUE



NEW ZILDJIAN 24" PREMIUM CYMBAL BAG

(ZCB24P) LIST: \$230.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$149⁹⁹

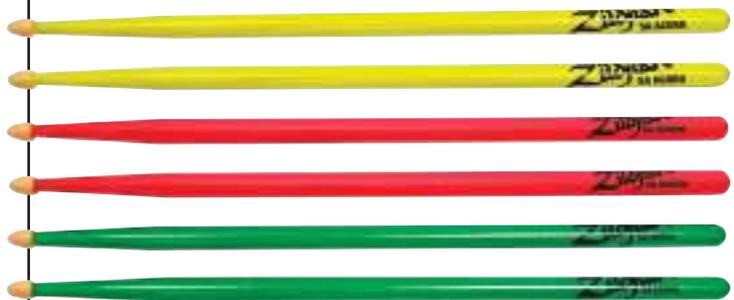


NEW ZILDJIAN 5A NEON HICKORY DRUM STICKS

(5ACWDGG) (5ACWDBP) (5ACWDGY) LIST: \$16.75

SELECTION VARIES BY LOCATION

YOUR CHOICE
\$8⁴⁹





NEW MEINL OVANGKOL CAJON

WITH FREE BAG

(BCINTOV) LIST: \$245.00

\$129⁹⁹



EXCLUSIVE^{AM} MEINL HEADLINER CAJON IN TIGER STRIPE AZUL

(HCAJ2ATS) LIST: \$245.00

\$129⁹⁹



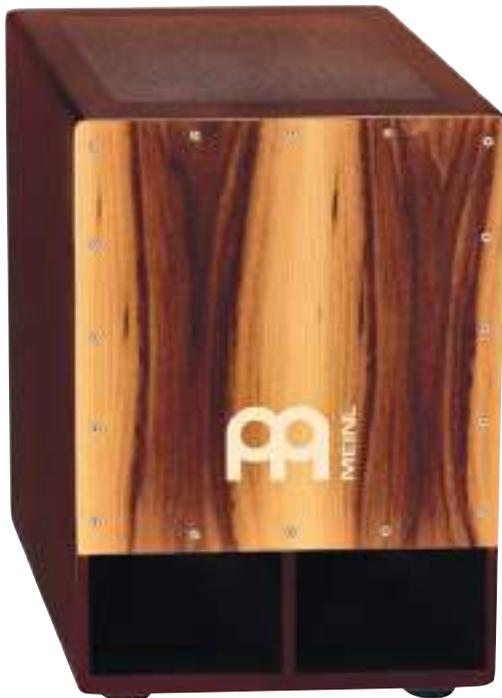
MEINL SUBWOOFER JUMBO BASS CAJON

WITH WALNUT FRONTPLATE

(SUBCAJ5WN) LIST: \$336.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$199⁹⁹



MEINL SLAP-TOP MAKAH BURL CAJON

(TOPCAJ1MB) LIST: \$215.00

SELECT STORES & GUITARCENTER.COM

\$109⁹⁹



Building a Teaching Business

From Breaking Ground to Finding Students

by Jeff Salem

I've owned and operated my own teaching school, Jeff Salem's Music Studio, for eleven years. Prior to that I taught percussion lessons at a local music store for twelve years. When I decided to branch out on my own, the decision was made after being on tour with a band for five months. When I returned home I wanted to start teaching again. My first thought was, "If I was just starting to learn the drums, where would I want to go for lessons?"

Location, Location, Location

My first step was to find a suitable location in an area that was close to a highway exit so that potential students wouldn't have difficulty finding me. I also had to consider options of renting a commercial space or purchasing a larger house so that I could convert part of it into a teaching studio. My main objective was to offer a comfortable setting for students that felt like a home away from home.

I decided to purchase a larger house with my teaching business being run out of the basement, which has a separate entrance so that students don't have to walk through my front door and living room to get to the lesson rooms. I looked for property that would allow for ample parking, and I made sure to get proper business insurance that allowed me to teach from home. There are plenty of other schools and stores offering drum lessons in my area, so I went about setting my studio apart from the competition by providing a much more comfortable environment for students and parents.

The mission statement at J.S. Music Studio is: "Teaching the art of music to all ages in an inspirational, motivating setting and style." The purpose of this mission statement is to send out the message that I want every student who studies at my studio to enjoy his or her lessons as much as any other hobby. I want students to *want* to take lessons, rather than being told by their parents that they *had* to take lessons. To achieve that, I focused on making the studio feel as relaxed as possible, and I made sure to use state-of-the-art equipment.

The Walk-Through

The first room you enter at my studio is a lounge for parents and students to hang out in prior to the scheduled lessons. This room includes a television and a classic arcade game machine for anyone to use while they wait. I included



Main teaching studio

comfortable sofas, and I chose soothing paint colors for the walls. I hung various pieces of art on the walls to enhance the cozy feel.

For my teaching rooms, I felt it was important to have enough space to fit two drumkits (one for me and one for the student), and I did everything I could to soundproof each studio. In addition to two drumsets, my drum rooms include a PA system so we can listen and play along to recordings. I have access to the Internet, as well as an extensive collection of books, and there are options to record video and/or audio so that students can take a DVD of their lesson home with them or download it later from my server.

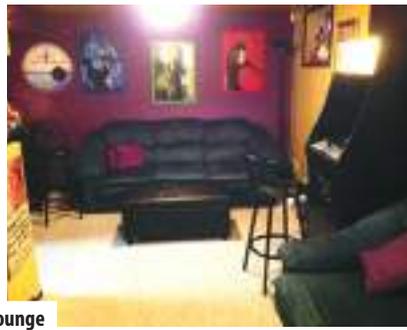
Building the Roster

After designing and constructing my teaching studio, my energy shifted to seeking out potential students. Since I'd spent ten years doing drumset clinics in various schools in my area, I had developed a nice rapport with many of the music teachers. I had also spent a lot of time facilitating drum circles at day care centers, corporate events, and private parties. Through those interactive programs, I was able to connect to a lot of potential students.

I developed a marketing strategy where anyone I met at my clinics and drum circles who might be interested in studying with me privately could come to my studio for a free introductory lesson. This was a great way to introduce students to my studio without their having to make a financial commitment. I had an overwhelming number of students take me up on the offer, so much so that I had to bring in



The lounge



additional experienced, reliable, professional teachers. The incentive program I used with the other teachers was that if the student decided to sign up for a month of lessons, then that teacher would get paid for the free trial.

The Curriculum

It was also important for me to develop a structured program so that parents and students could monitor their progress through the various stages of learning. I designed method books that implemented a similar level system to the color belts used in martial arts. (Check them out at drumkitmethod.com.)

The first book is the introductory level (white belt) for beginning students. We work through seven other books until the student reaches the final black level. Within each level, there's plenty of room for students to branch out into learning songs and styles of music that excite them. That flexibility is essential in keeping students interested and inspired to continue moving forward. I suggest certain songs that I know students will enjoy learning that have similar grooves as to what they're studying in their current book. Before a student can progress to the next level, I film him or her playing to one of those songs.

When students complete a book, they get a free drumstick with a color strip to indicate which level they finished, plus a video recording of their performance. I've found that the sticks and the videos provide a great way for students to share their accomplishments with friends and family.

Expanding the Business

Within the first year of my teaching facility I had about fifty students between me and another instructor. As time progressed, some parents asked if I offered lessons for other instruments, such as guitar or piano. I didn't have the intention at that time to expand beyond drum lessons, so I referred them to study elsewhere. However, I found out they weren't signing up elsewhere. What they wanted was a one-stop shop where multiple kids could take different lessons at the same time.

The first step I took towards expanding was to have students and parents sign a request list that indicated how many more lessons I would be adding and what instruments they wanted to study. My initial list had more than ten students who were interested in taking guitar lessons, so I decided to add a professional, experienced, and reliable guitar instructor. When I interview potential teachers I'm looking to make sure they have a positive attitude, are confident, polite, and experienced, and have the patience required to teach students of all ages.

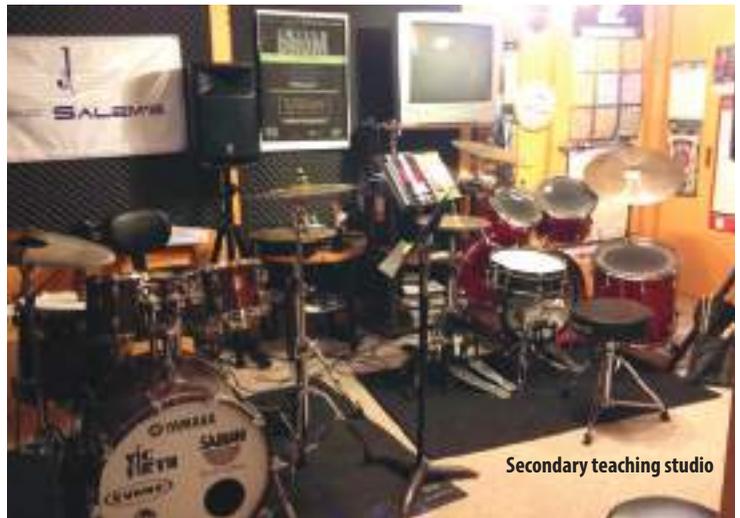
Once the guitar program was up and running, interest for the piano and vocal lessons emerged, and I began interviewing teachers for those areas as well.

After trying many avenues to increase student enrollment, including placing ads in local newspapers and the Yellow Pages, handing out flyers and more, I found that my best results came from school performances, my website, and referrals from school teachers, current students, and parents of current students.

Having an informative website is very important. It doesn't have to be flashy, but it must include your lesson policies and rates, photos, your teachers' bios, contact information, and any other pertinent information about the services your school provides.

Yearly Wrap-Up

Towards the end of spring each year, I host a recital for any students who wish to participate. This allows the students, parents, and teachers to interact, and it helps build a solid community within my school. I hold the recital at a local music venue, which I reserve for a private event for the day, and I hire a backing band of professional musicians to play with the students. The recital is open to all students, friends, and family



Secondary teaching studio

to enjoy and is a great opportunity for students to showcase all the hard work they put in over the past year. My studio also provides biannual report cards to indicate students' strengths as well as areas that need improvement.

I'm proud to say that I'm now into my eleventh year of operating Jeff Salem's Music Studio, and I have eight teachers (including me) and over 125 students. I owe this all to my wonderful, dedicated teachers and to the students who are committed to studying the art of music. There's nothing more rewarding than witnessing progress in a student and experiencing the joy that learning an instrument brings to them.

Hopefully some of the ideas I used to get my business up and running will inspire you to start or improve upon your own teaching practice. Feel free to reach out to me via my website, jsmusicstudio.com.



A Twist on the Buzz

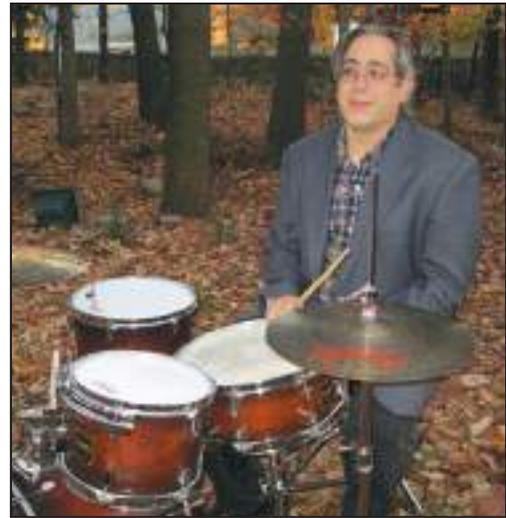
6 Exercises for Smoother Rolls

by Greg Sundel

A drummer once approached me after a show and said, “Your rolls sound as smooth as running water.” This statement gave me a new sonic goal, and that’s now what I think about when playing a closed roll. This lesson focuses on exercises I developed to help with buzz-stroke sensitivity and will help you achieve that flowing sound.

When playing a closed roll, you should execute the buzz stroke with as little tension as possible. After the initial rebound, let the stick bounce multiple times without stopping it. The looser your grip, the slower the stick initially bounces. This is the opposite of a tight grip, which could be used to press the stick into the drum for a shorter buzz. If you’re unfamiliar with the buzz-stroke technique, err on the side having the hand too loose rather than too tight. In these exercises, you’ll play the buzz strokes with individual hands on quarter notes.

Your wrists might tighten up when executing the buzz strokes. If this happens, use the notes in between the buzzes to recover and relax. The sticking alternates in the exercises for smooth and easy transitions. By playing these exercises



consecutively, your strength, agility, and sensitivity will improve. Try to make the buzz strokes as legato as possible, extending them all the way into the next note. Long, sustained buzz strokes are what produce smooth rolls. Play these exercises slowly (starting at 40 bpm), stay as loose as possible, and don’t rush. You can take these exercises in many different directions by adding flams, diddles, or accents to the strokes that aren’t buzzed.

1

R L R L R L R L

2

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

3

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

4

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

5

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

6

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

Greg Sundel has worked for Billy Corgan, Lauryn Hill, Joshua Redman, and Fox News. His instructional books are available through amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, and bluetrufflemusic.com.



Crossovers

10 Exercises to Improve Drumset Facility

by Steve Fidyk

This month's lesson focuses on the crossover, a technique that legendary drummers such as Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson, Jo Jones, and Sonny Payne popularized in their extended solos. Employing crossovers can help maintain the continuity and flow of single-stroke phrases you play around the kit without altering the sticking.

With a crossover, one hand will pass over the other while moving to a different part of the drumset. Here's what a left-hand crossover looks like as it passes over the right to the floor tom.



Here's a right-hand crossover as it passes over the left to the snare.



Here are ten one-measure crossover examples to practice. As with any exercise, focus on keeping the rhythm consistent as you coordinate the hands to make each move.

= =

1
 R L R L R



2
 L R L R L

3
 R L R L R L R L

4
 R L R L R L R L

5
 R L R L R L R

6
 R L R L R L R L R L

7
 R L R L R L R L R L

8
 R L R L R L R L R L

9
 L R L R L R L R L R

10

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

Once you have control of the one-measure crossovers, try combining them into longer phrases. This four-measure example mixes Exercises 3, 4, 7, and 10.

11

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

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

In addition to the examples in this piece, come up with your own rhythmic moves as you improvise around the drums. Have fun!

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.



DrumDial

"DrumDial gives me the ability to tune quietly while achieving the same great sound show after show. I rely on my DrumDial, both at The Voice and in the shop because no other tuning device comes close."

Steve "Steevo" Morrison
 Drum Tech, Drum Tech Services
 Currently for Nate Morton, The Voice

watch the video

BIGBANG DISTRIBUTION
 9420 Reseda Blvd. PMB 350, Northridge, CA 91324
 Ph. 800-547-6401 | www.bigbangdist.com



DRUMSTRONG 2016

share your pulse | come out & PLAY!

visit drumstrong.org for an event near you

drumstrong.org

Supporting survivorship, education and research globally through RHYTHM

drumSTRONG.org
 PRODUCED BY DrumsForCures, Inc.

MAY 21 2016

CELEBRATING Our 10th ANNIVERSARY!

DRUMMING TO BEAT CANCER



the power is in your hands!

Progressive Drumming Essentials

Part 9: Switching Gears With the Double Bass Pyramid

by Aaron Edgar

Changing subdivisions on a dime is a fundamental skill for playing double bass in modern heavy metal. Switching gears to a faster subdivision can help build intensity, and with a careful execution it sounds incredibly tight and powerful. A great example of this would be playing a 16th-note groove and then ramping up to 16th-note triplets.

Bass Drum Subdivision Pyramid

In this example, each subdivision from 8th to 32nd notes is played on the bass drums while the hands outline a quarter-note groove. The hand pattern gives you a musical frame of reference throughout the seven subdivisions.

First focus on each example individually, and try to make it feel comfortable while playing along with a metronome. We're going to eventually put the examples together, so your starting speed will be dictated by how fast you can play a measure of 32nd notes.

Running the Pyramid

Set your metronome a few bpm below your maximum tempo. Play the first measure for four bars, and then transition to the second measure. Focus on executing the transitions as precisely as possible—don't gradually slide into each subdivision. Practice the first two measures back and forth until they're solid. Continue with this method all the way up to 32nd notes.

When you've mastered all of the transitions, play the entire pyramid from measure 1 to 7 and back. Don't be too concerned with how many bars you spend on each subdivision. Take as much time as you need to make each of them feel comfortable. When one subdivision is settled into the pocket, make the jump to the next. If the transition is



bumpy, jump back and forth until you get it tighter. Repeat this until you can switch freely between all of the subdivisions.

Another way to practice this is by matching your hands and feet. Put both hands on the hi-hat (or other tight sounds), and match the bass drum rhythm. Play an accent on the snare with whichever hand lands on beats 2 and 4. Exercise 1 demonstrates this idea in 4/4 with 16th notes and quintuplets. Practice the entire pyramid in this fashion.

Additional Groove Exercises

Now it's time to tackle larger jumps, such as 8th-note triplets to 32nd notes. For each of these exercises, create a two-bar phrase in 4/4 comprising one bar for each subdivision. There are forty-two possibilities, however there are eight main pairs of more common transitions to master first. They are: 8th notes to 16th notes, 8th notes to 16th-note triplets, 8th notes to 32nd notes, 8th-note triplets to 16th-note triplets, 8th-note triplets to 32nd notes, 16th notes to 16th-note triplets, 16th notes to 32nd notes, and 16th-note triplets to 32nd notes.

Here's what 16th notes to 16th-note triplets looks like.

If you're feeling brave, try creating more advanced combinations, such as this quintuplet to septuplet exercise.

When you feel like you've gotten a handle on the full-measure transitions, try experimenting with shorter groupings of notes. For example, you could make a two-bar phrase in 4/4 using measures 3, 2, 3, and 5 from the pyramid.

Here are some examples that use more advanced phrasings. Exercise 6 has an odd number of notes, so the foot pattern reverses on the repeat.

For an additional independence challenge, try different sticking patterns over alternating singles on the bass drums. Exercises 7–11 demonstrate a few alternate sticking patterns you could try for 16th notes through 32nd notes.

Paradiddles

Paradiddle-diddles

RLRLRL

Doubles

For advanced polyrhythm junkies looking for an extra challenge, try running the pyramid while playing 8th notes on the hi-hat over each bass drum rhythm. In measures with triplets, quintuplets, and septuplets, the “&” of each beat lands on its own between bass drum notes. Go slowly, count, and good luck!

Aaron Edgar plays with the Canadian prog-metal band Third Ion and is a session drummer, clinician, and author. You can find his book, *Boom!!*, as well as information on how to sign up for weekly live lessons, at aaronedgardrum.com.

For a video demo of these examples, visit modern drummer.com.

Trolling

The “Greatest” Drummers and the Bliss of Ignorance

by Russ Miller

I have to admit that I’m not very excited about the whole social network thing. I realize that I didn’t grow up with it, and accepting something new is not always easy. But being involved online has become a necessity in today’s market.

A lot of the jargon used online also throws me for a loop. My assistant is in her mid-twenties and is on top of these things, so I often ask her what different terms mean. A while back I had her explain “trolling” to me. I was well aware of how rude, inconsiderate, and ignorant people can be in their comments on YouTube videos, but I didn’t realize there was a name for such behavior. For this

“We manifest the very thing we put out. If you’re putting out negativity, then you’re going to retrieve that same sentiment. If you emanate joy, it comes back to you.”—Robin Wright, actress/director

month’s column, I want to give my two cents regarding drummer trolls on social media. I also want to address the common online battle over who’s the “better” drummer.

You’ve probably heard the pearl of wisdom that “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” If everyone followed that mantra, then the world would surely be a better place. Why would you want to spend any part of your life committed to tearing something apart? Build something instead! Unfortunately, the general attitude online is overwhelmingly negative, and here is why I think that’s the case.

Too much time on their hands. The online troll has a lot of expendable time to pick apart the work of others. Drummer trolls could (and should) be practicing and making themselves better. They could be focusing on their long-term preparation so that when it’s their turn to put their skills on display, they might perform better than whomever they just criticized on YouTube. Anytime I see a negative comment, I’m reminded of the following phrase, which I wrote in my practice book: “You will want this minute back at the end of your life, so use it wisely.”

Those who haven’t mastered a skill will never know the difficulty of its acquisition. When you spend time practicing new things, you begin to realize how much more there is to learn. Every skill worth developing requires some type of sacrifice. This is why the greatest players are usually the most humble. They understand just how little they actually know.

One of the key components of a coward is anonymity. The troll who hides behind his/her screen name is full of timidity. Very few people would post negative comments if they also had to include their name, telephone number, and address.

The Greatest Drummer of All Time Is....

If there’s a topic that brings out the drummer trolls in droves, it’s

an argument over who’s the “best” drummer. Let’s discuss the ridiculousness of such debates.

First off, being the “greatest” at anything is subjective. Even in sports, where you have statistics to back up your arguments, it’s impossible to say who is definitively the best at any given time. Is the greatest quarterback the one who threw for the most yards in his career? Or is the greatest quarterback the one with the most Super Bowl rings? What about the gifted quarterbacks who were never part of a great team?

When you start debating about art it becomes even more unfeasible to say who’s great and who’s not. I’ve seen paintings that sold for millions of dollars that I wouldn’t hang in my garage. I also hear a lot of songs that don’t have all of the classic attributes of pop music composition (harmony, melody, lyrics, etc.), but they still end up selling millions of copies. No one can explain exactly why he/she likes some works of art more than others, but that’s part of the beauty of it.

I also feel that the term *greatest* gets used far too often when people begin debating their favorite drummers. Let’s take a look at a list of things that I believe should be considered for someone to be deemed the “greatest” drummer:

- Excellent timekeeping
- A unique and consistent groove
- A recognizable sound
- The ability to play convincingly in many styles of music
- The ability to read and write music well
- A long and consistent tenure in the music business
- High-quality documentation (recordings, videos, books, etc.)
- Significant contributions to the recorded history of music
- Significant contributions to the art of drumming
- High proficiency on the instrument

There are many more attributes than those mentioned above, but notice that “fastest,” “loudest,” or “most popular” aren’t included. But given my choices to define “greatest,” which drummers would qualify? There are players who’ve achieved most of the things on my list, such as Buddy Rich, Steve Gadd, and Vinnie Colaiuta. But I can’t think of anyone who can check off everything. That’s why I believe there’s no such thing as the greatest drummer of all time.

It would make much more sense if people would make comments like, “This drummer is one of the greatest technicians,” or “He/she is the most influential drummer in progressive rock.” But labeling a player as the “greatest” is tremendously difficult to defend.

The quote I included this month is from American actress/director Robin Wright, and it resonated with me about the time that’s often wasted thinking, speaking, and writing negatively. We need to stay focused on what makes us better as drummers...and as people.

Russ Miller has recorded and/or performed with Ray Charles, Cher, Nelly Furtado, and the Psychedelic Furs and has played on soundtracks for *The Boondock Saints*, *Rugrats Go Wild*, and *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*, among others. For more info, visit russmiller.com.



A STEP BEYOND

Smoother Feel. Firmer Foundation. Improved Attack!



HP910LN
Speed Cobra Rolling
Glide Single Pedal

HP900PN
Iron Cobra Power
Glide Single Pedal

2016 marks a new era in Iron Cobra and Speed Cobra history. Characterized by the smoothest "feel" ever, these Cobras deliver an unmatched sense of power and control. The reason for our constant re-engineering is simple:
Your finest performance is why we do what we do.

The Cobra Evolves. You Create.

TAMA[®]

"When I play a new Iron Cobra, I find myself a lot faster, a lot more fluid. There's a quicker response. The new beater head is an amazing design. It has a really good attack and a really good feel to it. The pedal easily becomes an extension of my own body. I forget that there's anything between me and the drum."

- DAVE LOMBARDO
Dead Cross

"What I really love about this new version is that it's basically been taken to the next level. The swiveling action of the Swivel Spring Tight makes it feel so natural. It's even faster, it's smoother and it's more solid. It's so streamlined, I'm able to play with more power with less effort."

- RODNEY HOLMES
Rodney Holmes Trio / Jim Weider

"Due to the new Speed Cobra upgrades there's a lot more durability, a lot more speed and there's a lot more smoothness. Another upgrade that I like is they adjusted the bass drum mounting plate on the master side of the pedal. In addition they widened the base plate, which means the whole pedal is a bit more stable."

- NICK PIERCE
Unearth

NEW *and* NOTABLE

PRESENCE

Axelador Bass Drum Pedal

The Axelador bass drum pedal features a lightweight yet strong carbon-molded longboard and a multi-accelerator cam system that can change from a circle to a concentric shape in three steps. The fine-tension lock system offers spring tension adjustment by using the supplied hex wrench drum key.

Additional features include a detachable heel system, a changeable glide/grip footboard plate, and independent beater and footboard angle adjustments. List price is \$890.

presencedsgn.jugemcart.com



TAMA

Limited Edition Imperialstar

Tama has added a new finish to its five-piece Imperialstar line, called Hairline Black, and the series now also comes with black-nickel hardware. Two add-on toms are available for a limited time. This compact Imperialstar setup is designed to fit easier onto tight stages or small practice spaces.

tama.com



UP DRUMS

Rick Latham Apex Signature Snare

To celebrate author/drummer Rick Latham's sixtieth birthday, Up Drums has designed the Rick Latham Apex signature snare. The drum is handcrafted in South Tyrol, Italy, and it features a lacquered American walnut shell, African zebra wood hoops, a custom throw-off, 60-degree bearing edges, and graduated snare beds. Production is limited to sixty drums.

up-drums.com



MOTION MOUNTS

iCymbal iPad/MP3 Player Holder

Able to clasp onto any cymbal stand, the iCymbal allows drummers to easily access their mobile devices from the drum throne. List price is \$29.99.

icymbal.com



RATTLY AND RAW Martin France Drums

Martin France Drums is a detailed and realistic-sounding drumkit instrument for Native Instruments Kontakt. It features samples of multi-miked vintage and modern drums and cymbals, including a rare 1920s Slingerland Radio King with gut snares, old A and K Zildjian cymbals from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, and a snare built from 700-year-old submerged wood. All instruments are played by U.K. drummer Martin France.

rattlyandraw.com



A revolutionary design in bass drum risers.

The Lift®

www.bassdrumlift.com



" THE LIFT...affected my positioning in a way that makes me feel more comfortable and most importantly it changed the sound of my 22" bass drum - I've been LIFTED !!! "

- Will Kennedy

" I always use it on my 18" drum."
-Horacio "el negro" Hernandez

DRUM CLIP
EXTERNAL DRUM RING CONTROL

www.TheDrumClip.com

For Over 11 Years People Have Been Asking Me...

WHAT IS THAT DRUM!?"
-Vinnie Colaiuta

LONGO Custom GOLD SHELLS

570.788.5820 Longodrums.com

AHEAD
CUSTOM MOLDED EARPLUGS

SCAN THE QR CODE TO CHECK OUT A HOW-TO VIDEO

DISTRIBUTED BY BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION 800.547.6401 WWW.AHEADDRUMSTICKS.COM

(888)756-5777

RUPPS DRUMS
WWW.RUPPSDRUMS.COM

PRO PERCUSSION CENTER
Roland
CUSTOM DESIGN YOUR KIT.

Denver's only PRO DRUM SHOP.

Stone Custom
EXOTIC DESIGN
For Wares, Indiana USA

Custom American made drums & shells built on the original Slingerland tools and moulds.
Quality You Can Hear!

Stone Custom Drum
260.403.7519 • stonecustomdrum.com

AHEAD SPINAL GLIDE
THE ULTIMATE IN COMFORT AND SUPPORT

QR CODE

AHEAD SPINAL GLIDE DRUM THRONE

- Patented "Ergokinetic" split seat supports the body in motion.
- Reduces fatigue and discomfort, improves mobility and flexibility.
- Memory Foam motorcycle-style seat in a choice of red, black or sparkle.
- Heavy-Duty, Quad-Leg base with threaded height adjustment.

AHEAD
BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION
WWW.AHEADDRUMSTICKS.COM
1 800 547 6401

KASZA CYMBALS

HANDMADE QUALITY TRADITION

- Handmade from pure B20 cast bronze.
- Each cymbal tested for sound quality and performance.
- No two cymbals are alike.
- Rock & Fusion Series perfected to ensure the best quality and sound.

QR CODE

Hear the Kasza Cymbals in action

BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION
Ph. 800-547-6401 | www.bigbangdist.com

GET CONTROL!

IsoPac B

Portable & Free-Standing IsoPacs
For Drums, Amps, Vocals, & More

ClearSonic Panel
Acrylic Shields

SORBER
Sound Absorption Baffles

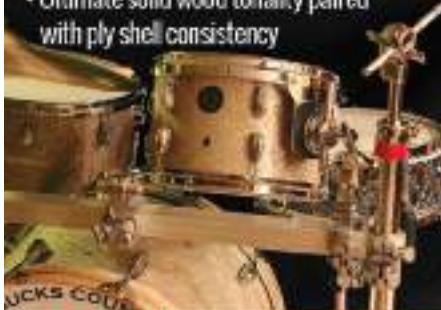
www.clearsonic.com

QR CODE

THINK INSIDE THE SHELL



- Enhanced Tonal System (ETS)
- Patent-pending semi-solid shell design
- Ultimate solid wood tonality paired with ply shell consistency



www.Buckcountydrumco.com
267-354-1425

Cymbal Crown
CYMBAL HOLDER

FAST SET-UP




- Built-in soft rubber cushion
- Sleeve protection
- No screws to remove
- Better cymbal sound
- No metal to metal
- Sleek professional appearance
- Fits all stands
- Slides between arms & base

Big Bang Distribution • 9429 Rosada Blvd. PMB 250
Northridge, CA 91324 • PH: 800.541.6401 • www.bigbangdrum.com

MAX MULTI

CRUZTOOLS



GrooveTech®
Drum Multi-Tool

888-909-8665 www.cruztools.com

SUBSCRIBE TODAY
MODERNDRUMMER.COM

Billy Blast



www.billyblastdrums.com
billyblast@att.net

We're dedicated to selling high-quality custom drum sets, hardware and accessories. Our custom kits are 100% 100% Keller Maple Shells and the very best hardware. Choose from our INCREDIBLE selection of sets & accessories, and build or repair your own drum kit!

"Remember If Billy Doesn't Like It He Won't Sell It!"
Phone: 714-620-1882
E-Mail: billyblast@att.net

Castle Drum Co

Dare to be different.
We did

The only **Conical** snare drum on the market

Check us out at
www.castledrumco.com

PRECISION DRUM

Custom Drums



Wrap
Repairs
Hardware
Keller Shells

Precision Drum Company, Inc.
3012 Route 44, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569
Toll free 1-888-512-DBLUM (3786)
www.PrecisionDrum.com

SLUG

BEATERS • BADGES • KEYS • FELTS

★ MADE IN USA ★

slugdrums.com

rb DRUMS

RBHdrumsUSA.com

www **Drums on SALE** .com

GIGANTIC SAVINGS

11375 Robinwood Drive
(College Plaza)
Hagerstown, MD 21742
www.drumsale.com
1-301-733-DRUM (3786)



www.dwdrums.com/moonmic/

MOON-MIC
DYNAMIC MICROPHONE

Gibraltar
Flatter Bags



www.gibraltarhardware.com/?fa=flatterbags

Alternate Mode **KAT**

trapKAT 5KS



26 piece e-drum kit
with sounds by Kurzweil

DRUM MARKET

INSTRUCTION

NYC Drummers: Study with **John Sarracco**, one of the most knowledgeable pros in the NY area. Accepting only the serious-minded for drum instruction **the professional way**. Staten Island studio locations. 718-351-4031.

NYC—Westchester. Learn the art of playing the drums. Students include platinum artists. All welcome. **"It's about time."** Tel: 914-591-3383, 914-674-4549. www.edbettinelli.com

Baltimore-Washington: Grant Menefee's studio of drumming. B.M. Berklee College of Music. All styles and levels. Tel: 410-747-STIX.

MISCELLANEOUS

N.A.R.D. Is Back! The National Association of Rudimental Drummers. Approved by Ludwig. www.nard.us.com

www.drumatix.com, home of the reproduction super 'clamshell' snare strainer handle, drumsets, snares, singles and cymbals.

VINTAGE SHOWCASE

Ludwig, Rogers, Slingerland, Leedy & Gretsch books by Rob Cook, producer of the Chicago Drum Show & publisher of drummer biographies. Rebeats 989-463-4757. rob@rebeats.com, www.rebeats.com

www.drumatix.com, home of the reproduction super 'clamshell' snare strainer handle, drumsets, snares, singles, and cymbals.

For information on how to advertise in Drum Market, please contact LaShanda Gibson at 973-239-4140 x102 or lashandag@moderndrummer.com.



The MD Deluxe Stick Bag



Now you can carry up to two dozen pairs of sticks, mallets, and brushes in style with the new MD Deluxe Stick Bag. It's made from durable Cordura fabric and features six deep padded pockets, two tom-hanger cords, a loop handle, a shoulder strap, and a zippered outer pocket for all of your odds and ends, including the latest issue of *Modern Drummer*. The bag is 18" long, 10" wide when closed, and 21" wide when open, and a heavy-duty zipper keeps everything secure in transport.

So whether you're taking your sticks to practice, heading out to a gig, or keeping everything all in one place in your studio, you'll be thrilled to have the attractive MD Deluxe Stick Bag with you.

(Sticks, brushes, and mallets are not included.)

**Order today
for only
\$29.99!**

moderndrummer.com/stickbag

Enter To Win This Incredible Prize From Bucks County Drum Company and Zildjian Cymbals!

This incredible prize includes a three-piece Bucks County Drum Company Semi-Solid bop kit with a satin wenge veneer finish, Gretsch-style lugs, and black-nickel hardware.

The 8x12 rack tom features five maple plies fused to a solid granadillo core, the 12x14 floor tom features five maple plies fused to a solid yellowheart core, and the 16x18 kick drum has five maple plies fused to a soft maple core. Each drum features maple reinforcement hoops.

One of the most popular and versatile cymbal series used by musicians for generations, the Zildjian A line is known for its bright timbre, focused overtones, and wide dynamic range.

The A series prize pack includes 14" New Beat Hi-hats, 16" and 18" Medium-Thin Crashes, and a 21" Sweet Ride.



**Contest valued
at over \$3,600!**

**Enter today at
moderndrummer.com!**



Consumer Disclosure: 1. To enter, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Bucks County/Zildjian Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS MARCH 1, 2016, AND ENDS MAY 31, 2016. 4. Prize Drawing: Winners will be selected by random drawing on June 7, 2016. Winners will be notified by phone or email on or about June 9, 2016. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Bucks County Drum Co., Avedis Zildjian Co, and their affiliates are ineligible. 6. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada; Florida; New York; and where prohibited by law. 8. One prize awarded per household per contest. 9. Prizes: 1st Prize – One (1) winner will receive the prizes as described above. Approximate retail value of prize: \$3,695. Approximate retail value of contest: \$3,695. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 271 Route 46 W, H-212, Fairfield, NJ 07004, 973-239-4140. 11. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Bucks County-Zildjian/Official Rules/Winners List, 271 Route 46 W, H-212, Fairfield, NJ 07004.



CRITIQUE

RECORDINGS

John Coltrane *A Love Supreme: The Complete Masters*

In celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, this masterpiece has been released in expanded two- and three-CD editions. The larger package is a completist's dream, offering every existing take and overdub.

Saxophonist John Coltrane's towering declaration of spirituality sits high on the short list of jazz game-changers, and its influence remains vital today. Featuring pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison, and drummer **Elvin Jones**, the quartet produced a thundering, yearning sound—simultaneously intense and meditative—that delivered a jolt in 1965. This is peak Elvin, he of the surging, triplet-rolling drive.

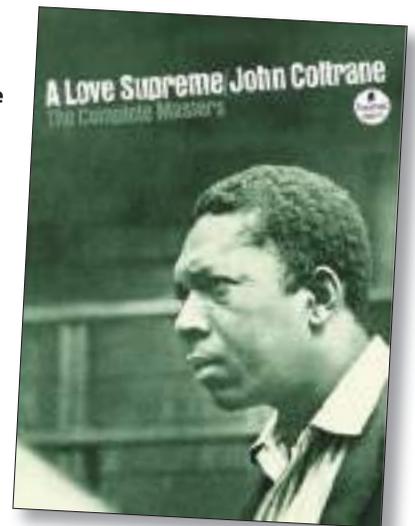
The suite includes some of the drummer's greatest moments. Witness "Pursuance," where Jones opens with an extended tension-building solo, setting up Trane's kickoff phrase. Later, his power swinging behind the tenor giant's phrases escalates into the transcendent.

Following the initial session, Coltrane recorded sextet versions of "Acknowledgement" augmented with bassist Art Davis and tenor saxophonist Archie Shepp. Not part of the original LP, all six takes are included here. These versions differentiate most notably in Shepp's buzz-saw attack from the get-go. Jones is driving throughout, playing Afro-Latin flourishes in cymbal bell/rimclick patterns over polyrhythms, and his sensitive double-time backing behind a two-bass solo section is captivating.

Disc three features a live prerelease performance of the suite from the Festival Mondial du Jazz Antibes. The quartet immediately leaps into a blistering version that sustains over forty-eight minutes. Although lacking the exquisite arc of the classic recording, the set's spontaneity is riveting. Elvin complies, hitting mightily hard. Both cheers and boos greet the finale.

The three-CD version also includes an informative thirty-two-page book. Much of the bonus material was issued on the disc's 2002 edition, and many of the previously unreleased tracks, including brief false starts and Coltrane's take-home mono reference tracks, would be considered minutiae to all but hardcore fans. But there are also gems, in particular take six of the sextet's "Acknowledgement."

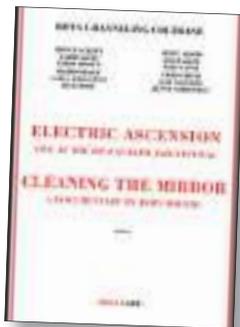
Casual fans may be well served by the lesser versions. But the full archival treatment of this landmark is certainly in order, and this meticulously assembled edition stands, hands down, as the definitive document. (Impulse!) **Jeff Potter**



Rova Channeling Coltrane

Electric Ascension: Live at the 2012 Guelph Jazz Festival
A modern take on a classic record, with the spirit of freedom as the only rule.

On this live performance video, the Rova Saxophone Quartet is augmented by confident improvisers including Nels Cline, Fred Frith, Jenny Scheinman, Ikue Mori, and drummer **Hamid Drake**, to reimagine John Coltrane's alternately maligned and revered 1965 recording *Ascension*. The concert is certainly demanding, with sixty-eight minutes full of honking noise as well as moments of understated beauty from a twelve-piece band. The musicians know when and how to pick their spots, however. Check out when, fifteen minutes in, Drake steps into the ring toe to toe with Cline, the drums boldly peaking and receding on top of and underneath an aggressive guitar solo. Later Drake plays some grooving beats with his snares off and locks into an almost Afro-Cuban pattern for only a few bars during a bass/drums duet, so even though it's obvious that the interpretation is reverential, these cats are surely doing their own thing. A second disc includes *Cleaning the Mirror*, a making-of documentary with interviews and behind-the-scenes footage. (rova.org) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Panic! At the Disco *Death of a Bachelor*

At this point, the hugely popular emo-pop "group" is down to one member. Rarely has a one-man band proven so adept at so much.

Brendon Urie, who plays all the instruments on PATD's fourth record, is an absolute master songwriter and vocalist, with a multi-octave range that recalls both Freddie Mercury and Frank Sinatra. And far from a pedestrian drummer, Urie is a powerful, inspired, Ilan Rubin-meets-Danny Seraphine terror. He opens the track "Hallelujah" by playing (and doubling in length) Seraphine's swing-triplet-fill intro to Chicago's "Questions 67 and 68," then samples the song further to create a new R&B gospel shindig. Elsewhere Urie rips a rolling hip-hop beat on "Emperor's New Clothes," apes a riotous Gene Krupa on "Crazy=Genius," and smashes a mean 2-and-4 groove on "LA Devotee." PATD is huge with the little girls—but now we drummers can understand. (FBR/DCD2) **Ken Micallef**



Taking the Reins

Bill Stewart *Space Squid*

A rare leader disc from this drumming legend proves that good jazz comes to those who wait.

Bill Stewart has released only a handful of albums as a leader since he burst onto the jazz scene twenty-five years ago, making his newest, *Space Squid*, a welcome addition to a varied discography. Stewart penned all but one of the compositions and gathered musicians he's recorded with for years, including saxophonist Seamus Blake, pianist Bill Carrothers, and bassist Ben Street.

"Paris Lope" is all melancholy hues, the drummer coaxing swells out of his cymbals and keeping things moving along at a leisurely pace with a rimclick backbeat. Blake is a tenor player of rhythmic invention, and he and Stewart engage in some hip repartee on "Tincture," floating over barlines like it's second nature, before things wind down with a drum solo of nasty hi-hat licks and wild snare/kick combos.

The syncopations in the head of "Dead Ringer" give Stewart a chance to work out, and he dutifully crawls inside the pulse, driving the tune with an insistent ride before throwing in those famous ruffs underneath Carrothers' dark piano solo. Stewart dispenses with tempo on "End of Earth" and gets into some funky stuff and one incredible fill after another on the title track. He's good at keeping the musicians on their toes and the listener engaged by changing textures, sometimes within the same song. Dig how he applies subtle brushwork at the top of the medium-swinging "If Anyone Asks You," eventually grabbing sticks for the sax solo, switching back to brushes on the out-head, and returning finally to sticks to conclude with a beautiful triplet figure over the coda.

As is usually the case with Stewart, there's a lot going on; the drumming is consistently full of activity but never intrusive. *Space Squid* isn't a blowing date, and you can find Stewart in a whole slew of sideman settings where he's perhaps playing with more fire, but none where he plays with more purpose. (Pirouet) **Ilya Stenkovsky**



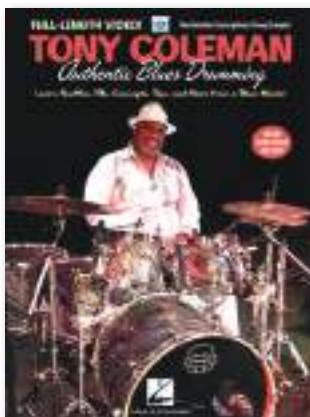
MULTIMEDIA

Authentic Blues Drumming by Tony Coleman

Burrowing into a market stuffed thick with thoroughly researched style studies, this book/downloadable video package tears drummers' eyes away from text to learn the real deal from a seasoned blues veteran.

With this book/video project, Tony Coleman, longtime backbone for the late B.B. King, breaks around ninety minutes' worth of loose instruction into fourteen lessons that cover various shuffles and blues concepts. Accompanied by guitarist Jonathan Ellison and bassist John Williams, Coleman demonstrates feels and immediately applies them to a blues setting. The book portion, which features sixteen pages of accurate transcriptions, contains a code to download the accompanying video from Hal Leonard's website.

Coleman covers double, gospel, Texas, and Kansas City shuffles, as well as blues grooves for slow and funk situations. Demonstrations include



breakdowns and explanations with brief anecdotal background information, and transcriptions help viewers discern Coleman's occasionally ambiguous fills.

You can skip the sixteen-minute ramble devoted to drum setup and tuning. In fact, throughout the video some explanations straddle a thin line between clarity and incoherence—though there's humor in their blunt charm. And you're not going to find the type of in-depth historical analysis here that other academic efforts have uncovered. Nonetheless, the content fits appropriately for a style of music that was born and fostered from an oral tradition. This production comes from a *player*, not an educator or researcher, and it's worthy to hear drumming that might look simple on paper but requires years of historical perspective to get right. If you want to play the blues, put down the text, listen to Coleman, and learn. (\$19.99, Hal Leonard)

Willie Rose



London Drum Show 2015

Held at the Olympia Conference Centre in London this past November 21 and 22, the London Drum Show gathered nearly 3,500 drummers and percussionists to watch performances, attend master classes, and check out the latest gear packed into two floors of exhibits.

This year's show debuted the Education Zone, a dedicated space for intimate clinics taught by the tHUNder Duo, Mike Johnston, Adam Markó, Anika Nilles, and Harvey Mason, as well as tuning workshops presented by Remo. Trinity College London instructors hosted free lessons throughout the weekend using Alesis and

Roland electronic drumsets.

The Mike Dolbear master-class suite featured insightful sets by Kaz Rodriguez, Euan Leslie, Karl Brazil, Ian Thomas, and Pink Floyd's Nick Mason, who gave candid advice about life in the music business.

Pete Cater, Nilles, Thomas Pridgen, and Pete Ray Biggin took the main stage on Saturday, while Sunday featured Peter Erskine, Johnston, Franklin Vanderbilt, and Gregg Bissonette.

Text by Gemma Hill

Photos by Richard Ecclestone



Rich Redmond's Third Annual Drummer's Weekend in Nashville

This past October 30 through November 1, attendees of Rich Redmond's Drummer's Weekend studied and mingled with multi-faceted industry talent during three eight-hour days of hands-on training in Nashville, Tennessee.

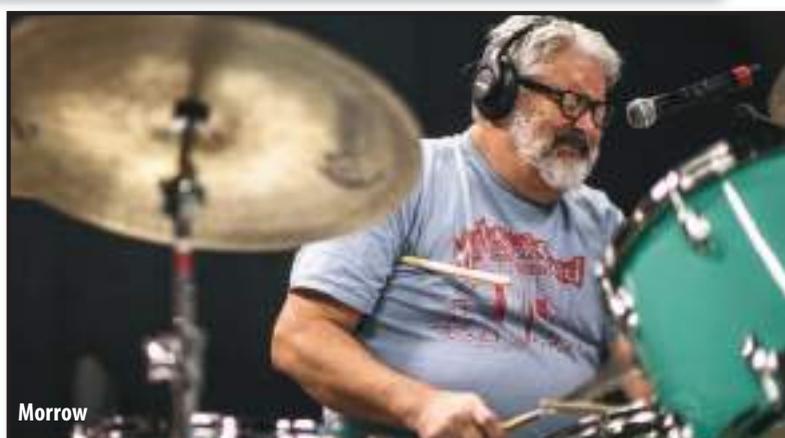
Producer Michael Knox explained what he looks for in studio drummers, Jim Riley demystified the Nashville number system, and Jon Hull covered tuning and the skills needed to be a major touring drum tech. Session drummer Greg Morrow played with tracks he's recorded, answered questions, and let campers play his drumset, which has been used on hundreds of hit records.

Jason Aldean's rhythm section—guitarist Kurt Allison, bassist Tully Kennedy, and Redmond—performed some of Aldean's hits and offered insight on becoming top-call musicians. Tyler Farr's Mark Poesz explained how studying multiple genres influenced his playing. Colbie Caillat's Billy Hawn offered advice on backing singer/songwriters using creative setups, and he joined Redmond for an improvisational piece with their percussion duo, Strike That.

Drums and Disabilities' Mike Wrench explained strategies for teaching students with disabilities. Mark Schulman performed songs by Pink, Cher, and Foreigner, and discussed concepts from his book *Conquering Life's Stage Fright*. Redmond explained musical, mental, and business concepts needed for industry success, as well as chop development, reading, rudiments, chart creation, and playing along with click tracks. Monster drummer Thomas Lang delivered an extensive solo, played to fusion and instrumental rock tracks, broke down his concepts for achieving drumset freedom, and answered an array of questions.

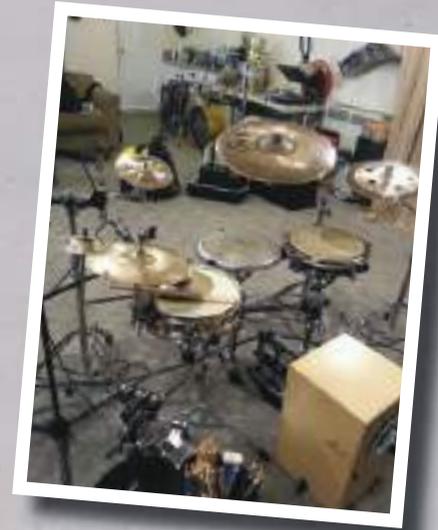
The final day featured a Q&A with some of Nashville's top drummers, including Lester Estelle, Chris McHugh, Kevin Murphy, Keio Stroud, Ben Sesar, Tom Hurst, and Tracy Broussard. To close out the weekend, campers performed a concert benefitting the W.O. Smith School of Music at Nashville's Douglas Corner Cafe.

Photos by Lauren Elle Jaye





The Frankenstein



"This kit is for any drummer looking to incorporate the best of the drumming and percussion worlds into one simple and versatile setup," says Westminster, California's Jimmy Tran, who performs regularly at the Disneyland Resort with *The Voice* finalist Tini Grey. "I put it together using the knowledge I've gained from years of touring and session work, advice from several drumming mentors, and mostly from my own artistic passion for bringing Frankenstein to reality.

"The kit consists of a Latin Percussion Compact Conga, a Pearl Travel Conga, a 14" PorkTone brass snare [an anniversary collaboration between Pork Pie and Soultone], and a tambourine played with a pedal. The tambourine pedal is an old Yamaha model that I reversed so I could hit the tambourine from the bottom. I flipped the chain and cam upside down and reversed the beater. I didn't set the pedal vertically because I didn't want any extra jingle-jangle. This way the sounds are short and staccato, which leaves plenty of musical space when I'm playing complex rhythms,

especially in pop music."

Tran sits on a DG DeGregorio cajon that doubles as a bass drum, which he plays with a DG pedal. "When miked at the sound port, the cajon sounds like an 808 bass drum," says Tran. "Sometimes I use an 8" Meinl Drummer Snare Timbale for flavor as well.

"I am a proud endorser of SilverFox percussion and Soultone cymbals," Tran continues. "The small cymbal on the snare is a 9" Inferno Dark splash. I added a bathroom doorknob from a local hardware store, which is an idea I took from one of my drumming idols, Johnny Rabb. I call this my job-security cymbal. Pretty much everyone I perform with gives me a do-that-again look whenever I use it. I'm always exploring textures in my sound, and I enjoy mimicking electronic sounds with my acoustic setup. This cymbal reproduces the classic 808 handclap, which lends itself perfectly to modern pop music."

A video of Tran playing his hybrid setup can be found at youtube.com/mrtinyjam.

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



Coming Up in Modern Drummer

HAMILTON'S ANDRÉS FORERO

MD'S 2016 READERS POLL RESULTS
DEFTONES' ABE CUNNINGHAM GEARS UP • AND MORE!



Paul La Rosa

EARN YOUR BADGE



JOE CLEGG

ELLIE GOULDING

His impeccable ability to play for the song has earned him the chair behind chart-topping English pop superstar Ellie Goulding. Before he became an international success story, he was a working drummer with big ambitions and bigger dreams. Fast forward eight years later and he has become one of the UK's most in-demand drummers and musical directors.

Since 1883, Gretsch has been building the finest American-made drums for players who understand that in order to play "That Great Gretsch Sound," you have to earn it.



GRETCHDRUMS.COM/BROADKASTER

THE GREAT AMERICAN DRUM SET™



Zildjian®

BE EXPRESSIVE

WITH THE NEW S FAMILY

Zildjian's new S Family will redefine your expectations of what a B12 alloy cymbal can deliver. We spent years of R&D building these from the ground up. Where the technology didn't exist, we invented it. With a balanced frequency response, long sustain and a wide variety of models to choose from, you'll have everything you need to break through.

So be bold. Be expressive. And let them hear what you really sound like.



#BEEXPRESSIVE

To learn more about the S Family and hear all the different models, go to Zildjian.com/SFamily.

Mike Fuentes / Pierce the Veil