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SEPTEMBER 2007

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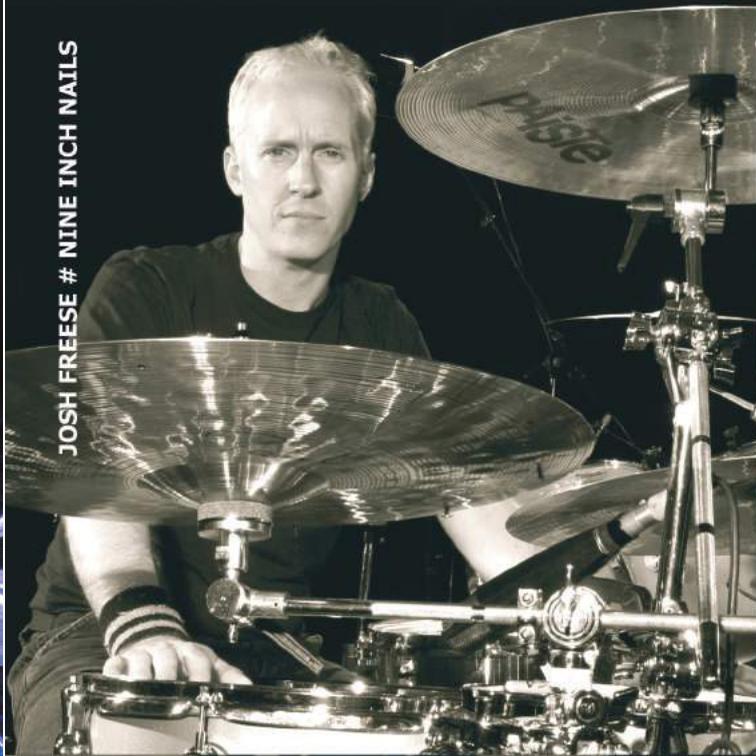
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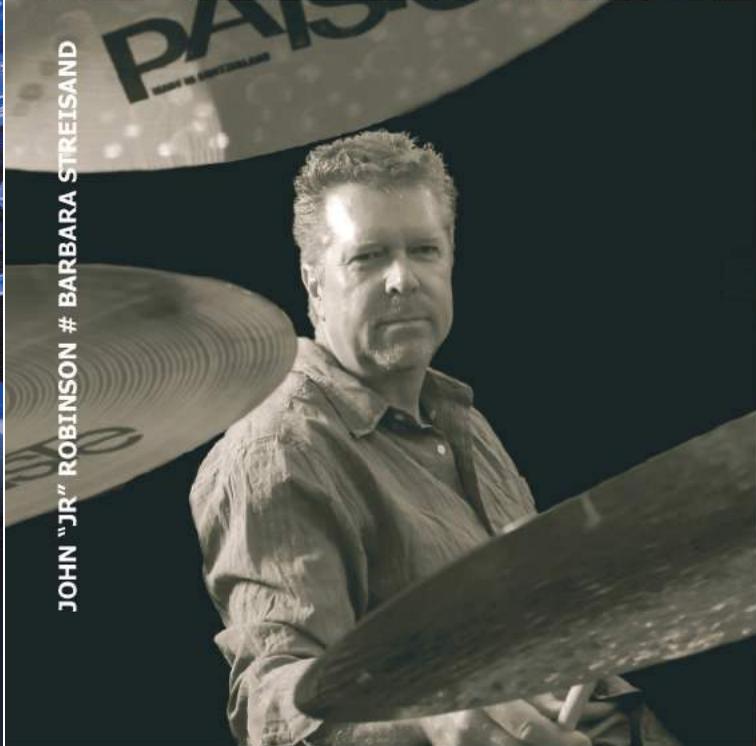
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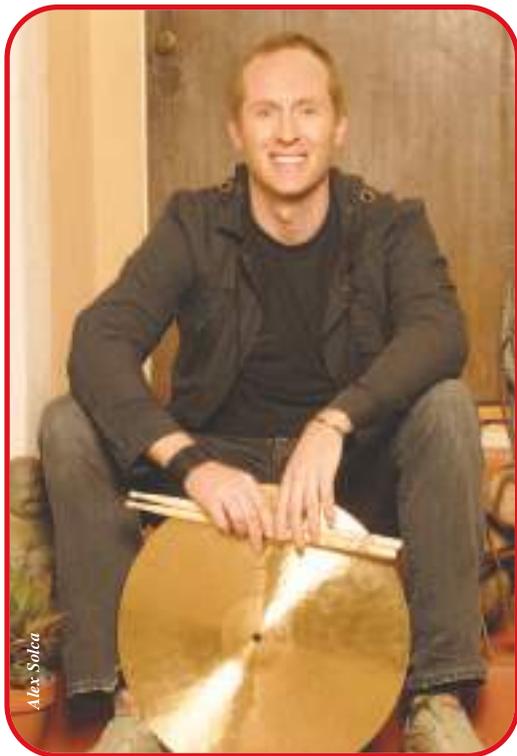
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Alex Solca

FEATURES

<< 58 Josh Freese

Quick: How many drummers can you think of who hold first-call status with punk bands, folkies, metal heads—even jazzers—live AND in the studio? This month MD explores the universal grooves of Josh Freese, the busiest drummer in town.

76 It's All About Time!

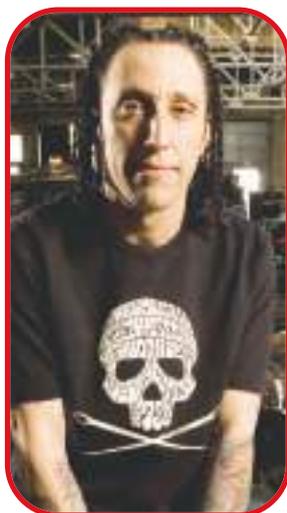
Time and groove: they're a drummer's ultimate responsibilities—and don't kid yourself, they're also the toughest skills to master. But have no fear, MD is here with timekeeping tips from the very best players today. Get your grooves together here and now! PLUS remembering **Jeff Porcaro**, page 90.

112 R&B/Soul Legend James Gadson

So, Aretha Franklin, Little Richard, Paul McCartney, and Beck are at a bar. In walks James Gadson. Conversation stops, and the pop stars break out in applause. It could happen. It SHOULD happen. Meet the immortal James Gadson.

146 Heaven And Hell's Vinny Appice

Journeyman drummer Vinny Appice is back in the saddle with Black Sabbath, '80s-style. That's what's called a perfect fit.



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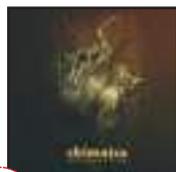
Glenn Hughes

Classic rock's ageless blue-eyed-soulster riffs on Ian Paice, Chad Smith, and other rhythmic confidants.

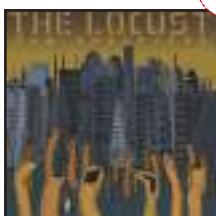




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Cindy Blackman
The J.B. Trio



Travis Barker
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Charley Brayton
The Roots



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Dennis Chambers
Santana

Steve Smith
Jimi Hendrix Experience

Questlove
The Roots

J.J. Johnson
John Mayer



Time Is On My Side

The word "time" has many different connotations. To us drummers, time is one of the most important words in our vocabulary. I'm sure you've all heard a drummer—maybe even yourself—described like this: "He has it all—solid groove, awesome feel, and great time." But what does that mean? The ability to play odd time...syncopated time...straight 2 & 4 time? And are you born with great time, as some are said to be born with perfect pitch? Or can you learn to groove and have good time?

This month, in an unprecedented study of the concept, you'll read dozens of invaluable tips on the topic from some of the best drummers in the world. Among the players/writer/drummer Mike Haid interviewed are Bernard Purdie, Clyde Stubblefield, Kenny Aronoff, Keith Carlock, Ian Paice, and Billy Ward—players whose deep sense of time has inspired legions of drummers during their quest for the groove.

And as a special treat, one of my favorite guitarists, Toto founder and session virtuoso Steve Lukather, speaks to MD about what it was like playing with his friend and bandmate, the one and only Jeff Porcaro.

Speaking of players with great time, feel, and groove, I had the opportunity to speak to one of the most recorded drummers of all time, R&B/soul legend James Gadson, in his first MD interview. Among the topics we cover with Gadson: his early days on the music scene, his chart-topping studio career, and in keeping with this month's theme, playing and practicing with a click track.

Also featured in this jam-packed issue is our cover story with one of the most sought-after session drummers of today, as well as a member of Nine Inch Nails: the incredible Josh Freese. There's also A Different View with ex-Deep Purple singer/bassist and solo artist Glenn Hughes, and Carmine Appice's younger brother Vinny speaks with Robyn Flans about playing on the long-awaited Heaven And Hell tour.

So grab your sticks, get behind your kit, and groove! Enjoy the issue.



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Marco Minnemann

It's great to see Marco Minnemann gracing MD's cover. I first became aware of Marco back in 1998, when I was blown away by his performance with H-Blockx on a TV show. Two years later I was able to set up his first Italian clinic. We've been friends and mutual supporters since then. Marco is just as you see him in his clinics and videos: down to earth, friendly, and fun...a true music and life enthusiast.

Sergio Ponti

Coordination & Independence Issue

Any time you've run a "theme" issue, I've enjoyed it. But you outdid yourselves with the June '07 issue focusing on coordination and independence. What a wealth of information, advice, and challenging exercises! I'll be shedding on that material for weeks to come.

Frank Alessio



Spanky McCurdy

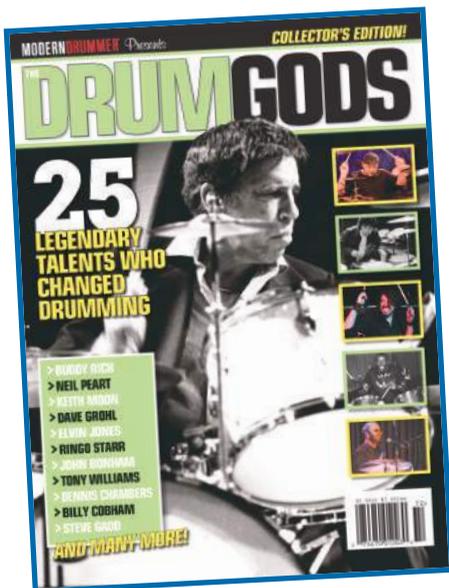
Another hot drummer comes out of Philly's R&B/Gospel scene. What do they put in the water in that town? Spanky McCurdy (June '07 MD) sounds like a solid and sincere young cat with serious potential. Let's hope the Diddy gig is his launching pad to even bigger things.

Tyrone Jackson



The Drum Gods

Editor's note: Response to MD's special collector's issue The Drum Gods has been hot and heavy. Here's just a sample.



I'm really enjoying your Drum Gods collector's edition. I realize that there will always be someone who doesn't like the list because their favorite drummer isn't included, or simply because they feel that these types of publications are too subjective. But my opinion is that you did a very nice job of presenting "25 Legendary Talents Who Changed Drumming."

Christopher Straley

Great Drum Gods issue. I hope drum students pick it up and learn something about those who laid out the blueprints for drumming. I am, however, disappointed that Louie Bellson and Carmine Appice were not featured among "those who changed drumming." Maybe another special issue can feature additional "influential drummers" of our time.

Phil Sollar

Putting Travis Barker in the same category as Roy Haynes seems screwy to me. Don't try so hard to appeal to the young crowd. Just tell the truth and keep the term "god" in perspective.

Tom Bagshaw

I was extremely surprised (and pleased) that you acknowledged Dave Lombardo's incredible playing. But I'm equally surprised that Bill Bruford, Danny Carey, and Josh Freese didn't make the list, while

Travis Barker did. What gives?

Mike Labita

Nice to see that your Drum Gods issue reflected the influence of contemporary as well as veteran drum stars. It's important to acknowledge that drummers like Grohl, Lombardo, and Barker have been as influential on the current generation as Rich, Williams, and Peart were on previous generations. Good job.

Allan Wentworth

How could you not include Joe Morello? He played in one of the biggest jazz groups of all time [The Dave Brubeck Quartet], and he recorded one of the greatest drum solos of all time on Brubeck's "Take Five."

Jade Bergum

What about Stewart Copeland...?

Tim Flanders

Where's Carl Palmer...?

James Amato

Jeff Porcaro...?

Sean Rollins

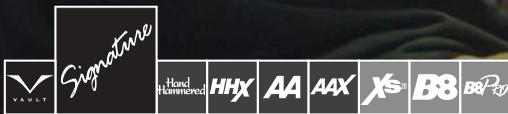
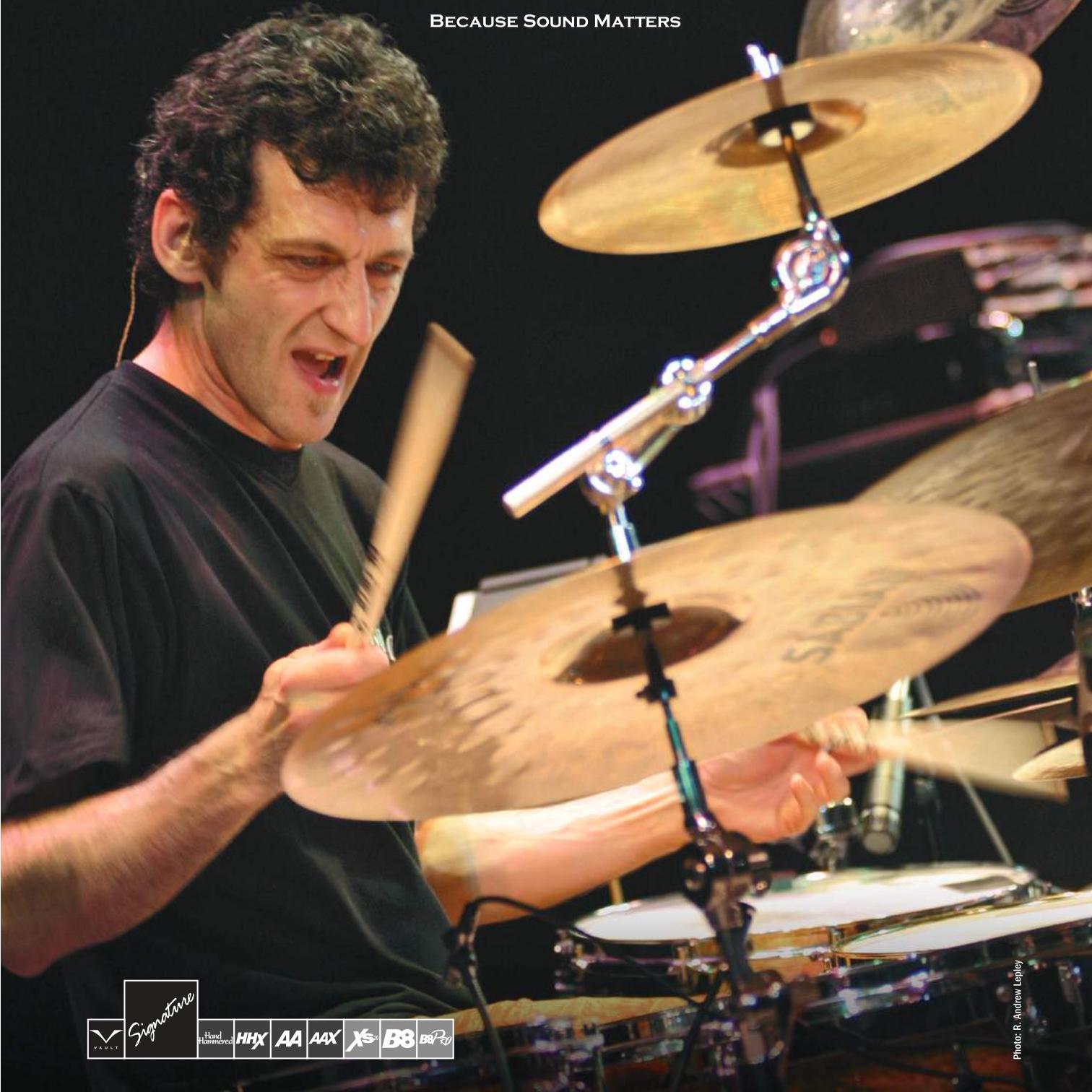
Editor's note: Drum Gods II is already in the planning stages, so look out for our next presentation of drumming's all-time greats.



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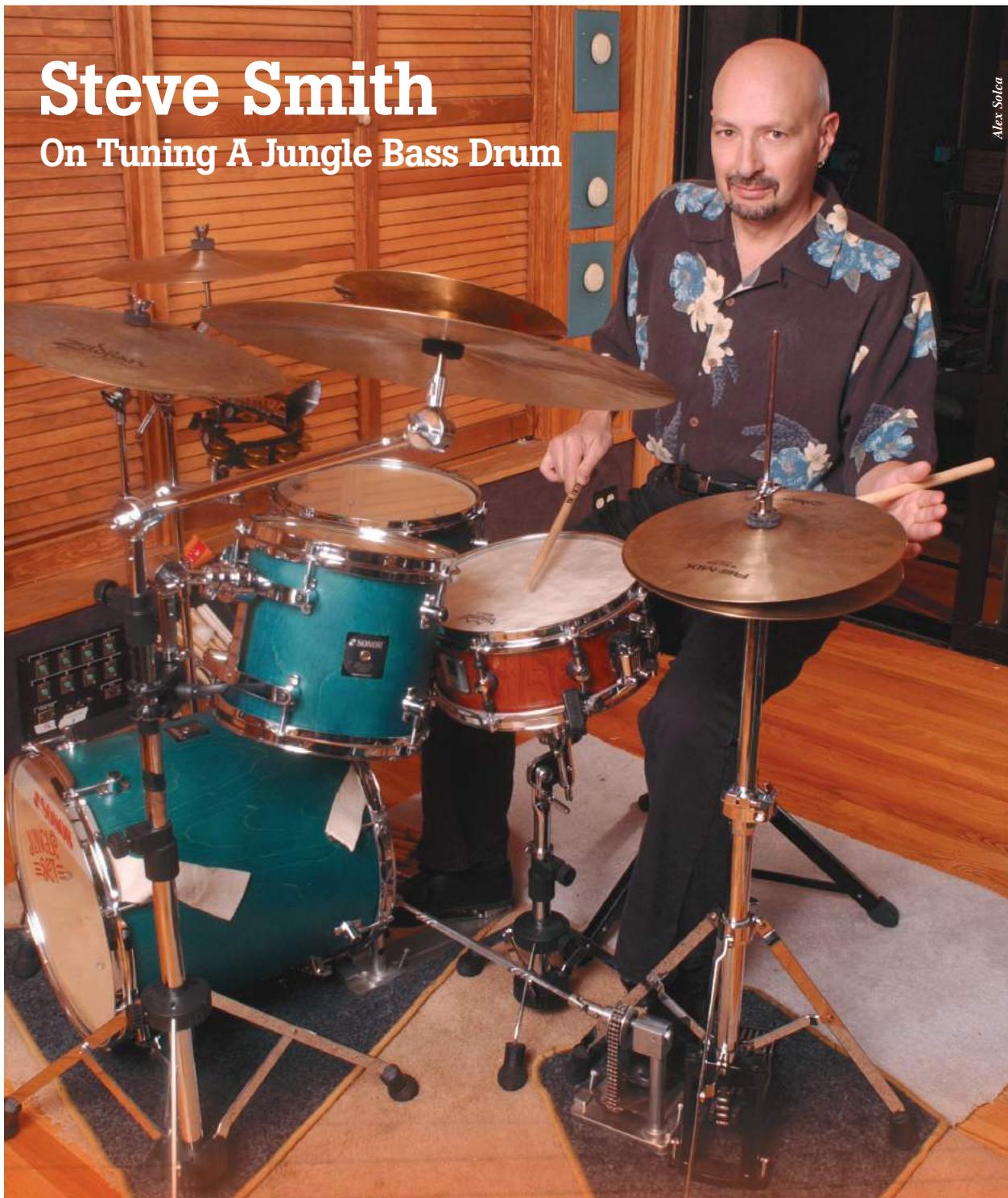
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Steve Smith

On Tuning A Jungle Bass Drum

Alex Solera



I've seen you playing a Sonor Jungle kit on several occasions, and I just purchased one for myself. I really enjoy the kit, but I'm not sure how to appropriately tune the tiny 16x16 bass drum. Could you provide some tips on tuning, muffling, and head selection for the Sonor Jungle bass drum?

Jim Davis

I truly enjoy playing on a Sonor Jungle kit. I have to say I think there are some "secrets" to getting a great bass drum sound on this kit. The first is the batter head: I use a clear

Remo Emperor. (I use the standard front head that comes with the kit.) The Emperor batter makes a big difference by helping the drum produce more low-end frequencies.

The second secret is that I use only felt strips as muffling, with a strip on the batter head and a strip on the front head, each placed about 2" or 3" down from the top of the drum. I don't cut a hole in the front head or put a pillow in the drum, because it's not big enough for that type of bass drum muffling to work.

The last secret is to not bury the beater. The drum can sound big and beautiful if you play "off the head." Hope this helps.

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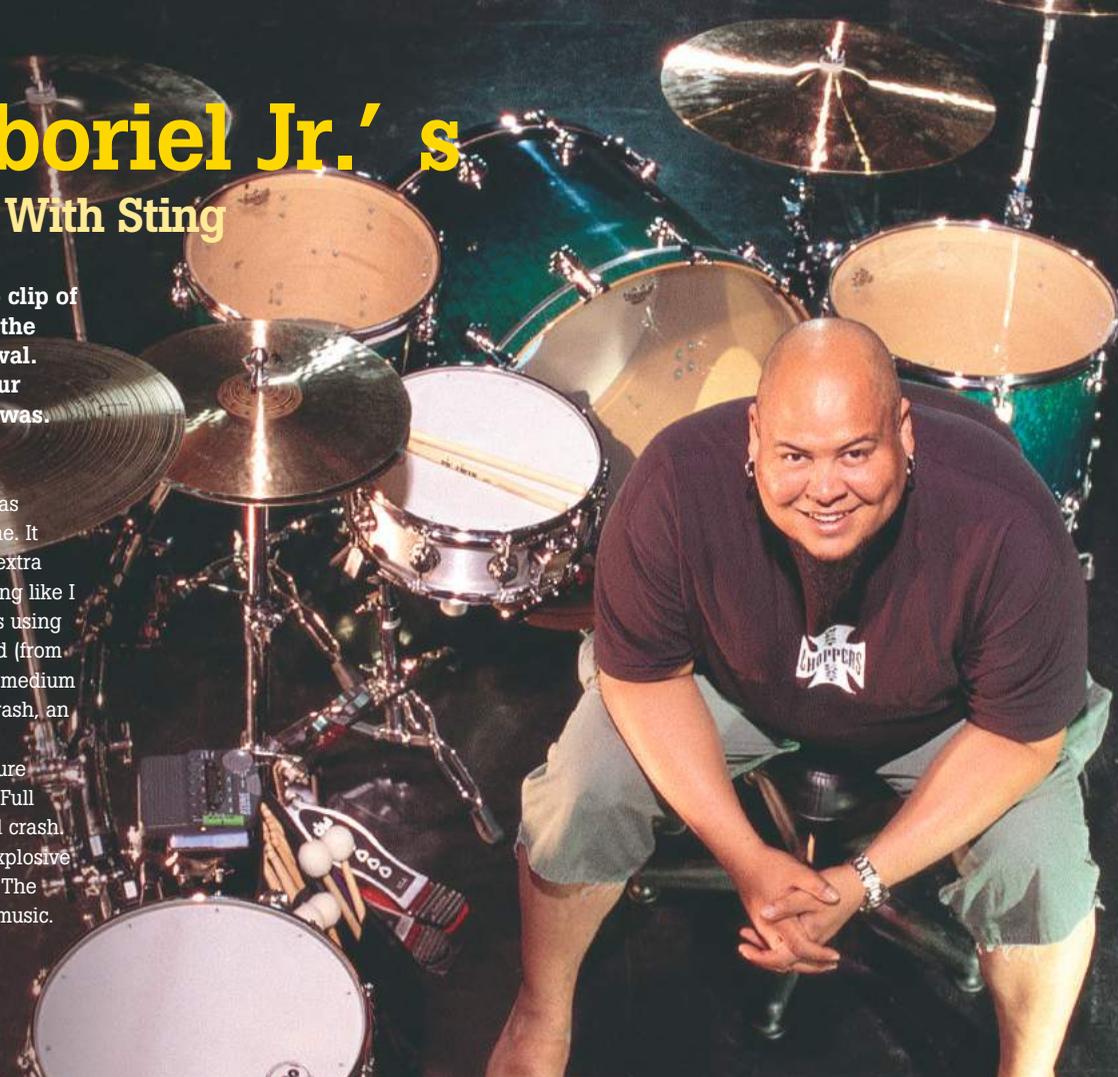
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Abe Laboriel Jr.' s Cymbal Setup With Sting

I watched an online video clip of you playing with Sting at the 2006 Montreux Jazz Festival. I' d love to know what your cymbal setup for that gig was.

Tim Jones

My cymbal setup with Sting was uncharacteristically large for me. It was a lot of fun to have some extra tonalities to play, without feeling like I was cluttering the music. I was using Paiste cymbals, which included (from my left to my right): 14" 2002 medium hi-hats, a 20" Signature Full crash, an 8" Dark Energy splash, a 10" Signature splash, a 22" Signature Mellow ride, an 18" Signature Full crash, and a 16" Signature Full crash. That setup provided a great, explosive sound that suited the songs of The Police as well as Sting' s solo music.



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KEITH CARLOCK

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QUICK BEATS

Tower Of Power's David Garibaldi

text and photo by Joe Pery

Place of birth: Oakland, California

Influences: Sonny Payne, Clyde Stubblefield, Greg Errico

Hobbies/interests: Sports, running, working out, music

How I relax: Hang out with my wife, watch TV, run

Favorite food: Italian, chicken & broccoli

Favorite fast food: Pizza at Parlouverde in Milano, Italy

Favorite junk food: Dark chocolate

Favorite drink: Espresso coffee

Favorite TV shows: *X Files*, *Deadwood*

Favorite movie: *Alien*

Favorite albums: John Coltrane's *Ballads*, The Meters' *Look-A Py Py*, Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*

Vehicle I drive: 2004 Acura MDX, 2003 Toyota pickup

Other instruments I play: Cello, string bass, piano, mallet percussion

If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A chef or a landscaper

Place I'd like to visit: Towermina, Sicily, Italy

I wish I'd played drums on: "Rock Steady" by Aretha Franklin

Musicians I'd like to work with (or to have worked with):

Chick Corea, Count Basie, James Brown

Next up & coming drummers: Adam Deitch, Marcus Baylor

Most prized possession: My 1993 Yamaha drums

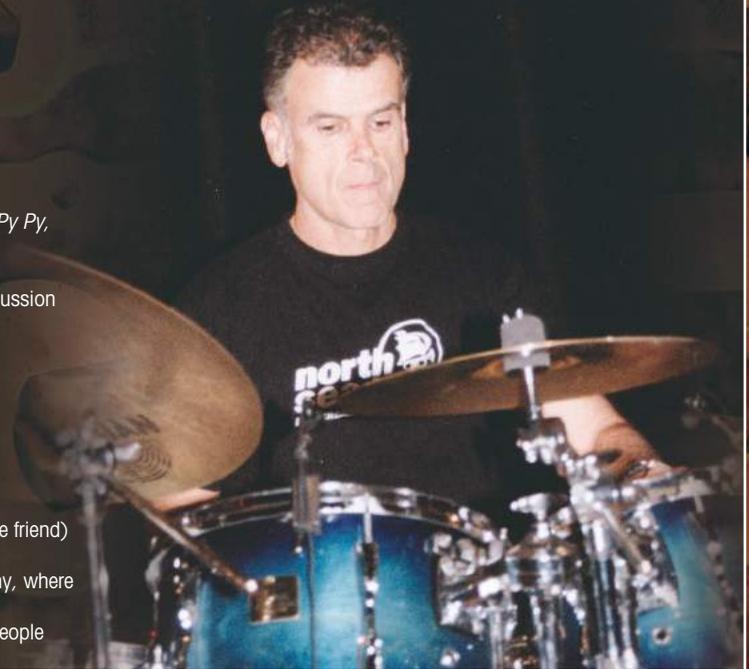
Person I would like to talk to: My late father

Person I admire: Skip Mesquite (ex-Tower member and a close friend)

Most memorable performance: With Aretha Franklin in 1972

Most unusual venue played: A stadium in Nuremberg, Germany, where Hitler held Nazi rallies

Biggest venue played: The Rose Bowl in 1974, for 100,000 people



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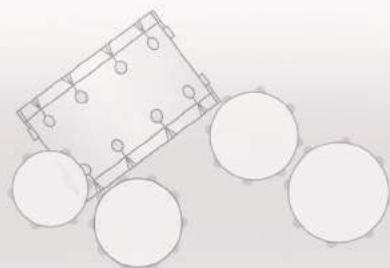
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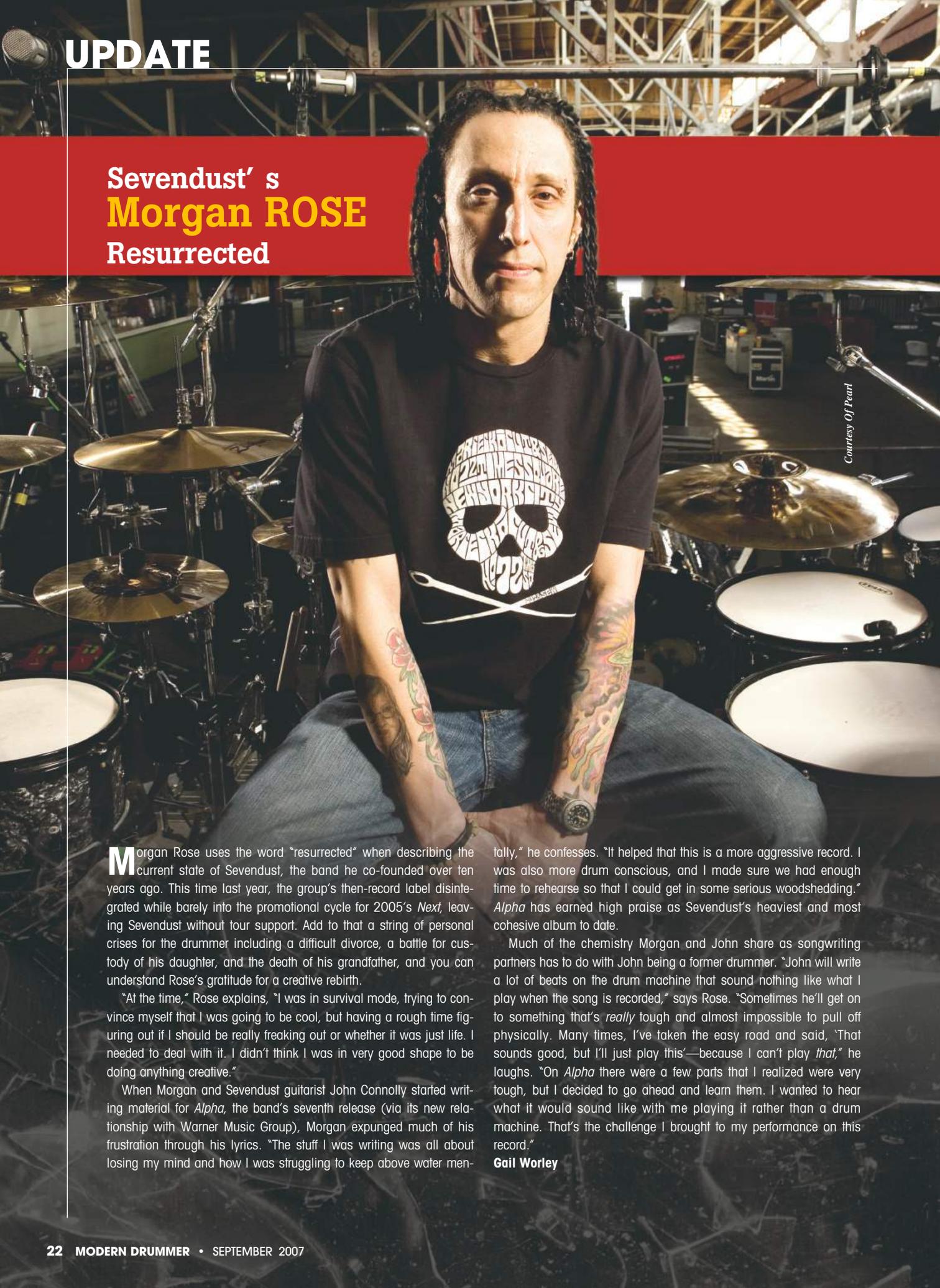
Drummer Adam Carson sits behind the wheel of a high-energy sports car named AFI. DW's legendary all-maple Collector's Series drums let him drive his own signature sound and harness the band's raw power. His beefy 18x24" kick with Built In Bottom™ provides the pulse, while his new 7x14" Edge snare drum projects through the sonic fury. We also knew he wanted something beautiful yet subtle, so we suggested Ebony Stain Lacquer over highly-figured Exotic Curly Maple with chrome hardware. With an unparalleled sound and appearance, Adam's new kit allows him to realize the creative fire inside. For Adam, there is no other drum company. The original, The Drummer's Choice®. **DW is Custom.**



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Sevendust's Morgan ROSE Resurrected



Courtesy Of Pearl

Morgan Rose uses the word “resurrected” when describing the current state of Sevendust, the band he co-founded over ten years ago. This time last year, the group’s then-record label disintegrated while barely into the promotional cycle for 2005’s *Next*, leaving Sevendust without tour support. Add to that a string of personal crises for the drummer including a difficult divorce, a battle for custody of his daughter, and the death of his grandfather, and you can understand Rose’s gratitude for a creative rebirth.

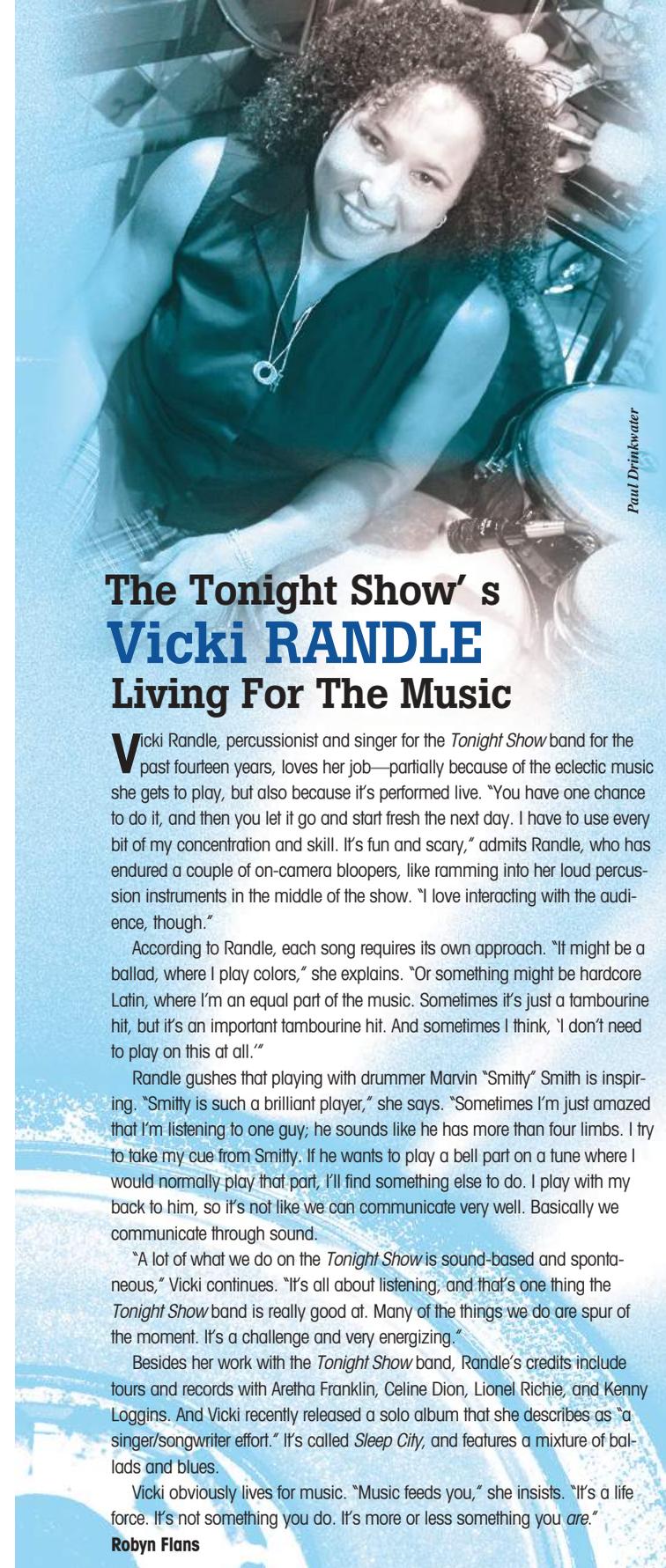
“At the time,” Rose explains, “I was in survival mode, trying to convince myself that I was going to be cool, but having a rough time figuring out if I should be really freaking out or whether it was just life. I needed to deal with it. I didn’t think I was in very good shape to be doing anything creative.”

When Morgan and Sevendust guitarist John Connolly started writing material for *Alpha*, the band’s seventh release (via its new relationship with Warner Music Group), Morgan expunged much of his frustration through his lyrics. “The stuff I was writing was all about losing my mind and how I was struggling to keep above water men-

tally,” he confesses. “It helped that this is a more aggressive record. I was also more drum conscious, and I made sure we had enough time to rehearse so that I could get in some serious woodshedding.” *Alpha* has earned high praise as Sevendust’s heaviest and most cohesive album to date.

Much of the chemistry Morgan and John share as songwriting partners has to do with John being a former drummer. “John will write a lot of beats on the drum machine that sound nothing like what I play when the song is recorded,” says Rose. “Sometimes he’ll get on to something that’s *really* tough and almost impossible to pull off physically. Many times, I’ve taken the easy road and said, ‘That sounds good, but I’ll just play this’—because I can’t play *that*,” he laughs. “On *Alpha* there were a few parts that I realized were very tough, but I decided to go ahead and learn them. I wanted to hear what it would sound like with me playing it rather than a drum machine. That’s the challenge I brought to my performance on this record.”

Gail Worley



Paul Drinkwater

The Tonight Show's Vicki RANDLE Living For The Music

Vicki Randle, percussionist and singer for the *Tonight Show* band for the past fourteen years, loves her job—partially because of the eclectic music she gets to play, but also because it's performed live. "You have one chance to do it, and then you let it go and start fresh the next day. I have to use every bit of my concentration and skill. It's fun and scary," admits Randle, who has endured a couple of on-camera bloopers, like ramming into her loud percussion instruments in the middle of the show. "I love interacting with the audience, though."

According to Randle, each song requires its own approach. "It might be a ballad, where I play colors," she explains. "Or something might be hardcore Latin, where I'm an equal part of the music. Sometimes it's just a tambourine hit, but it's an important tambourine hit. And sometimes I think, 'I don't need to play on this at all.'"

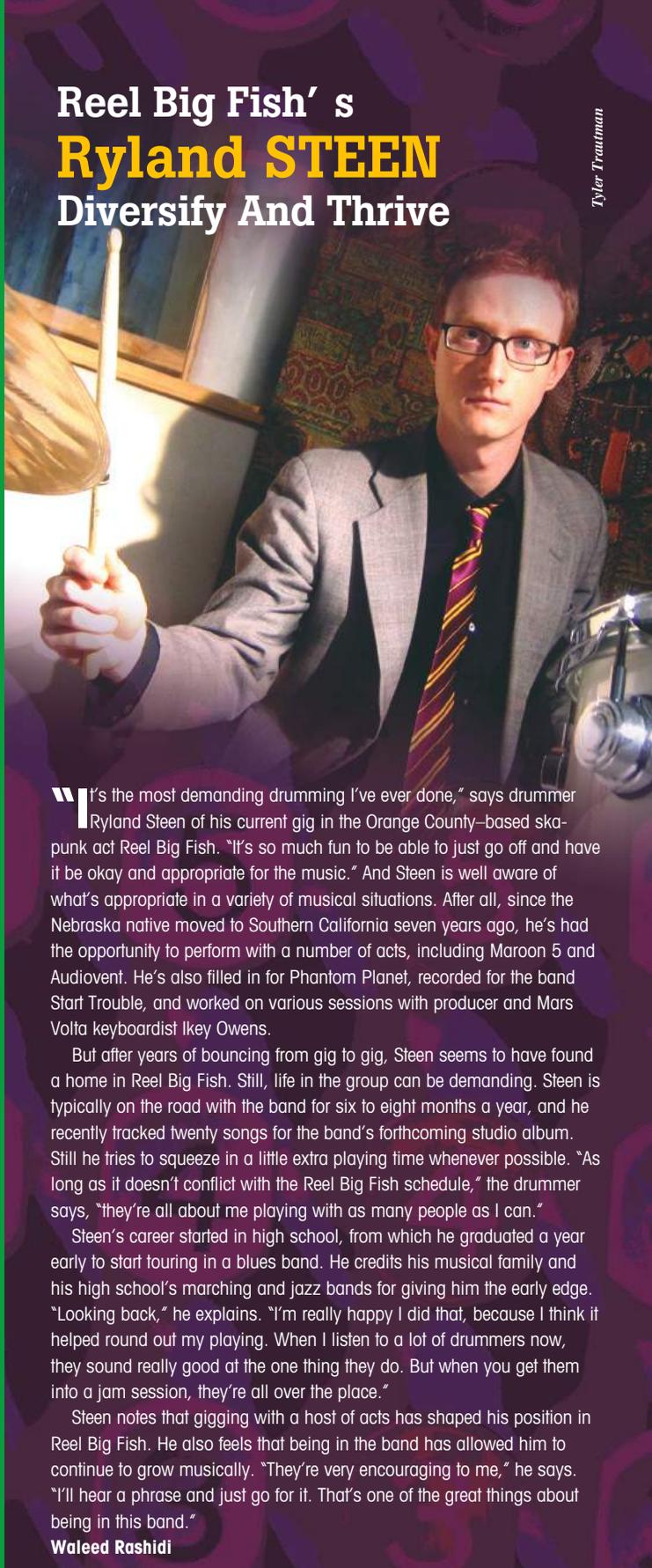
Randle gushes that playing with drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith is inspiring. "Smitty is such a brilliant player," she says. "Sometimes I'm just amazed that I'm listening to one guy; he sounds like he has more than four limbs. I try to take my cue from Smitty. If he wants to play a bell part on a tune where I would normally play that part, I'll find something else to do. I play with my back to him, so it's not like we can communicate very well. Basically we communicate through sound."

"A lot of what we do on the *Tonight Show* is sound-based and spontaneous," Vicki continues. "It's all about listening, and that's one thing the *Tonight Show* band is really good at. Many of the things we do are spur of the moment. It's a challenge and very energizing."

Besides her work with the *Tonight Show* band, Randle's credits include tours and records with Aretha Franklin, Celine Dion, Lionel Richie, and Kenny Loggins. And Vicki recently released a solo album that she describes as "a singer/songwriter effort." It's called *Sleep City*, and features a mixture of ballads and blues.

Vicki obviously lives for music. "Music feeds you," she insists. "It's a life force. It's not something you do. It's more or less something you are."

Robyn Flans



Tyler Trattman

Reel Big Fish's Ryland STEEN Diversify And Thrive

"It's the most demanding drumming I've ever done," says drummer Ryland Steen of his current gig in the Orange County-based ska-punk act Reel Big Fish. "It's so much fun to be able to just go off and have it be okay and appropriate for the music." And Steen is well aware of what's appropriate in a variety of musical situations. After all, since the Nebraska native moved to Southern California seven years ago, he's had the opportunity to perform with a number of acts, including Maroon 5 and Audiovent. He's also filled in for Phantom Planet, recorded for the band Start Trouble, and worked on various sessions with producer and Mars Volta keyboardist Ikey Owens.

But after years of bouncing from gig to gig, Steen seems to have found a home in Reel Big Fish. Still, life in the group can be demanding. Steen is typically on the road with the band for six to eight months a year, and he recently tracked twenty songs for the band's forthcoming studio album. Still he tries to squeeze in a little extra playing time whenever possible. "As long as it doesn't conflict with the Reel Big Fish schedule," the drummer says, "they're all about me playing with as many people as I can."

Steen's career started in high school, from which he graduated a year early to start touring in a blues band. He credits his musical family and his high school's marching and jazz bands for giving him the early edge. "Looking back," he explains. "I'm really happy I did that, because I think it helped round out my playing. When I listen to a lot of drummers now, they sound really good at the one thing they do. But when you get them into a jam session, they're all over the place."

Steen notes that gigging with a host of acts has shaped his position in Reel Big Fish. He also feels that being in the band has allowed him to continue to grow musically. "They're very encouraging to me," he says. "I'll hear a phrase and just go for it. That's one of the great things about being in this band."

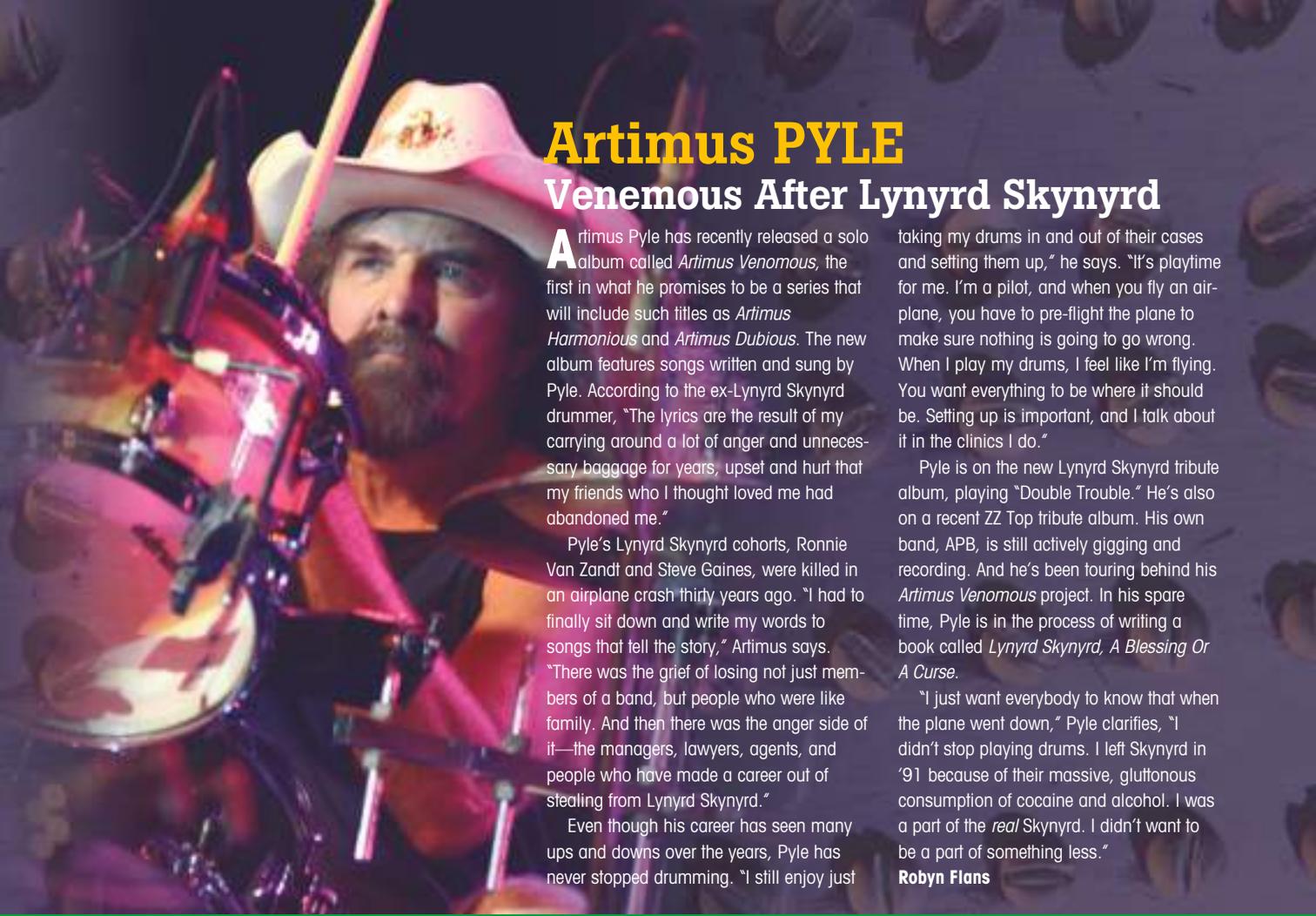
Waleed Rashidi

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- Chico Hamilton** (jazz great): 9/21/21
- Horace Arnold** (educator, author): 9/25/35
- Ron Bushy** (Iron Butterfly): 9/23/45
- Greg Errico** (Sly & The Family Stone): 9/1/46
- Don Brewer** (Grand Funk Railroad): 9/3/48
- Kenny Jones** (The Faces, The Who): 9/16/48

- Martin Chambers** (The Pretenders): 9/4/51
- Neil Peart** (Rush): 9/12/52
- John Tempesta** (The Cult): 9/26/64
- Matt Wilson** (jazz great): 9/28/64
- Zak Starkey** (The Who): 9/13/65
- Janet Weiss** (Quasi): 9/24/65

- Ginger Fish** (Marilyn Manson): 9/28/65
- Robin Goodridge** (Bush): 9/10/66
- Stephen Perkins** (Jane's Addiction): 9/13/67
- Tyler Stewart** (Barenaked Ladies): 9/21/67
- Brad Wilk** (Rage Against The Machine): 9/5/68
- John Blackwell** (Justin Timberlake/Prince): 9/9/73



Artimus PYLE

Venemous After Lynyrd Skynyrd

Artimus Pyle has recently released a solo album called *Artimus Venomous*, the first in what he promises to be a series that will include such titles as *Artimus Harmonious* and *Artimus Dubious*. The new album features songs written and sung by Pyle. According to the ex-Lynyrd Skynyrd drummer, “The lyrics are the result of my carrying around a lot of anger and unnecessary baggage for years, upset and hurt that my friends who I thought loved me had abandoned me.”

Pyle’s Lynyrd Skynyrd cohorts, Ronnie Van Zandt and Steve Gaines, were killed in an airplane crash thirty years ago. “I had to finally sit down and write my words to songs that tell the story,” Artimus says. “There was the grief of losing not just members of a band, but people who were like family. And then there was the anger side of it—the managers, lawyers, agents, and people who have made a career out of stealing from Lynyrd Skynyrd.”

Even though his career has seen many ups and downs over the years, Pyle has never stopped drumming. “I still enjoy just

taking my drums in and out of their cases and setting them up,” he says. “It’s playtime for me. I’m a pilot, and when you fly an airplane, you have to pre-flight the plane to make sure nothing is going to go wrong. When I play my drums, I feel like I’m flying. You want everything to be where it should be. Setting up is important, and I talk about it in the clinics I do.”

Pyle is on the new Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute album, playing “Double Trouble.” He’s also on a recent ZZ Top tribute album. His own band, APB, is still actively gigging and recording. And he’s been touring behind his *Artimus Venomous* project. In his spare time, Pyle is in the process of writing a book called *Lynyrd Skynyrd, A Blessing Or A Curse*.

“I just want everybody to know that when the plane went down,” Pyle clarifies, “I didn’t stop playing drums. I left Skynyrd in ‘91 because of their massive, gluttonous consumption of cocaine and alcohol. I was a part of the *real* Skynyrd. I didn’t want to be a part of something less.”

Robyn Flans

Stephen FLINN

Embracing The Avant-Garde

Stephen Flinn spent the ‘70s gigging in hard rock bands, and the ‘80s immersed in honing his jazz technique. Today he considers himself an “avant-garde-ist.” Aside from the ambient, minimal, often Asian-flavored soundscapes found on Flinn’s latest recording, *Square Circle*, what sets him apart from most drummers working in the realm of experimental music is his unorthodox approach to the kit.

“I often play what is called ‘prepared drumkit,’” Stephen offers. “I have two suitcases full of everything from found objects like pieces of metal, rubber, and Styrofoam, to combs that I put on top on the drums. I’ll also play with something *other* than drumsticks. Most of what’s on *Square Circle* is played with knitting needles, 1/6” dowels, or car antennas.”

The drummer’s unique approach was inspired by his 1999 solo tour of the UK. “I listened to tapes of those performances and realized that by using drumsticks I was playing too loud. I wanted to get the *attack*, but I didn’t want the volume, and it’s difficult to get one without the other. I decided that I needed to stop using drumsticks, and I started to put

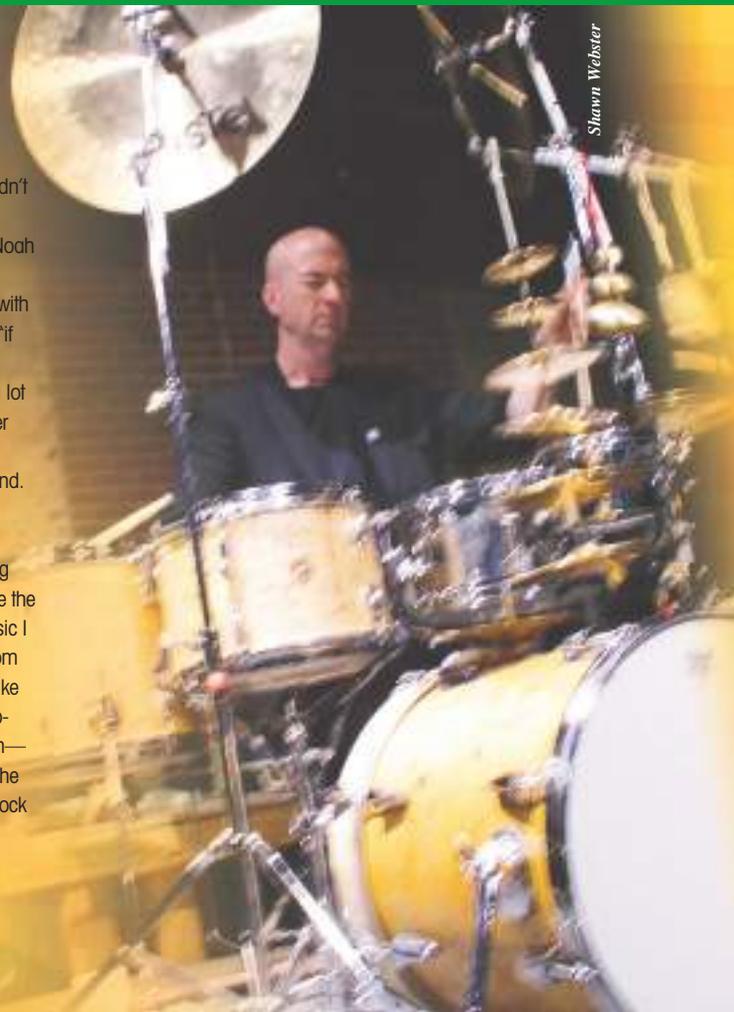
things on top of the drums so that I wouldn’t sacrifice the attack.”

For *Square Circle*, on which guitarist Noah Phillips joins him, Stephen explains his objective of going for “texture matching” with the guitarist. “In many places,” he says, “if you listen closely, you might not be sure what’s drums and what’s guitar. That’s a lot of my approach to improvisation; whether I’m playing with a guitarist, bassist, or a cellist, I’ll try to match their texture or sound.

“I didn’t choose to play this way,” the drummer insists. “If it were up to me, I’d probably be making a good living playing rock ‘n’ roll. I don’t even think that I chose the drums; I feel as if the drums and the music I play chose *me*. This approach comes from the heart—otherwise, why would I play like this? It completely defies any kind of rationale—in terms of financial compensation—to do something this left of center.” Then he laughs, “Maybe when I’m fifty I’ll start a rock band with all twenty-year-olds!”

For more info on Flinn, check out www.stephenflinn.net.

Gail Worley



Shawn Webster

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UPDATE NEWS



Mike Terrana has been touring Europe with German heavy rock act Masterplan. Mike also released a performance DVD earlier this year, *The Rhythm Beast—In Session*, which showcases his impressive technique.

Rodney Crowell's **Keio Stroud** is not only busy touring with Crowell, he's doing dates with Deana Carter, Ray Scott, Jamie O'Neal, and The Randy Rogers Band. Also, congratulations are in order to Keio and his wife Kristina on the birth of their first child, Ava Beth.



Jeff Hamilton has been on the road with Diana Krall since June. The tour ends in October.

Ray Luzier (Army Of Anyone) has been in the studio with Billy Sheehan, Doug Pinnick, and Goaded. He has also been doing clinics in Japan and the US. For more info go to www.rayluzier.com.

Fido Kennington is on Great Lakes Myth Society's new record, *Compass Rose Bouquet*.

Sean McDaniel has been touring with Clay Aiken.

Troy Luccketta is on the road with Tesla in support of their new record, *Real To Reel*.

Eddie Bayers Jr. has been working with Patti Page, Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, Alabama, Craig Morgan, Blaine Larson, Alan Jackson, Anne Murray, Emmylou Harris, and Martina McBride.

Bobby Huff is on drums, percussion, and background vocals on Bucky Covington's debut self-titled CD.

Jason Sutter has been touring with Chris Cornell. Chris left Audioslave earlier this year and plans to have a CD out soon.

LaFae Sci is on tour with Antigone Rising.

Louie Bellson collaborated with old friend Clark Terry on a new recording due out later this year.

Todd Sucherman will be out with Styx for the summer and fall. Todd also produced and played on his wife Taylor Mills' record *Lullagoodbye*, which features appearances by Brian Wilson and Tommy Shaw.

Tico Torres is on the upcoming Bon Jovi CD, *Lost Highway*.

Former Push-Stars drummer **Ryan MacMillan** has a new band called Redcar. Their debut is *Can't Be Stopped*. For more info visit www.myspace.com/redcarrock.

Thin Lizzy drummer **Brian Downey** is on Gary Moore's latest, *Close As You Get*.

Chris Deaner is touring with Kelly Clarkson.

Congratulations to **Jason Rullo** and his wife on the recent birth of their son, Jayden Xavier. Jason can be heard on the new Symphony X release, *Paradise Lost*.

And congratulations to Doobie Brothers drummer **Ed Toth** and his wife, Meredith, on the birth of their daughter, Caroline Olivia.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Buddy Rich was born on 9/30/17, **Elvin Jones** on 9/9/27.

Original Average White Band drummer **Robbie McIntosh** passed away on 9/23/74, **Keith Moon** on 9/7/78, **John Bonham** on 9/25/80, **Shelly Manne** on 9/26/84, and **Philly Joe Jones** in September of '85.

9/22/65: Guitarist Wes Montgomery captures one of his best New York nightclub performances with his live record, *Smokin' At The Half Note*, featuring pianist Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer **Jimmy Cobb**.

9/8/79: The Knack, with the late **Bruce Gary** on drums, has the number-1 single on the charts with "My Sharona."

For Oregon-based percussion company **Handmade Rhythm**, 9/17/04 represents a milestone. It's the day **Mickey Hart** and the Planet Drum reunion led the record-setting drum circle at the *Earthdance Festival*, using handmade Ashikos made especially for the event.



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References For Swing Drumming

I've recently joined a ten-piece swing band and I'd like to know if there are any books that could help me learn a little bit more about that style. I have CDs of original big-band recordings, but it's hard to hear the drums on recordings from that era. Could you recommend any new sources of information?

Nestor Busquets

We sent your inquiry to Dr. Bruce Klauber, who is a recognized authority on big band drum history. He replies, "As the biographer of Gene Krupa and the writer/co-producer of various DVDs on Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich, I'm naturally partial to Gene and Buddy. Krupa, a true "swing drummer," was the man who made the drums a solo instrument. Buddy was a swingster at heart, and he took swing drumming to technical levels that have not yet been surpassed. The DVDs *Gene Krupa: Swing Swing*

Swing (Hudson Music) and *Gene Krupa: Jazz Legend* (Alfred) stand as great audio/visual examples of Gene's style. For Buddy, try *Buddy Rich: Jazz Legend* (Alfred).

"When it comes to books, *Gene Krupa: The Pictorial Life Of A Jazz Legend* (Alfred) is a good place to start. It comes with an accompanying CD. And Burt Korall's *Drummin' Men* is a superb overview of the most important swing drummers in history.

"The contributions of the true innovators, such as Papa Jo Jones, Chick Webb, Dave Tough, Big Sid Catlett, Louie Bellson, and Sonny Greer constitute essential listening. Amazon.com has dozens of CDs by these artists. Meanwhile, to hear and see all these greats in performance, you should consider obtaining the DVD *Legends Of Jazz Drumming Volume One* (Alfred). My own site, www.JazzLegends.com, also has plenty of rare material. Above all, keep swingin'!"



THE DOCTOR IS IN

by Asif Khan, M.D.

Editor's note: This new mini-department has been established to address your questions related to drumming and health.

Energy Drinks

I've heard mixed opinions about the benefits of "energy drinks" for drummers. What's your take on it?

Karl Monroe

Energy drinks provide an almost immediate surge in heart rate and blood pressure, which the user perceives as "boosted energy." This is actually just a pharmaceutical response by our bodies to the high levels of caffeine—which is classified as a drug by the FDA—in these drinks. A cup of coffee or a 16 oz. soft drink contains roughly 150 mg of caffeine. Some energy drinks contain as much as 300 mg!

In addition, the sugar content in energy drinks is astonishing. There are seven to ten teaspoons of sugar in a 12 oz. can of many name-brand sodas—and over twenty in some energy drinks. Most electrolyte-containing beverages contain high amounts of sugar. These provide only a quick (roughly fifteen-minute) burst of energy, while studies show that your reaction time and cognition are actually reduced at one-, two-, and three-hour post-ingestion intervals. Some energy drinks also contain unspecified (and thus unknown to the user) doses of vitamins that if taken in abnormally high amounts on a daily basis can have clinically observable adverse effects.

There are many other disadvantages to the use of energy drinks, including a dramatic increase in heart rate and blood pressure. This can have devastating effects if the user is unaware of his or her personal health situation. These effects can include abnormally fast heart rates, and, in rare cases, the generation of irregular heartbeats and uncontrolled blood pressure. Rarely, these conditions can lead to sudden death by unmasking underlying cardiac defects.

Frighteningly, it has become popular to mix energy drinks with alcohol. Mixing these beverages can dehydrate you faster than if you didn't consume any beverage at all. They also provide a false



and dangerous sense of heightened awareness if one is actually intoxicated. Some energy drinks also contain taurine, which is a semi-essential amino acid required in digestion. Taurine has absolutely no stimulatory effects on the body.

Type II Diabetes Mellitus is a debilitating disease mainly caused by insulin resistance, brought on by vastly fluctuating levels of glucose intake in the form of unbalanced high-carbohydrate meals and high sugar loads, as well as by obesity. Energy drinks in high amounts could theoretically contribute to the development of this disease. These drinks are currently unregulated in the United States, but the authors of a University Of Florida paper suggest warning labels for them.

Briefly, the best energy replenishment is water with electrolytes (salt, potassium) consumed before, during, and after any show or rehearsal, coupled with a balanced diet.

Dr. Asif Kahn is a staff physician at Kaiser Permanente of Hawaii. He trained in internal medicine at Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, and in allergy & immunology at the Long Island College Hospital in New York. Dr. Kahn is also a drummer with over twenty years experience, currently performing with Johnny Hi-Fi (www.johnnyhi-fi.com).

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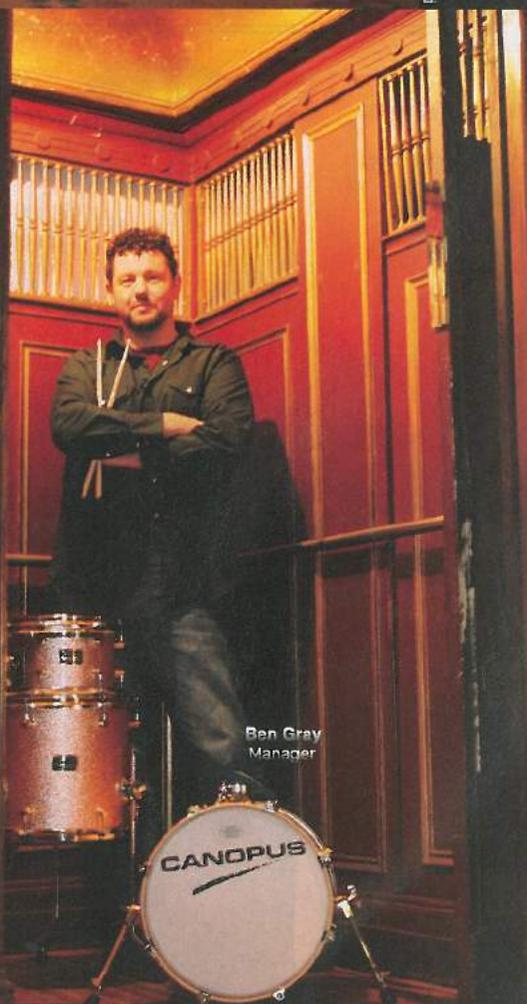
Also see Steve Maxwell Custom Drums, visit website for his inventory of great vintage sets and snares as well as his museum of celebrity owned and other historic drums and drum sets.

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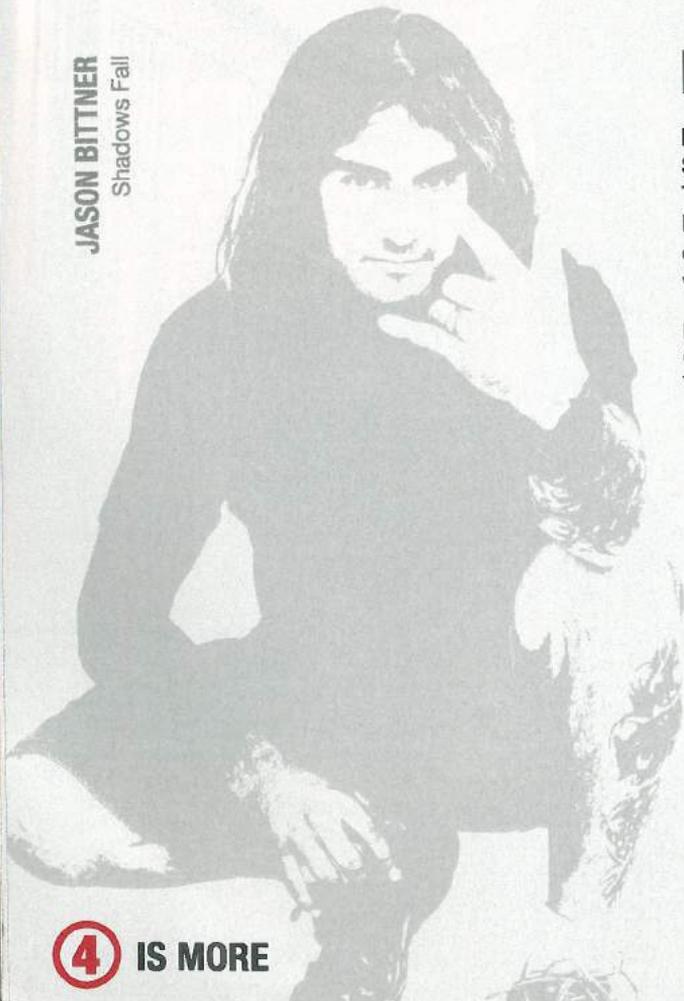
I've been searching for a way to get my hi-hat pedal closer to the left kick drum in my double bass setup. Page 53 of the April 2007 MD contains a picture of Carmine Appice's kit. It looks like the legs of his hi-hat are folded in, and there seems to be some type of bracket connecting the hi-hat to the left kick drum. Can you tell me what this is?

Chef G. Bourg

We're not sure about Carmine's specific device, but we can tell you that Pearl, Tama, and Mapex all make excellent adapters that are specifically designed to attach a folded-up (or legless) hi-hat to a bass drum hoop. The Pearl unit is the HA100 hi-hat to bass drum attachment. The Tama unit is the MHA623 Fastclamp. The Mapex device is the AC906 bass drum/hi-hat attachment clamp.



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Shadows Fall



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Don Moye's Sonor Drums

I may have spotted a slight error in *MD*'s May story on Art Ensemble Of Chicago drummer Famoudou Don Moye. The equipment list shows his drums as being the Sonor Signature Series, with bubinga shells. Unless Don had a special kit made for him at some point, his kit is likely a beech shell with a bubinga veneer. Can you clarify the exact composition of Don's shells?

JJ Dugan

According to Sonor general manager Karl-Heinz Menzel, Don's drums feature shells with six plies of beech in their centers, surrounded by three inner and three outer plies of bubinga. The total shell thickness is 12 mm.



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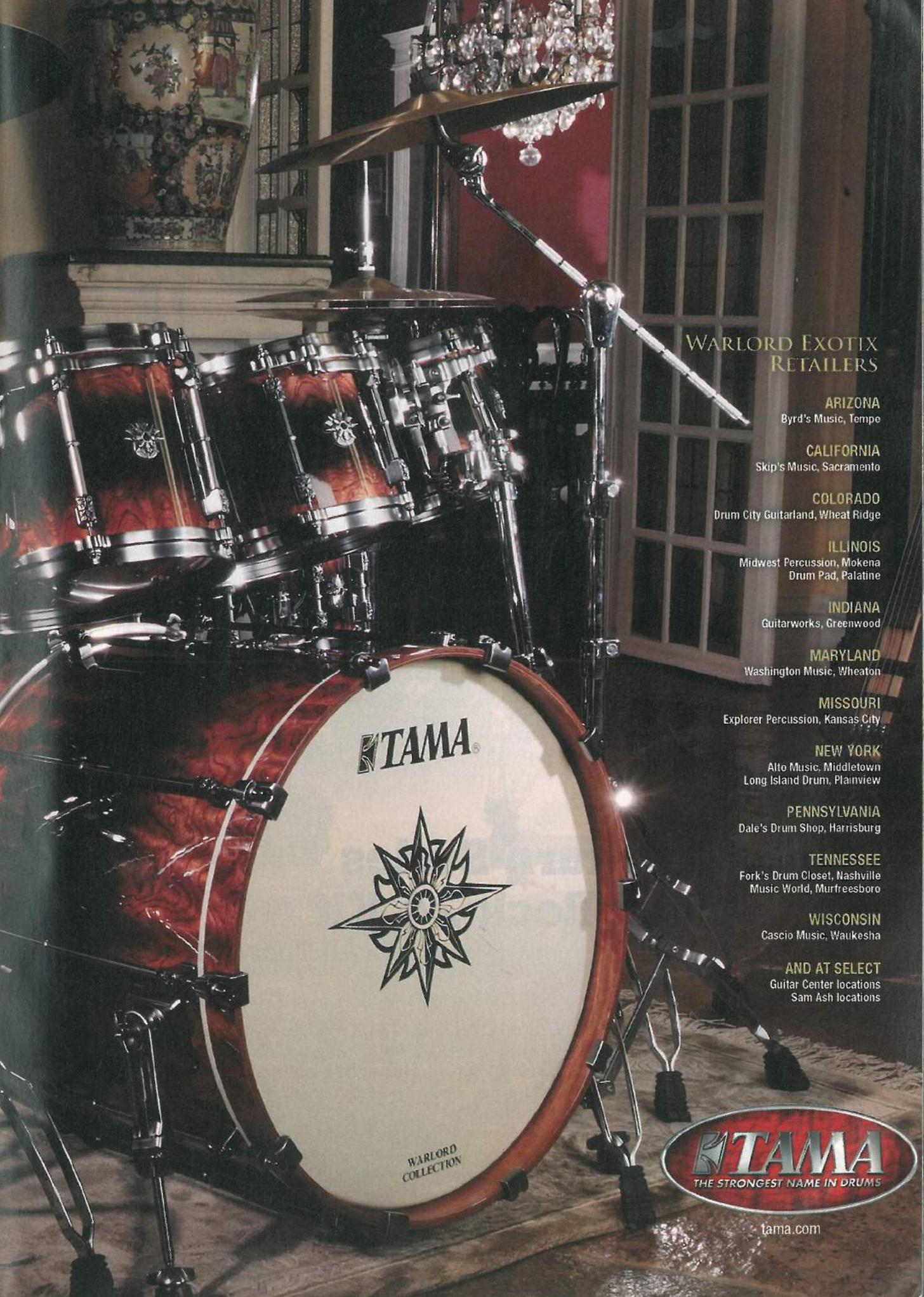
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Fork's Drum Closet, Nashville
Music World, Murfreesboro

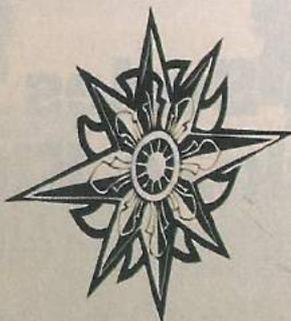
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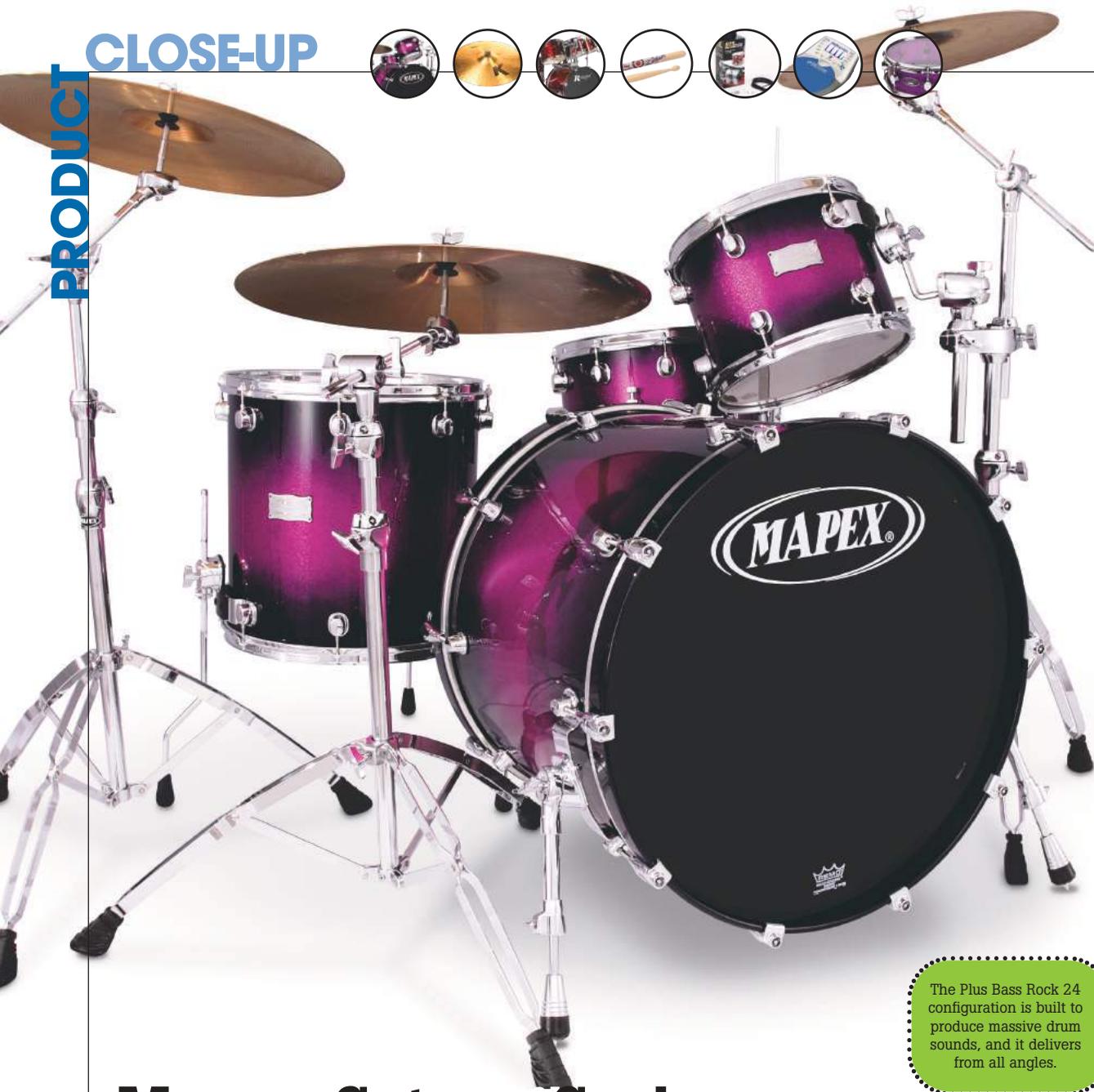
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by Mike Haid

KEY NOTES

- Attractive hand-lacquered sparkle-burst finish
- Well-matched tonality between drums
- Exceptionally versatile snare drum
- Innovative drumshell hardware design

Small kits with big drums seem to be the current drumkit trend in pop/rock music. Mapex has jumped on the beefy bandwagon with their four-piece Saturn Plus Bass Rock 24 configuration. It features a massive 20x24 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 7x14 snare drum. The Plus Bass Rock 24 package also includes a complete set of 750A series hardware.

The coolest new visual aspects of the Saturn Series are the three sparkle-burst finishes. The eight-coat, hand-lacquered finish of the Green Apple Burst, Electric Berry Burst, and Galaxy Burst kits produce an eye-catching metal flake center that fades to a deep, high-gloss black finish at both hoops. The elegant, silver sculptured and engraved Mapex logo adds a classy look.

Sweet! But how' d the drums sound? Let' s dig!

Big Drums...Big Sound

Simply put, the Plus Bass Rock 24 is one of the most well-balanced kits I've played. To begin with, Mapex chose the perfect head combinations to achieve consistent, matched tonality from all four drums. But the secret ingredient to this great-sounding rock kit is the drumshell construction.

Saturn series tom and snare drum shells are thin, at 5.1 mm. They're constructed from four exterior plies of North American maple and two interior plies of warm-sounding walnut. This exotic blend delivers a rich, thick tone that is darker than most all-maple shells I've heard. The bass drum also features a 6-ply shell, but with thicker (7.2 mm) plies.

The toms and the snare drum are equipped with 2.3-mm chrome steel Powerhoops. Thick, all-maple, lacquer-finished hoops on the bass drum are secured by the same chrome-plated, cushioned, die-cast claw hooks that are featured on Mapex's high-end Orion series.

Each drum is fitted with low-mass lugs secured to the shell at only one point. Fewer holes means fewer vibratory interruptions, which results in true tone and enhanced resonance. All bearing edges were precision cut and flawless, allowing the warm tones to fully resonate from each beautifully painted shell. Let's look at the unique characteristics and design of each drum.

Terrific Toms

The two toms are fitted with clear Remo Emperor batters and clear Ambassador resonant heads. The 9x12 rack tom is stand-mounted from the arm of the TS960A tom/cymbal combo stand. The versatile TH684 ball-joint arm offered exact tom placement. The tom mount is

secured to the shell via two lugs, rather than being attached directly to the shell. The user-friendly Mapex I.T.S. suspension system won't interfere with head changes, and it allows the shell to vibrate freely for maximum projection and resonance. The rack tom had nice punch and depth, and it was able to hold a true pitch when tuned low.

The 16x16 floor tom offered sustained low-end resonance that recorded nicely. The floor tom legs (equipped with memory locks) are isolated from the shell via I.T.S. mounts, and they're tipped with spring-loaded feet that further enhance sustain and projection. I was impressed with the design of the I.T.S. floor tom leg mounts. But keep in mind that all the tom mounts protrude a bit, possibly necessitating oversized drum cases.

Big Bass Monster

If you're accustomed to playing a smaller-diameter bass drum, the sheer size of a 20x24 bass drum will take some getting used to. Likewise, rack tom placement over the bass drum can be awkward. Due to the large diameter of the bass drum, I found it difficult to position the tom low enough without its bottom edge resting on the bass drum. The only way to lower the tom was to move it further to the left of the bass drum than might be considered "traditional" placement.

It also took a little extra leg power to ignite the full potential of this thunderous beast. The action of the bass drum pedal lagged behind a bit, due to the air mass being moved inside the bass drum.

The Remo PowerStroke 3 batter/resonant head combo provided a fat, punchy, and projecting sound that balanced well with the other drums on the kit. I needed just a slight bit of muffling inside the drum to cut the hollow, empty tone. The Saturn's non-penetrating I.T.S.

With its deep purple-sparkle gleam, the delicious Electric Berry Burst high-gloss finish looked great under stage lights—and drew major visual attention on live gigs.

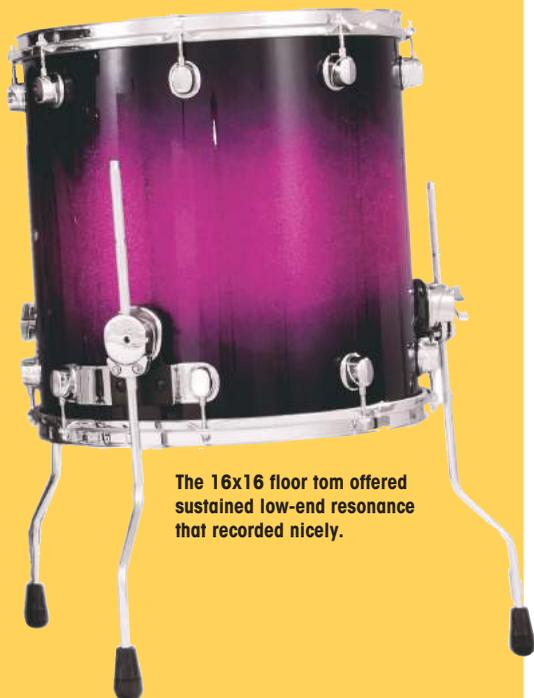




Good looks and great sound make the well-crafted 7x14 Saturn snare drum a winner.



The 9x13 rack tom produced punch and depth, and it was able to hold a true pitch when tuned low.



The 16x16 floor tom offered sustained low-end resonance that recorded nicely.

telescopic bass drum spurs isolate the shell and distribute the weight of the drum across existing lug mounts. (Again, I was impressed with the innovative I.T.S. mounting system.)

Super Snare

I've tested lots of snare drums, and Mapex snares have been consistently impressive in overall sound and construction quality. The Saturn 7x14 maple/walnut drum was no exception. In fact, it may be the most versatile snare drum I've played in recent years. Not too bright, not too dark. The 7" depth gives it more character and personality than is usually found in shallower wood or heavier metal snare drums.

When played wide open (with no muffling) at a medium tension, this drum could sit well in any musical setting. There's a throaty depth to the tone, yet it still projects with just the right amount of ring and bite—especially when played off-center or with a bit of rim to brighten the crack of the backbeat. With a little dampening it becomes fat and punchy—perfect for recording. (I used the Plus Bass Rock 24 kit to record a heavy rock project, and the snare drum supplied the beef that was needed for a full-bodied warm tone.)

Remo coated Ambassador batter and clear snare-side heads were the perfect match for this beautifully articulate drum. Snare tension adjustments on both the throw-off and the butt permit finely tuned snare-tension adjustments.

Handy Hardware

The Saturn Plus Bass Rock 24 kit comes with high-quality, double-braced 750A series hardware. The package includes two B750A boom cymbal stands, an H750A hi-hat stand, an S750A snare stand, a P750A single pedal (with three-way beater featuring maple wood, ABS plastic, and felt surfaces), and a TS960A tom/cymbal stand.

Mapex has become known for their innovative cymbal stand design, which features versatile ball-in-socket cymbal tilters, knurled hideaway boom arms, triple-tube construction with slip-proof nylon inner sleeves, OS Cymbal Accentuators (rubber cymbal "felts"), die-cast memory locks, and an impressive five-year warranty. Additionally, the TS960A tom/cymbal stand was highly versatile and sturdy, and in combination with a TH684 tom holder and a B75 boom arm it allowed for exact placement of the tom and a cymbal. The AC908 cymbal/tom arm mount on the TS960A stand adjusts independently from the main shaft, allowing additional clamps to be added to that main shaft. More innovative design!

Summary

I've tested Mapex Pro M and Orion series kits. But the Saturn Plus Bass Rock 24 is the most impressive Mapex kit I've encountered, in terms of quality of construction and materials, innovative hardware and shell design, perfect drumhead selection for a well-balanced sound, and beautiful, hand-lacquered finish. It's also priced competitively, which makes it even more attractive. If you're in the market for a four-piece, pro-level rock drumset that looks and sounds great, do yourself a favor and check out this kit.

THE NUMBERS

Saturn Plus Bass Rock 24 Kit **\$3,081.99**

Includes a 20x24 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, a 7x14 snare drum, and a complete set of 750A series hardware.

Plus Bass 24 Add-on Pack (to create a double bass kit) **\$2,142.99**

Includes a 20x24 bass drum, a 9x10 rack tom, a 16x18 floor tom, a TS960A tom stand, an AC-906 hi-hat clamp, and a P750 bass drum pedal.

www.mapexdrums.com

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-Travis Barker

"These RT-10 Series drum triggers are extremely reliable and lightweight which makes a big difference."

-Thomas Lang



Roland Roland Roland Roland

Zildjian K Dark Medium Ride

>> Cindy's Ride For All Seasons

by T. Bruce Wittet

KEY NOTES

- Resembles old Turkish Ks
- Works well at all dynamic ranges
- Effective for jazz and rock

The 22" K Zildjian Dark Medium ride was developed in conjunction with drum star Cindy Blackman. It's a multi-purpose cymbal that succeeds at the difficult task of being equally effective in acoustic jazz and stadium rock



Cindy Blackman worked with Zildjian to develop a ride cymbal as versatile as she is.

A Pro Shows The Way

I have to admit that when I first heard the 22" K Dark Medium ride upon its introduction at the 2007 NAMM show, I wasn't knocked out. It was a little heavier than I would have imagined, and the ping was a little stronger than the cherished "click" that many drummers associate with old Turkish cymbals. Paul Francis, who was giving me a tour of the Zildjian booth, said, "I wish you could hear Cindy working out on one of these. She gets so much out of this cymbal." As if on cue—you guessed it—Cindy Blackman entered the booth. She agreed to give the cymbal a thorough going-over for me.

Cindy really spanked that thing, striking sometimes forcefully, sometimes gently. She gave it multiple shanks across the bow, coaxing out hollow, low mini-crashes. Then she launched into a frightfully quick tempo. Paul was right. It was all there, and you didn't have to be timid—precisely the attitude I adopted when the two review cymbals arrived a few months later.

Personal Testing

Those two review cymbals were remarkably consistent in tone and weight. I could lay into either one with a hickory 5B and get good articulation with moderate build-up. The surprising thing was that both cymbals spoke well and yielded all the desired effects when played quietly with maple sticks.

Our review rides worked equally well in a piano / upright bass / drums trio format and a band that's sort of a jazz version of the White Stripes (meaning a duo of drums and guitar that can get quite loud). In both situations the rides delivered a clean, high-end ping with the tip of the stick, yet were light enough to open up for short-duration accents played with the stick shank across the cymbal bow. Crashes were monumental, reminding me of Ringo's magnificent cymbal swell in "Come Together." Continuing with the Beatles theme, the large, unhammered bell permitted well-defined bell patterns, as in Ringo's choruses to "Let It Be."

Two In One

In my opinion (and those of several other drummers who heard me play the review rides), Zildjian has done a credible job with the 22" K Dark Medium. It may not be every drummer's depiction of "the perfect old K," being a little heavier than the wobbling-edged, ultra-thin rides that purists cherish. But it compared very well with my own old Ks, most of which are heavier, more stable cymbals.

At the end of the day, the key feature of the new ride is its versatility. I'd reach for the 22" K Dark Medium with confidence, knowing it'd cut an acoustic jazz gig with delicacy or a rock gig with ferocity.

genres.

Cindy is a monster jazz drummer whose style bears strong hints of Tony Williams. She's also a nail-it-down groove player who tours with R&B/rocker Lenny Kravitz. In 2005, Cindy began working with Zildjian's Paul Francis on a new ride cymbal. She was adamant that it should be reminiscent of old Turkish Ks in her collection in terms of sound and look, while still serving as a strong voice in the huge halls in which Lenny performs.

The resulting 22" cymbal falls on the heavy side of its official "medium" weight designation, tipping the scales at close to seven pounds. The distinctive hammering reminds me of several old Turkish Ks in my own collection. There was considerable variety in the depth of the surface "craters," while the irregular pattern suggested human inconsistency, rather than computer symmetry. Paul Francis told me that to get that old-world, hand-made look, he employed three different types of hammering from various K series.

Paul went on to explain that the wide, deep tonal grooves lathed into the K Dark Medium ride were mostly for cosmetic reasons. "We did that," he said, "so the cymbals would resemble the old Ks that Cindy showed me. The primary lathing is actually 'pin lathing'—very tight, narrow grooves that give a smooth surface appearance."

THE NUMBERS

22" K Dark Medium ride\$585
www.zildjian.com

The Inner Circle



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Trailblazer kits offer larger drums and more professional-style features.

Rogers Prospector And Trailblazer Kits

>>Classic Name...New Approach

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- Quality drums at reasonable prices
- Sensible, well made hardware
- Throne might be too light-duty for some players

The Rogers Drum Company was founded in 1849, and over the following hundred thirty-five years it gained a reputation as one of the most innovative and desirable drum brands. Past endorsers include drumming legends Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Ed Shaughnessy. The Rogers influence is still evident in today's hardware, from memory locks to flexible multi-duty stands.

Fast-forward to the present. Yamaha has acquired the rights to the Rogers name and wants to bring back this well-known brand. But instead of trying to compete immediately in the professional-level market, the initial Yamaha-made Rogers kits are intended for beginner and entry-level players. Two new series are being offered. Let's take a look.

Prospector Series

Prospector series drums feature 100%-poplar shells. Toms are 6-ply; bass and snare drums are 9-ply. The bass drum comes with a self-muffling batter head and a Rogers black logo front head. The Rogers logo also appears on oval air-vent badges on the drums.

The available five-piece configuration includes a 16x22 bass drum, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x10 and 8x12 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare drum. Kits are offered in Bandana Red or Blacksmith Black wrap finishes.

The rack toms are held by pistol-style arms that fit into a mount on the bass drum shell and protrude into the tom shells. (The low price range for this kit precludes the use of suspension mounts.) Predictably, this reduces the toms' resonance somewhat, although what's left is more than respectable. Meanwhile, the floor tom legs have "spider" feet, with a circular web of rubber tips on the bottom designed to suspend the drum slightly off the floor and thus promote more resonance. The theory is sound, but I think you'd need to be play-

ing on a hard surface to really benefit from it. Most carpeting would negate the effect, as the small edges would sink into a rug.

The Prospector bass drum features metal hoops, with a small padded insert on the back hoop to accept the bass drum pedal clamp. The hoops are held on with nylon-composite claw hooks. Fold-back spurs are tipped in rubber feet.

The bass drum sounded big and full, and the snare had plenty of crack and sensitivity. Overall, the sound of the kit was impressive (especially for its price), with good pitch spacing between the toms, a nice snare voice, and solid bottom from the bass.

Hardware

The Prospector hardware package includes a straight cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, a snare stand, a bass drum pedal, a drum throne, and two $\frac{7}{8}$ " tom arms (which feature memory locks for height and length adjustments). All stands are double-braced; the throne is single-braced. The cymbal stand is very Yamaha-esque in design. It's also straight and solid, with nylon bushings at the adjustment points. The tilter had fairly fine spacing in the teeth, providing adequate angle choices. The wing nuts on all the hardware are ergonomically designed and easy to use.

The hi-hat was very smooth to operate. Its spring tension isn't adjustable, but the moderate tension setting should work acceptably for most players. The snare stand tilter is a friction (non-ratchet) type, which makes for easy angle adjustments.

The bass pedal is a chain-drive model with a footboard that connects to the pedal yoke by means of a supporting rod. This makes it lighter and easier to pack than a pedal with a solid baseplate—if a bit less stable under heavy stomping. The pedal is adjustable for stroke and spring tension, and it comes with a double-sided beater. A wing screw on the side secures the pedal to the bass drum hoop.

While the inclusion of a drum throne is a nice plus with this kit, I'm concerned that the throne is single-braced. That might be fine for a young student drummer, but I'd be worried for a larger teenager or adult beginner.

Trailblazer Series

The Trailblazer kit features 9-ply shells of birch and poplar. The basic kit includes a 16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, a 15x16 floor tom, and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 steel snare. Our review kit came with two available add-on toms, a 7x8 rack tom (with mounting hardware) and a 13x14 floor tom with legs. Kits are offered in Mining Pan Silver, Bandana Red, and Blacksmith Black wrap finishes. The drums feature the classic Rogers signature logo in metal script on the shells.

The steel-shelled snare had a very pleasing and powerful tone, with lots of crack and snare sensitivity. The

toms all sounded full, with more tone and resonance than the Prospector toms due to their suspension-style mounts. The bass, due to the self-muffling head, is also deep and full.

More Hardware

The snare stand and straight cymbal stands with the Trailblazer are the same as with the Prospector kit. The Trailblazer package includes a convertible boom cymbal stand with a 15"-long arm and a nylon counterweight that you can add for boom use. The tubing is large enough to be thought of as heavy-duty, but thin enough not to actually be heavy.

The Trailblazer hardware also includes a hi-hat with adjustable spring tension, but without a swiveling tripod base. The bass drum pedal is a strap drive model, with a green strap that's a reminder of Rogers pedals of the past. Three selectable positions for the spring attachment control the stroke angle of the two-sided beater.

The rack tom mount is attached to the bass drum shell, but the toms themselves mount to Yamaha-style hex rods that protrude from ball-in-socket fittings on the tom mount assembly. The rods fit into suspension-style brackets that are set on isolation rings attached to tension rods on the toms.

The Trailblazer bass drum has metal hoops with colored inserts that match the wrap. The hoops are held on with steel claw hooks and drum key screws. The spurs represent an upgrade as well. They feature interchangeable rubber feet and metal spur points, so you can work on any floor surface. The floor tom legs have the "spider" foot design.



Prospector kits are targeted at beginning drummers.

This 7x8 add-on Trailblazer tom features suspension mounting and the classic script Rogers logo.



Wrapping Up

Yamaha has made some great choices with these Rogers kits. They're priced to appeal to any beginner or intermediate player, yet they're built well enough to do more. (If I had a gig and needed to obtain a kit in a hurry, I wouldn't hesitate to use one of these, hardware and all.)

I really like the cut-down tom sizes on the Prospector set. They can be positioned within easy reach for a beginner, and they still sound great. The toms on the Trailblazer are more traditionally sized, and they sound fine as well. But they'd be more appropriate for a larger player.

Young drummers who might not know the Rogers name or heritage should look the company up on the Web, or read about it in Harry Cangany's excellent book *The Great American Drums And The Companies That Made Them*. There's history and value in them that hills. I commend Yamaha for their respect of a time-honored name and for their dedication to doing the right thing. Check the new kits and see how they pan out.

THE NUMBERS

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Prospector Kit | \$449.99 |
| Hardware package includes throne. | |
| Trailblazer Kit | \$549.99 |
| Hardware package includes boom cymbal stand. | |
| 7x8 Trailblazer add-on rack tom | \$129.99 |
| Includes DA-99C clamp and DA-85 tom arm. | |
| 13x14 Trailblazer add-on floor tom | \$129.99 |
| RSB-690 boom stand (as add-on) | \$39.99 |
| RDS-109N throne (as add-on) | \$29.99 |
| www.rogersdrumsusa.com | |

Quick Looks



ZILDJIAN ZAK STARKEY AND BACKBEAT STICKS

by Chap Ostrander

You can't have missed the full-page ads in *MD* for Zildjian's new Zak Starkey signature sticks. Created for the popular drummer from The Who, the sticks are made of hickory, with an oval wood tip and a distinctive "target" graphic printed on the grip area.

The Zak sticks are the same length as Zildjian's 5A (16"), and are .05" smaller in diameter. They have the larger, shorter taper of a 5B, but their smaller diameter gives them a lighter sensation in the hands. From a playability standpoint the sticks were very responsive, with lots of bounce. And they created a *big* cymbal sound. In terms of grip, the sticks felt almost tacky in my hands right away. Not sticky—just a secure feel. I'm a little surprised that Zak would use such relatively small sticks on his gig. But hey, if they work for him, WHO am I to doubt it?

Question: How many times do you find yourself reversing the stick that's hitting your snare because you need extra power? That's the theory behind Zildjian's tipless Backbeat sticks. But rather than being classic, straight-shanked, double-butt models, Backbeat sticks are slightly tapered for improved playability. So there's definitely a grip end and a playing end. The nice thing is that you can use them as a pair, or use one on the snare and use your other regular stick for the ride cymbal.

Backbeat sticks are available in 5A and 5B sizes, and in two configurations. The first

involves Zildjian's DIP coating, which is applied to the grip area. This bright purple coating provides a secure, rubbery feel, as well as a slight cushion. I felt like I could never lose the sticks while playing. In terms of playability, both stick sizes had a well-balanced feel. You'd make your choice based on how much power you want behind your sound.

The other Backbeat configuration incorporates Zildjian's Anti-Vibe technology, which replaces some of the wood within the butt end with a rubber plug to absorb stick vibration. The process is very effective, greatly reducing the shock to your hands. But there's a special benefit offered by the Backbeat Anti-Vibe models. You can't play with the back end of a regular Anti-Vibe stick, since the hollowed-out butt will crack quickly under impact. But the Backbeat design lets you play with "butt-ended" power while still holding on to the Anti-Vibe grip. Be aware, however, that the Anti-Vibe design shifts the weight of the stick forward (as compared to a regular model).

All of the new Zildjian sticks we tested were perfectly straight and pitch-matched. They did what they were claimed to do, and they felt great. The Zak Starkey models list for \$15.25 per pair, the Backbeat DIP models go for \$15.50, and the Backbeat Anti-Vibes sell for \$19.50.

www.zildjian.com

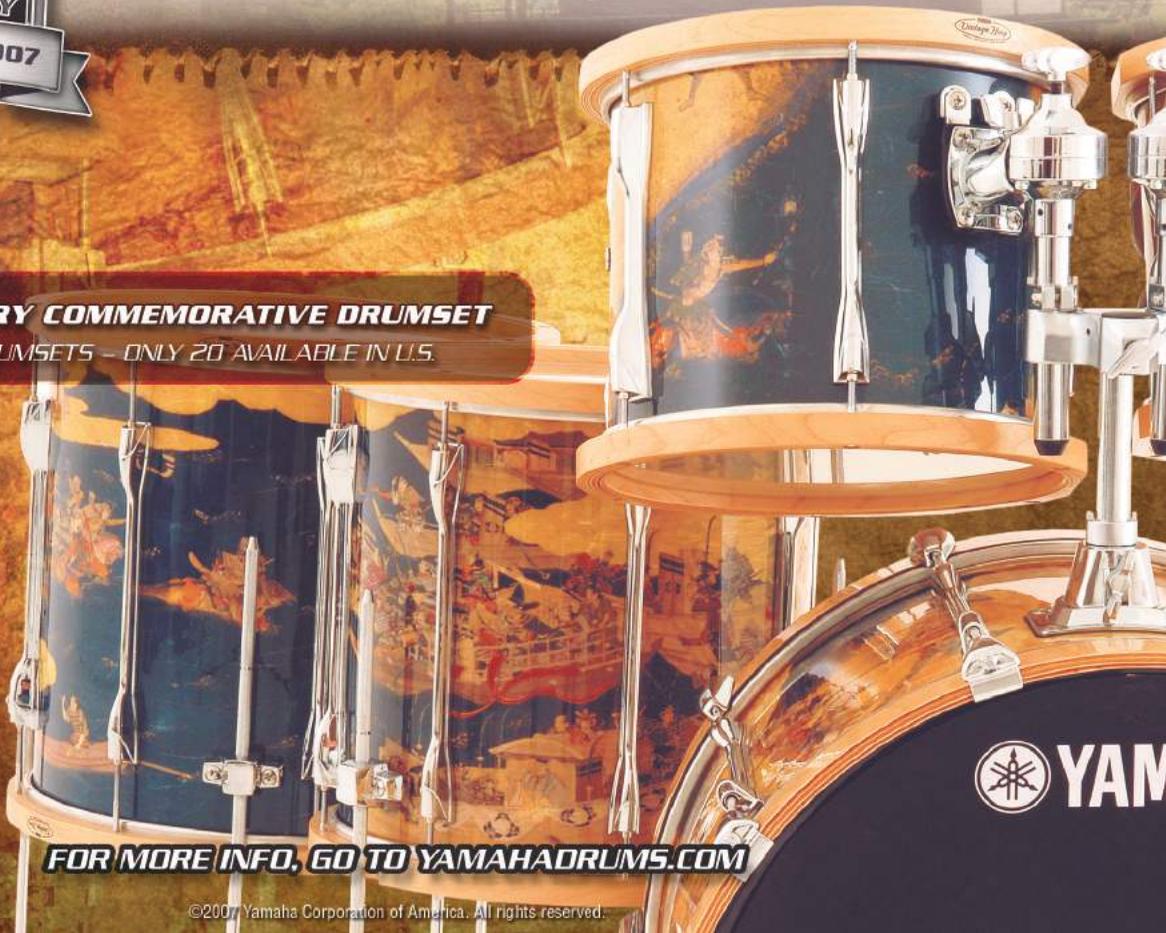
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Drum Tech DTS One-Touch Tuning System

>>The Answer You' ve Been Waiting For

by Michael Dawson

Because the DTS System allows you to tension each drumhead with one screw, finding a perfect drum sound has never been easier.

KEY NOTES

- Tunes entire head with one hex-bolt tension screw
- Removes need for fine-tuning individual lugs
- Great for quick tuning changes
- Some drum hardware can inhibit tuning cable

As the tension distribution cable is tightened, the tension brackets apply force to the underside of the tension rod, which causes the hoop to pull down.



Tuning drums can be a major drag. Even if you' ve spent hours fine-tuning every lug and you' ve found the perfect balance between the heads to give you just the right amount of pitch bend, as soon as you take your drums out of your practice room and into some dingy club with concrete floors and plate-glass windows, they inevitably sound like a pile of pots and pans.

The guys at Drum Tech must have had similar frustrations, because they' ve spent the past fifteen years refining a system that streamlines the tuning process so that you spend less time tweaking and more time playing. The result of their efforts is the DTS One-Touch Tuning System.

A Three-Part System

The DTS System has three main components: a single-bolt tension assembly (to tighten or loosen the head), a tension distribution cable (to apply tension evenly around the drum), and tension brackets (to transfer the cable tension to the individual tension rods).

The tension brackets are small levers made of aircraft-grade aluminum. They slide under the head of each tension rod, and you secure them in place by finger-tightening each lug. The coated distribution cable fits around the rim—resting in channels in the tension brackets—and then attaches to the tension blocks in the tension assembly.

The pitch of the head is adjusted by turning the tension assembly' s hex bolt with an Allen wrench (included with each system). By turning the bolt clockwise, the ends of the distribution cable are pulled together. This causes the tension brackets to squeeze inward and push up on the underside of the tension rods. That pressure causes the rim to pull down, resulting in a higher pitch. And because the tension brackets receive equal force, the head tunes up evenly.

With this one-touch tuning system, you can play and listen to the results as you sweep through the drum' s entire tuning range. This process can be done in a fraction of the time it would take using traditional tuning methods.

The Installation

Installing a DTS system for the first time can be a little tricky. First, you have to remove all of the washers from the tension rods. Then you finger-tighten each lug to where there' s just enough space between the rim



With the DTS System, you can tune your drums by ear by adjusting the tension assembly as you play.



A complete DTS System is comprised of a tension assembly, tension brackets, and a tension distribution cable.

and the rod to allow you to slide in the tension brackets. Once you've done that, each lug has to be tightened slightly so that it pinches the tension brackets into place.

The next step is to wrap the distribution cable around the drum—making sure it's aligned with the grooves in the tension brackets—to determine where to place the cable in the back of the tension assembly's tension blocks. As you're figuring out the proper positioning, it's important to pull the cable firmly so that you get the widest possible tuning range. (The DTS's instruction manual includes a settings chart to help determine the best cable positioning.)

After you've pinpointed the cable's position, you then disassemble the tension assembly and secure the ball-ends of the cable into the corresponding notches of the tension blocks. Then you piece the assembly together, place it along the lower flange of the rim, and wrap the distribution cable around the drum and onto the tension brackets.

To The Test

Once the DTS system was properly installed (we used the system on the top and bottom heads of 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms and the top of a ten-lug 14" snare), we began our test by seeing how quickly we could take the batter head of a 14" floor tom from completely slack to its highest tension. The results? Ten seconds. (Try doing that with conventional tuning.)

But being able to tension a drum with lightning speed would be meaningless if it didn't produce an even tone. So we tuned the heads back down to their lowest useable settings, and then gradually increased the tension on the top head. Throughout the tuning range, the drum's tone sounded amazingly even, with minimal funky overtones. We also discovered several great-sounding tension settings that we didn't even know this drum was capable of producing.

Once we settled on a batter head tension that felt good to play on, we tried sweeping through different bottom head tensions to find the intervals between the heads that make the drum sing. With conventional tuning, this is a process of trial & error. But with the DTS system, you can audition all of the possible top-to-bottom ratios in a matter of seconds. All you have to do is play the drum, tighten the hex bolt, and listen to the results.

In The Real World

The DTS system was also tested at a gig with minimal setup time and at a quick two-hour recording session. In both cases, the DTS was a lifesaver. For the gig, I had about ten minutes to get the drums from the green room to the stage. So there wasn't much time to tweak the tuning of the kit. But because of the DTS, the tone of the toms was quickly dialed in to work with the not-so-flattering sound of the room.

At the recording session, the producer had two hours to get drum sounds, teach the arrangement, and record the take. For the verses, he wanted me to ride on the floor tom, which led to the dreaded question: Can you tune your tom to match the key of the song?

Normally that would cause me to start sweating bullets, especially with only a short amount of time to complete the track. But with the DTS, it was simple: The guitarist played the desired note, and then the hex bolts on the top and bottom heads were adjusted until the pitches were in sync. This entire process was completed in less than two minutes.

Yeah, But...

Throughout our testing, we found very few drawbacks with the DTS One-Touch Tuning System. However, there are a couple of minor issues to consider. First, if you use RIMS suspension mounts, you'll need to purchase Drum Tech's Rim-Mount Spacer Kit to prevent the RIMS from obstructing the DTS.

There is also the possibility that your floor tom legs or other hardware might extend too close to the rim to allow the distribution cable to flow smoothly. So you may have to figure out a way to elevate the hardware from the shell. (Homemade cardboard or plastic gaskets are an easy, inexpensive way to add space to floor tom legs and snare strainers.)

Neither of these concerns, though, outweighs the benefits of being able to get your drums to sound great with only a few cranks of a tension bolt, especially if you find yourself changing tuning frequently for different-styled gigs or sessions. Plus, the DTS makes tuning drums fun. For that reason alone, this system is a must-have.

THE NUMBERS

DTS System (includes tension assembly, distribution cable, tension brackets, and hex-bolt wrench)

Six-lug drums (per head) \$49.99

Eight-lug drums (per head) \$54.99

Ten-lug drums (per head) \$59.99

The DTS retrofits to most acoustic drums and is available for drums 8" to 18" in diameter, and for six-, eight-, and ten-lug configurations. (Street prices are considerably lower than those listed here.) Component parts are also available.

Accessories

T-Handle Wrench \$9.99

Rim-Mount Spacers \$9.99

Bolt Lubricant \$5.99

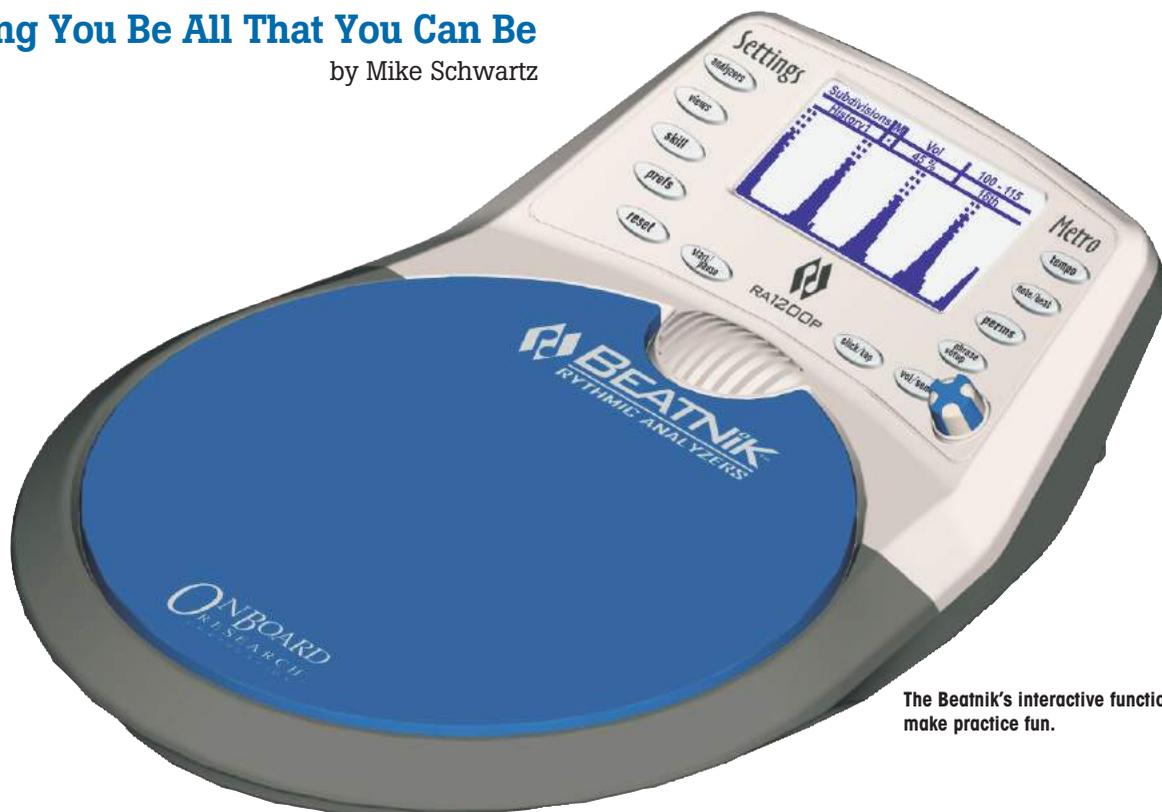
Bolt Assembly \$11.99

www.drumtech.com

Beatnik RA1200P Rhythmic Analyzer

>>Helping You Be All That You Can Be

by Mike Schwartz



The Beatnik's interactive functions make practice fun.

KEY NOTES

- Accuracy Analyzers provide in-depth evaluation of your playing skills
- Compact and portable
- Functions are easy to navigate

The Beatnik RA1200P Rhythmic Analyzer from OnBoard Research is touted as a tool to help you “improve your rhythmic accuracy.... Whether you’re an experienced player who wants some fine-tuning, or a promising new talent interested in developing solid rhythmic fundamentals....”

The unit is appropriately named, because through the use of its five onboard “Accuracy Analyzers”—Groove, Dynamics, Subdivisions, Phrase, and Tracking—novices and experts alike can hone their technical precision. The Groove Analyzer, for example, is intended to help you improve your ability to play at a consistent tempo—whether that tempo is ahead of, exactly on, or behind the beat. If you’re falling too far behind or playing too far ahead of the metronome, the Beatnik will buzz to let you know that you’re not playing steadily (and thus falling out of the groove). The other Accuracy Analyzers combine to provide a pretty comprehensive and precise evaluation of your hand work on the Beatnik’s built-in pad.

Beyond The Tick And Tock

The Beatnik is more than just a fancy metronome. It allows you to select a skill level (low, medium, high, and expert), and it evaluates your performance in relation to that level. A series of graphs are used to illustrate that evaluation. These graphs indicate where your beats fell to an accuracy of $\frac{1}{512}$ -of-a-note subdivisions. You can

also set your own permutations for practice purposes. The unit offers a wide array of options in terms of preference settings and views.

It’s User-Friendly

The data display is a 48x128 pixel LCD screen (with optional backlight) that’s efficient, but is small and sometimes a bit hard to read. Beyond that, the Beatnik’s various functions are easy to navigate once you’ve read the straightforward manual. The unit is compact, it’s lightweight at 2½ lbs., and it can be taken virtually anywhere, powered by batteries or an AC adapter.

Practice Makes Perfect

I’d recommend the Beatnik as a very helpful practice tool, especially for drummers who don’t have access to professional teachers. It clearly reveals where your deficiencies lie and can help you to improve on them. The graphs and scoring are great for self-study, and the interactive functions can make practice fun when one might otherwise be tired of the mundane routine on a rubber pad. The Beatnik’s list price seems a little steep, but most vendors are discounting that price substantially.

THE NUMBERS

RA 1200P \$189
www.funers.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

by Michael Dawson



PDP acrylic snares are available in eleven different size and color configurations.

While the clear batter head adds to the drum's aesthetic appeal, a twin-ply coated version proved to be a better sonic match.

PACIFIC SX SERIES

5x13 Purple Acrylic With Chrome Hardware

HOW'S IT SOUND?

At first, I wasn't thrilled with the sound of the PDP acrylic snare. Because it came equipped with a clear single-ply batter head, it had a bright, thin sound that wasn't particularly pleasing to listen to. Even when tuned down and muffled with a Zero ring, there wasn't enough body in the tone to balance out the drum's sharp attack.

But when I swapped out the clear batter head for a single-ply coated, the drum started to reveal some potential. There still wasn't a lot of warmth to the sound. But the drum's naturally bright character was toned down just enough to perk up my ear.

Then I took it one step further and tossed on a coated 2-ply head with a reinforcing dot. *Now* we're getting somewhere. This head successfully mellowed out the overtones that initially made the drum sound harsh, leaving behind a super-crisp "crack" that would work for certain situations (hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, punk, etc.) where you need a drum that cuts without dipping too far down the frequency spectrum to muddy up the mix.

To hear this drum, log on to the Multi-Media page at www.moderndrummer.com.

WHAT'S IT COST? **\$363.99**

www.pacificdrums.com



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PDP

PACIFIC DRUMS AND PERCUSSION
BACKSTAGE





N

N



PDP BY DW

NISAN STEWART

TIMBALAND

www.pacificdrums.com



>> YAMAHA 40TH ANNIVERSARY KITS

Two special-edition 40th Anniversary kits from Yamaha honor The Golden Temple Of The Silver Pavilion and The Temple Of The Silver Pavilion, located in Kyoto, Japan. Shells of 100% Hokkaido birch are said to produce a deep fundamental and low-end punch that's ideal for recording. Other features include 60° bearing edges and springless high-tension lugs.

The Golden Temple Kit comes with chrome hardware, with a 22" bass drum and two floor toms (\$7,999), or with a 20" bass drum and one floor tom (\$5,999). The Silver Temple Kit comes with anodized black hardware, with a 22" bass drum and two floor toms (\$7,999), or with a 24" bass drum and two floor toms (\$7,499).

www.yamahadrums.com



Yamaha's 40th Anniversary kits conform to the specs of the original Recording Custom drumset, which was introduced in 1976 and is considered to be the most recorded kit in history.

>> FORD SMART ASS SEATS

The Ford Drum Company's new Smart Ass seats feature contrasting bands, tops, and piping in 1940s and '50s retro-style colors. Beneath the tuck-and-roll stitching on each seat is pressure-relieving memory foam that conforms to the user's shape for maximum support and comfort. Round and moto-style seat shapes are available, as is a custom-designed carrying case with a cushioned divider for the tripod base. A seat top/base/case package lists for \$435; seat tops only list for \$180.

www.forddrums.com



>> CRAVIOTTO DIAMOND SNARE DRUMS

Master drum-builder Johnny Craviotto has teamed with Adrian Kirchler of AK Drums (Italy) to create brass-shell snare drums said to offer warmth and response unlike any other metal drum on the market. Each drum features Craviotto's trademark snare bed and hardware. Drums are finished in nickel over brass, with Craviotto's diamond pattern hand-engraved around the shell. Only fifty each of the 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 drums will be produced.

www.craviottodrums.com



>> TOCA CLAVE WOODBLOCK, PRO LINE BELLS, AND STATIC WHIP

Toca's Clave Woodblock (\$55) is equipped with a rubber-insulated mount that will attach to any $\frac{3}{8}$ " rod. The ash block projects a loud clave sound when struck with sticks, beaters, or mallets. It can also be used to produce other high-pitched woodblock effects.

Pro Line cowbells are designed to meld state-of-the-art hand hammering with optimum profiles, tapers, and sizes to create sonic excellence and durability. Bells are available in five Tight Grip Mount models and one hand-held model, in stainless steel and Black Copper finishes. Prices range from \$42 to \$51.

The Static Whip is designed to respond to a stick strike with a sharp, metallic snap that has good sustain in addition to the strong attack component. It mounts securely to any cymbal stand top. Two sizes, 29" (\$42) and 34" (\$46), are available.

www.tocapercussion.com



>> LATIN PERCUSSION CAJON

LP's cajon comes with an exotic Takean Tong wood playing surface and a composite wood body in order to create a broad range of frequency responses—especially the deep low end that's critical to traditional cajon performance. Tension of the internal snare strings can be adjusted easily with a standard drum key. Front height-adjustable feet enable the cajon to be tilted to popular playing positions, liberating it from the floor for increased resonance and player comfort. List price is \$239.

www.lpmusic.com

>>GMS 20TH ANNIVERSARY SNARE DRUM

The GMS 20th Anniversary snare drum features eight plies of North American white ash with an outer ply of highly figured North American olive ash burl. Eight-ply North American maple retainer rings are beveled on their upper and lower edges to mellow sonic reflection inside the shell.

The Anniversary drum is fitted with eight lugs for a warmer tone and a

slightly softer feel than standard ten-lug models. With the vent hole repositioned, the drum has a fatter sound, balancing the high-end cut delivered by the 9+8 ply configuration. Finishing touches include Special Edition snare drum lugs and a 20th anniversary logo embedded in the lacquer. List price is \$1,250.

www.gmsdrums.com

The GMS 20th Anniversary Snare Drum features a high-gloss clear lacquer finish over its North American olive ash burl.



>>ZILDJIAN TRAVIS BARKER BOOM BOX BAGS

Zildjian's Travis Barker Boom Box cymbal and stick bags feature the drummer's signature and repeating Boom Box tattoo artwork, both of which are silk-screened in white and embossed into the bags. The black, heavy-duty padded synthetic material looks and feels like premium leather.

The cymbal bag (\$119.95) will hold cymbals up to 24" in diameter. It features internal dividers, a 15" external hi-hat pocket, a wide adjustable shoulder strap, rugged but soft handles, and a rubberized skid plate. The stick bag (\$44.95) has an adjustable shoulder strap, a carrying handle, and a large pocket on the outside. The inside features two roomy stick pockets and several smaller pockets.

www.zildjian.com



>>MANDALA ELECTRONIC DRUMS

The multiple-zone Mandala electronic drum pad uses membrane sensor technology to detect where and how hard a surface strike occurs. The microprocessor-powered brain comes with eighty-three factory presets and fifty-seven additional slots for user patches. Sounds are assignable to respond on a per-zone basis, with up to seven assignable zones and 128 concentric position controller strike rings. The Mandala also serves as a real-time MIDI controller to manipulate synths, computers, samplers, and tone modules.

Extra features include onboard reverb, delay, chorus, and flange effects, as well as EQ, pitch-bend, modulation, volume, and panning parameters. A footswitch permits hands-free preset scrolling.

www.mandaladrum.com

The Synesthesia Corporation worked closely with Tool's Danny Carey for five years to create the Mandala Drum.



>> SAN FRANCISCO DRUM COMPANY CANISTER THRONES

San Francisco Drum's vintage-style canister thrones combine classic styling with the convenience of built-in storage. Medium and tall seat cushions provide a sitting height of 23 1/2" or 25", respectively. A heavy-duty amplifier-cabinet handle allows the canister to be carried comfortably when fully loaded, enabling it to function as a hardware case. List price is \$750.

www.sfdrumco.com

San Francisco Drum's canister thrones are available with pearl, sparkle, glass glitter, and other vintage-style wraps.

>> LAUPER PINOT NOIR SNARE DRUMS

Switzerland's Lauper Drums creates custom snare drums made entirely of French barriques (wine barrels) made from 200-year-old oak. The barriques are used to mature red wines, mostly Pinot noir. During maturation, the juice adds special sonic characteristics to the wood.

Drums feature 12 mm-thick segment shells and natural lacquer finishes. Remo heads, Power hoops, Fat Cat or Puresound snare wires, Dunnett strainers, and Rhythm Tech iT tension rods are standard, but buyers can stipulate any specifications. List price is approximately \$1,542 US.

www.lauperdrums.com



Each Lauper drum comes with an original bottle of wine and a barrel label.



Alm Leo

IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN.
American Made - Handcrafted One-Ply Solid Shells.



WWW.CRAVIOTTODRUMS.COM

Alesis ControlPad USB/MIDI Percussion Controller

An Easy E-Drum Solution

by Michael Dawson

If you have a drum machine, an e-drum sound module, or some virtual drum software in your laptop that you'd like to incorporate into your live setup—but don't want to carry around too much extra gear—then take a look at Alesis' s ControlPad.

The ControlPad is a compact MIDI controller that consists of eight velocity-sensitive rubber pads that can each be assigned to trigger a different sound. There are also two 1/4" trigger inputs for additional pads, inputs for a hi-hat controller and a kick pedal, and an input for a dual footswitch (which allows you to adjust the ControlPad' s parameters with a pedal).

Up to twenty-one drum/percussion setups can be stored to internal memory.



Each velocity-sensitive pad can be assigned a different sound.

USB connection allows the ControlPad to be easily integrated into a computer-based recording/sequencing system.



The ControlPad can be expanded by attaching additional trigger pads and pedals.

The ControlPad does not come with internal sounds but can be used to trigger MIDI instruments.

To get the ControlPad wired into your setup, you have two options. If you plan to trigger sounds from a drum machine or external sound module, connect the MIDI Out of the ControlPad to the MIDI In on your device. However, if you want to use the controller with software instruments in a computer, the ControlPad includes a USB cable for a quick and painless connection.

For those of you who don't have MIDI or software instruments, Alesis includes a scaled-down version of FXpansion's popular software drum module, BFD. This software contains a dozen preset kits that range from straightforward sounds, like Ludwig Vistalite and Pearl BLX sets, to heavily processed and electronic kits, like the Dance Corruption set. You can also create your own configurations by choos-

ing individual kit components.

Once you know which sounds you want to trigger, the ControlPad can store up to twenty-one drum/percussion setups to its internal memory. To create those presets, choose a kit number (0-20) with the function keys, tap one of the pads, and then adjust the MIDI note number (0-127) and MIDI channel (1-16) to correspond with the sound you want to trigger in your sound module or computer software.

The ControlPad's kits can also send program change information, which means each kit can be assigned to a different patch. For instance, Kit 1 of the ControlPad might trigger an acoustic-sounding kit in your drum machine, while Kit 2 brings up a set of electronic sounds.

All in all, the ControlPad did exactly what

it's designed to do. Expectedly, the rubber pads didn't feel great to play on. But they responded accurately and evenly at all dynamic levels. The ControlPad also had no problems triggering various MIDI drum machines, and it worked seamlessly with a laptop recording/sequencing system.

| VITAL STATS |
|---|
| List price: \$399 |
| Size: 17"x13 1/2"x2" |
| Power supply: 6V AC adapter or USB 1.1 cable (included) |
| www.alesis.com |



The Drums That Launched A Thousand Hits

LUDWIG SUPRAPHONIC 400 SNARE DRUMS



No matter what style of music you're into, chances are the snare drum on your favorite recordings is a Ludwig Supraphonic 400. Played by countless drumming legends, the greatest hits—and many of the greatest hitters' kits—feature the 400.

In fact, the 400 is among only a handful of truly exceptional drums that have become as famous as the drummers who play them. And, while its perfect combination of crispness, body and crack not only made the Supraphonic 400 number one on stage and in the studio for over a half century, this classic yet versatile workhorse remains just as popular and prolific as ever.

So, when it comes to choosing a performance-proven snare drum for the music you play, depend on Ludwig... the drums that launched a thousand hits.

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www.ludwig-drums.com



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Brian Dailor
MASTODON



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Bubinga kit on tour now! For all tour
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THE NEW DIRECTION IN SOUND FOR TODAY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL DRUMMERS

Kenny Aronoff (john fogerty) · Frank Beard (zz top) · John Blackwell (justin timberlake) · Bill Bruford (earthworks)
Ronald Bruner, Jr. (kenny garrett/stanley clarke/suicidal tendencies) · Abe Cunningham (deftones)
Alan Evans (soulive) · Brian Frasier-Moore (christina aguilera) · Chris Gaylor (all american rejects)
Mike Malinin (goo goo dolls) · Harvey Mason (fourplay) · Nick Oshiro (static x) · Simon Phillips (toto)
Jeremy Stacey (sheryl crow) · John Tempesta (the cult) · Pete Wilhoit (fiction plane)



tama.com

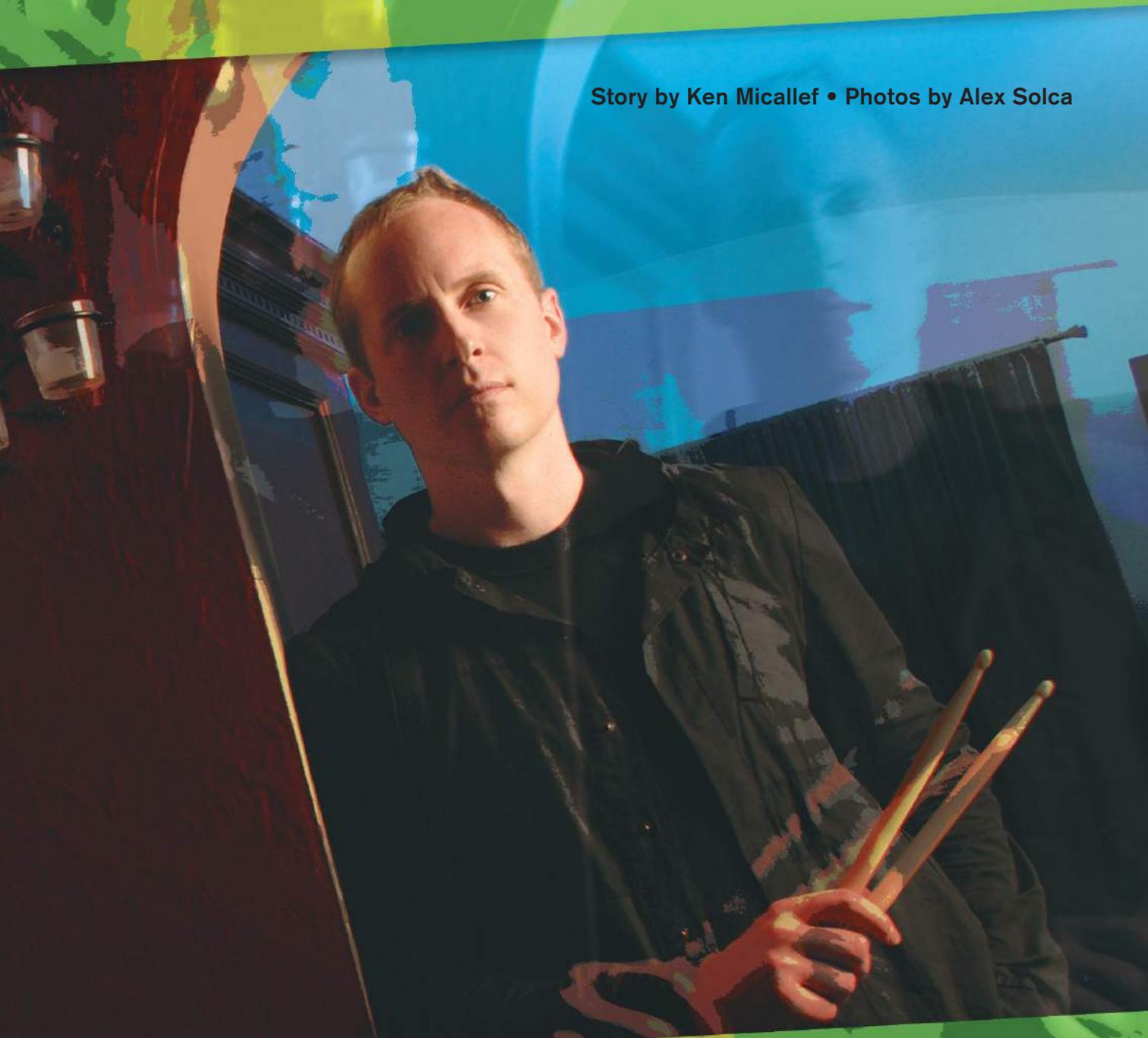


Time. Feel. Groove. Pulse. For many, these are illusive concepts with multiple meanings. Does a heavy metal drummer “feel” the pulse in the same way as a pop drummer? Does a punk drummer approach groove the same as a guy backing two folk singers? And what about external circumstances beyond the drummer’s control? Producers, engineers, electronics, and other musicians all have a collective vote in how a particular piece of music will feel and how that

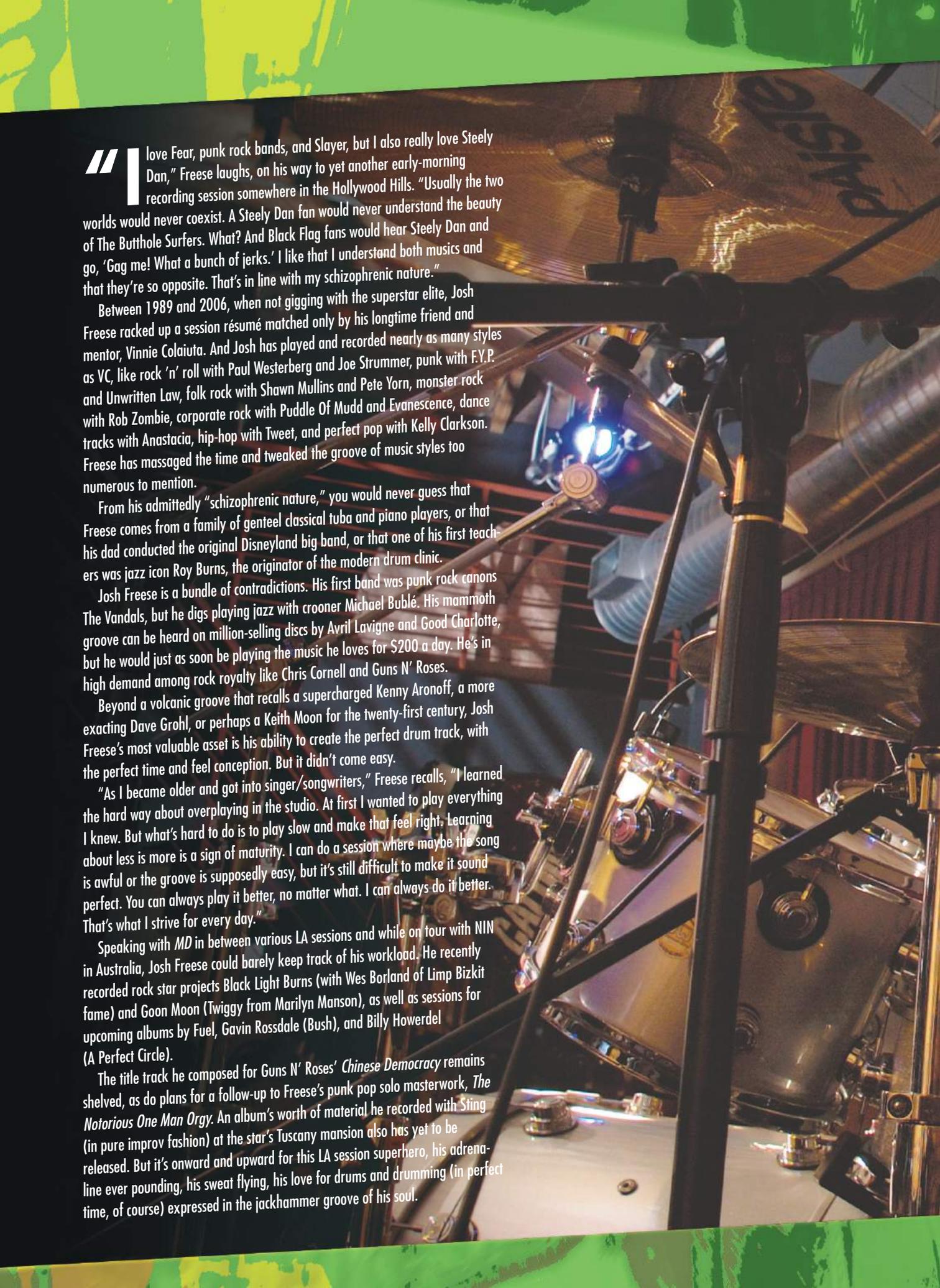
feeling is relayed to the audience.

Not many drummers can honestly comment on having experience in every given musical situation, be it rock, pop, metal, punk, jazz, or various acoustic music genres. One who *can* is the LA titan once called “the Bruce Lee of the drums.” Josh Freese is best known for his jackhammer groove with the likes of A Perfect Circle, Nine Inch Nails, The Vandals, and Sting, but his experience runs the gamut of contemporary music.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca



time Bandit
JOSH FREESE



“I love Fear, punk rock bands, and Slayer, but I also really love Steely Dan,” Freese laughs, on his way to yet another early-morning recording session somewhere in the Hollywood Hills. “Usually the two worlds would never coexist. A Steely Dan fan would never understand the beauty of The Butthole Surfers. What? And Black Flag fans would hear Steely Dan and go, ‘Gag me! What a bunch of jerks.’ I like that I understand both musics and that they’re so opposite. That’s in line with my schizophrenic nature.”

Between 1989 and 2006, when not gigging with the superstar elite, Josh Freese racked up a session résumé matched only by his longtime friend and mentor, Vinnie Colaiuta. And Josh has played and recorded nearly as many styles as VC, like rock ‘n’ roll with Paul Westerberg and Joe Strummer, punk with F.Y.P. and Unwritten Law, folk rock with Shawn Mullins and Pete Yorn, monster rock with Rob Zombie, corporate rock with Puddle Of Mudd and Evanescence, dance tracks with Anastacia, hip-hop with Tweet, and perfect pop with Kelly Clarkson. Freese has massaged the time and tweaked the groove of music styles too numerous to mention.

From his admittedly “schizophrenic nature,” you would never guess that Freese comes from a family of genteel classical tuba and piano players, or that his dad conducted the original Disneyland big band, or that one of his first teachers was jazz icon Roy Burns, the originator of the modern drum clinic.

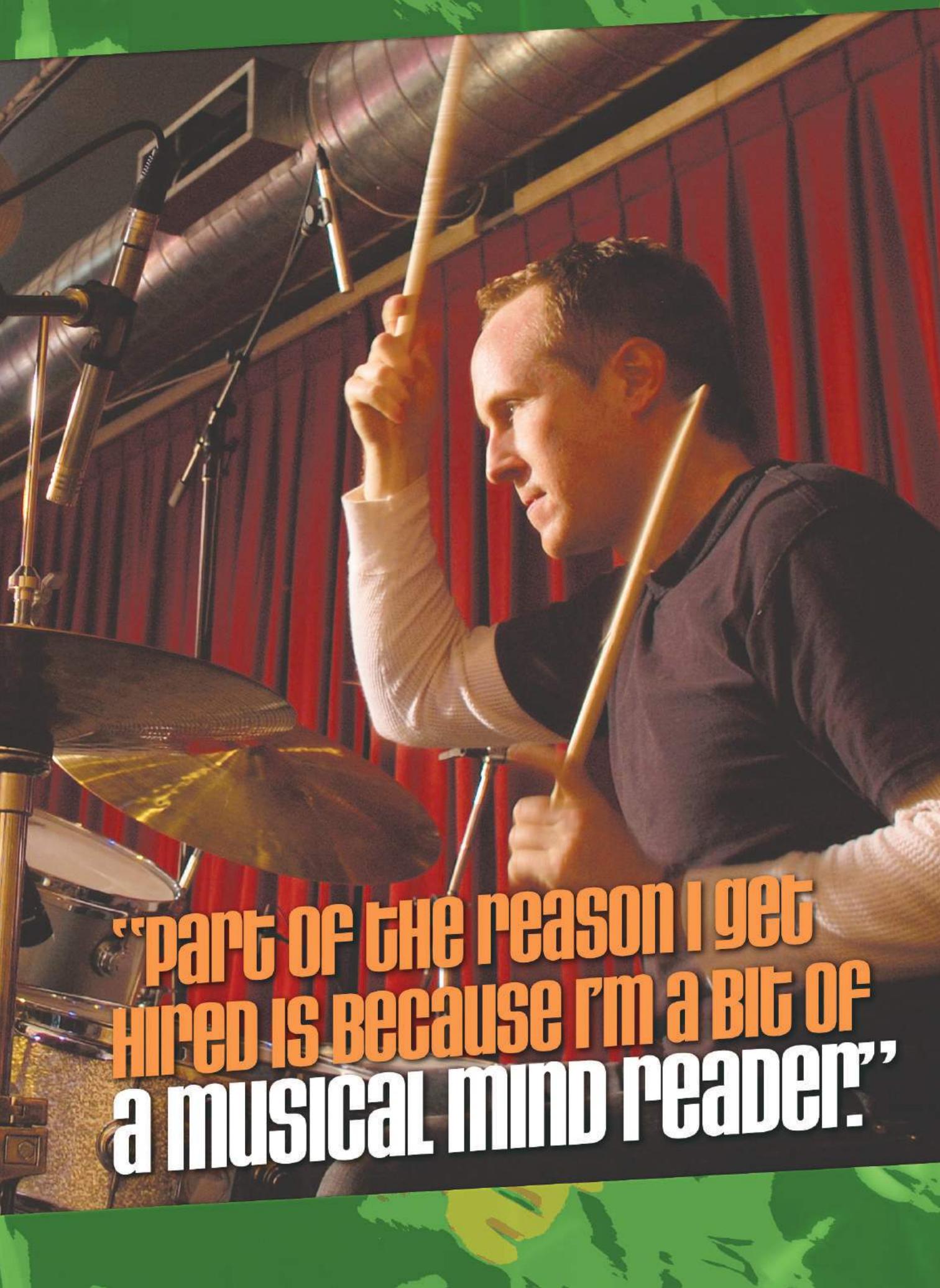
Josh Freese is a bundle of contradictions. His first band was punk rock canons The Vandals, but he digs playing jazz with crooner Michael Bublé. His mammoth groove can be heard on million-selling discs by Avril Lavigne and Good Charlotte, but he would just as soon be playing the music he loves for \$200 a day. He’s in high demand among rock royalty like Chris Cornell and Guns N’ Roses.

Beyond a volcanic groove that recalls a supercharged Kenny Aronoff, a more exacting Dave Grohl, or perhaps a Keith Moon for the twenty-first century, Josh Freese’s most valuable asset is his ability to create the perfect drum track, with the perfect time and feel conception. But it didn’t come easy.

“As I became older and got into singer/songwriters,” Freese recalls, “I learned the hard way about overplaying in the studio. At first I wanted to play everything I knew. But what’s hard to do is to play slow and make that feel right. Learning about less is more is a sign of maturity. I can do a session where maybe the song is awful or the groove is supposedly easy, but it’s still difficult to make it sound perfect. You can always play it better, no matter what. I can always do it better. That’s what I strive for every day.”

Speaking with *MD* in between various LA sessions and while on tour with NIN in Australia, Josh Freese could barely keep track of his workload. He recently recorded rock star projects Black Light Burns (with Wes Borland of Limp Bizkit fame) and Goon Moon (Twiggy from Marilyn Manson), as well as sessions for upcoming albums by Fuel, Gavin Rossdale (Bush), and Billy Howerdel (A Perfect Circle).

The title track he composed for Guns N’ Roses’ *Chinese Democracy* remains shelved, as do plans for a follow-up to Freese’s punk pop solo masterwork, *The Notorious One Man Orgy*. An album’s worth of material he recorded with Sting (in pure improv fashion) at the star’s Tuscany mansion also has yet to be released. But it’s onward and upward for this LA session superhero, his adrenaline ever pounding, his sweat flying, his love for drums and drumming (in perfect time, of course) expressed in the jackhammer groove of his soul.



“PART OF THE REASON I GET HIRED IS BECAUSE I’M A BIT OF A MUSICAL MIND READER.”

MD: You're often up at eight in the morning driving to sessions, and your studio and live drumming is all about energy—you're seemingly unstoppable. What's the essence of that forward motion that is your trademark?

Josh: For one thing, I've been around music my whole life. Music is my biggest passion. When my dad conducted the Disneyland big band, I watched the drummer every weekend, and I got to see Buddy Rich perform every summer. I played in the Disney Top-40 band on the Tomorrowland Terrace when I was a teenager. I befriended Vinnie Colaiuta at a NAMM show when I was a kid.

I have been determined to do this since I was a kid. Luckily, when I started playing the drums it came naturally. Now, that doesn't always mean that you have a guarantee of

having a job in the music industry. But since I was very young I tried to play with whoever would play with me. Whatever it took, whether it was sleeping a couple of hours a night to wake up early so I could practice before school, or not going surfing on the weekends, I was determined. I was locked into my own little world of playing drums.

MD: Why are you a first-call studio player in LA, perhaps only number two behind Vinnie? Is it your time feel, your quickness, your attitude?

Josh: It's all those things. I always joke that there are better drummers out there, but I can adapt on the fly. I have a good attitude and a good feel, I can play with a click, and I have equipment that sounds good. And I understand the producers [including Bob Rock, Matt

Wallace, Jon Brion, Eric Valentine, and Josh Abraham]. I know what it's like when you're trying to make a record and you're under pressure and you need to assemble a group of people who won't let you down. Producers know they can call me and I will be on time and I won't smoke pot all day. I am not a mess-up. I will get the song down right away and it will be finished in one hour.

MD: Big ears is part of the process.

Josh: Totally. I'm a fan of music. But I've never been one to practice all day. When I practiced as a kid, it was for two or three hours a day. After that I was watching Terry Bozzio on Frank Zappa's Baby Snakes video or Steve Gadd's Up Close video. Or I was driving to see Vinnie play at the Baked Potato on Sunday nights. I was listening and watching, and I still am.

MD: What did you take from seeing Vinnie play so often?

Josh: Fire. And going out on a limb. First, I was into Alex Van Halen, then Steve Gadd, Vinnie, Omar Hakim, Peter Erskine, Chad Wackerman, and then Dave Weckl. But by the time I was in my teens, it was all punk rock. You go through phases. But you take certain things that you like from each guy. I don't listen to those drummer's drummers now, but Vinnie still blows me away, even though I don't play anything like him. I live vicariously through him.

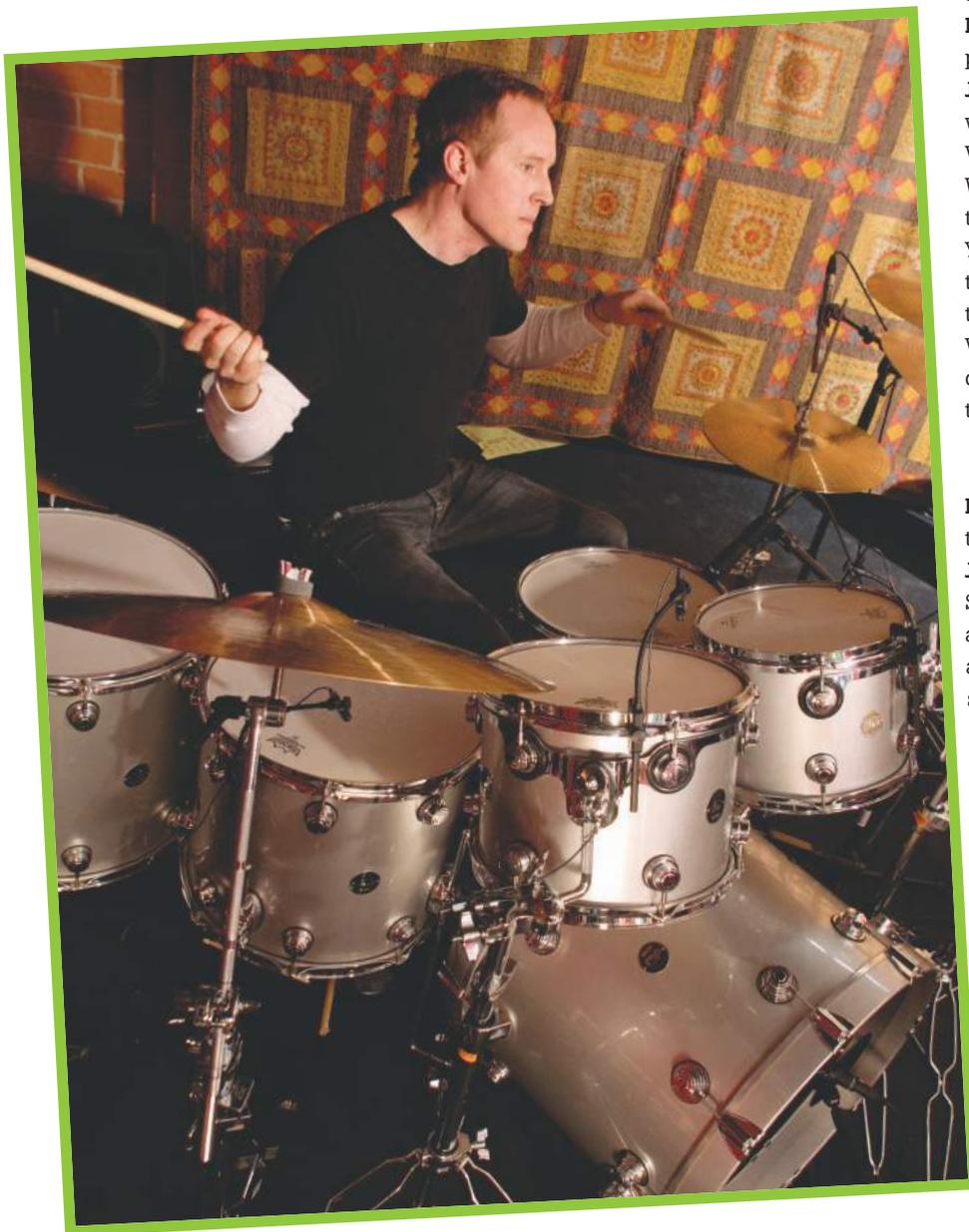
Taming The Studio

MD: What's your process for getting a good take in the studio?

Josh: I listen to the track and ask questions. Sometimes the producer or artist has recorded a drum machine pattern to get their idea across. I'll ask, "How true do you want to stick to the demo?" It can be a million different combinations.

I listen to the song; I cue off what the bass is doing, whether I'll be playing down or up. They might want you to open up more on the chorus and keep the verse pattern. If it's the end of the song or the solo section, maybe I'll play a couple of cool fills. But I won't do cool fills in the first verse. The intro might be bigger than the first verse. I'm assuming we come down in the first verse, and the hi-hats will close back up. Then you might open them up on the bridge, and go to the cymbal on the chorus. Maybe vice versa. It's usually a quick discussion.

I can play a lot of different styles, but it's all under the pop format, whether it's



playing a mellow song, or it's A Perfect Circle, or Jewel, or Suicidal Tendencies. It's always a rock music format.

MD: When you do so many sessions, how do you regularly summon the energy of a live performance in a cold studio environment?

Josh: I sweat my ass off in sessions. Often I'll do a take and will be sweating and when I

8th-note rock?

Josh: Yeah, it's not prog. I'm not doing a session for Chick Corea. I think Vinnie reads all the time; he's doing things that are more intricate. But just because it's simplified rock music doesn't mean it isn't challenging. It's still challenging because I'm there to make it sound and feel as good as I can with the least

MD: How do you handle getting paid?

Josh: Up front and cash money, baby! I don't take advantage of anyone. There are artists on major labels that I really couldn't care less about working with. So if they hire me, I charge them more. Why not? And I do sessions for free for friends who have no money. One punk rock band, F.Y.P., shoved \$200 in my



JOSH'S STUDIO KIT

Drums: Drum Workshop Collector's Series

- A. 5x14 snare (aluminum shell) or 7x14 snare (brass or bronze shell)
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 9x13 tom
- D. 14x16 floor tom
- E. 16x18 floor tom
- F. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste Signature Series

- 1. 14" Dark Crisp hi-hats
- 2. 18" Full crash
- 3. 18" Power crash
- 4. 21" Dry Heavy ride (or 22" Mellow ride)
- 5. 19" Full crash

Hardware: DW 9000 series stands, 5002 double pedal

Heads: Remo coated CS on snare batter, Ambassador snare-side, coated Emperors on tom batters, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum

Sticks: Vater Josh Freese H-220 model (hickory with wood tip)

Electronics: Pijtech pads, Roland KD-7 kick trigger, custom-built snare and kick triggers, Alesis DM-Pro brain, Pro Tools, Apple Mac

hear the take I realize, "This song isn't fast at all." In the room it feels fast, but it's really mid-tempo. Why am I drenched? It must be because when it's going down it feels intense. If you're focused and you concentrate, you'll end up working very hard.

MD: Are you usually required to read charts on sessions?

Josh: Sometimes I'll make notations, but I usually try to memorize the track after a few listens. I memorize the verse, the chorus, the bridge. I'll write, for example: "Intro 8 ride crash, verse 16 closed hats, snare fill at end, chorus open hat for four, re intro 8 ride cymbal, second verse closed hi-hat for 16." It's usually just a road map. I don't write out notation or drum music, though I can read. I was a good reader growing up. But I get asked to read an actual drum part about once every three years.

MD: Is that because your sessions are primarily

amount of hassle and without having to be there all day working on that one song. I know basically what they'll want when we listen to the song and discuss what they're going for. You listen and it's pretty obvious what the vibe will be and what they want.

MD: What do you bring to each session?

Josh: I keep all my stuff with the Drum Doctors [cartage company]. For a session, I'll tell them what I'm doing, and they know the routine. There's always a nice array of cymbals, the ones I use consistently. I use Paiste Signature series and DW snares.

MD: Do you tune differently for different sessions, or do they want the Josh Freese sound?

Josh: I can usually get what they want. If they ask for something unusual, I take it from there. It's not usually too outside. They don't ask for a Tony Williams sound on a rock session. It's usually just a good-sounding basic rock kit.

pocket at the end of the session—eighteen songs in a day. I thought I was doing it for free. But generally I work out payment issues in advance: X amount of dollars per song or X amount of dollars per day. But I'm pretty easy to hire, unless I need sleep or time with my kids.

MD: What are the dirty little secrets of the session world?

Josh: For what I do, as far as having my stuff planned, it's not as in-depth as you would think. I don't show up with twenty snares. I show up with three—DW and Craviotto models. I think readers might want to hear how much longer it took to get a drum sound, or your mindset the night before a session. Maybe it's because I've done it every day since I was sixteen—it's my life.

If I was going to make my first record, I would go through everything with a fine-tooth

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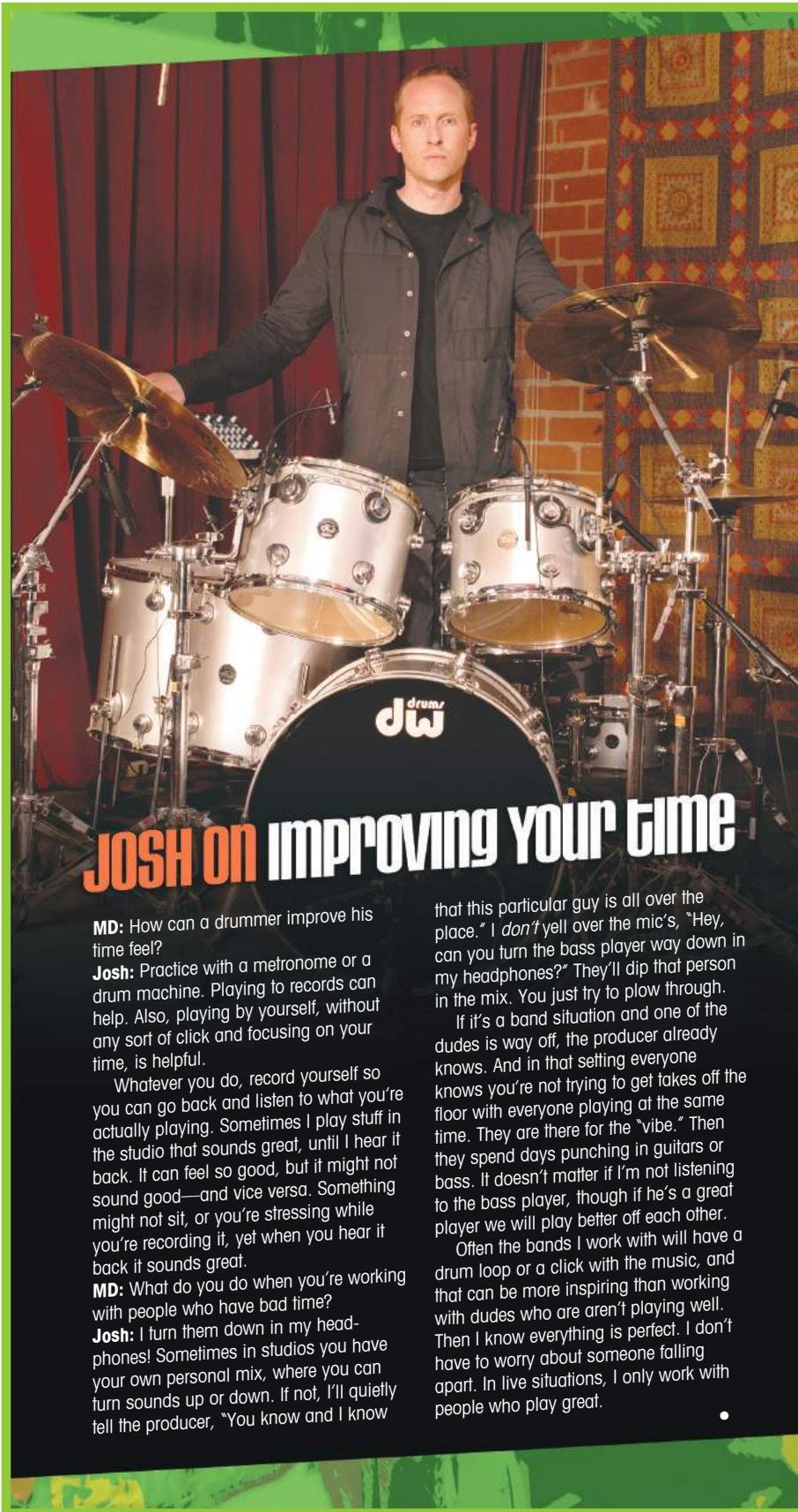
JOSH FREESE

comb and figure it all out. But I know what works and I know what most people want to hear. If I didn't eat, sleep, and breathe music, I would think about it more. Even if I'm not working on my independence or something

technical, I am constantly making music.

MD: That seems to be the most important thing: playing music, not practicing music.

Josh: Right. You can practice all day long, but you have to get in a room with people and you



JOSH ON Improving Your Time

MD: How can a drummer improve his time feel?

Josh: Practice with a metronome or a drum machine. Playing to records can help. Also, playing by yourself, without any sort of click and focusing on your time, is helpful.

Whatever you do, record yourself so you can go back and listen to what you're actually playing. Sometimes I play stuff in the studio that sounds great, until I hear it back. It can feel so good, but it might not sound good—and vice versa. Something might not sit, or you're stressing while you're recording it, yet when you hear it back it sounds great.

MD: What do you do when you're working with people who have bad time?

Josh: I turn them down in my headphones! Sometimes in studios you have your own personal mix, where you can turn sounds up or down. If not, I'll quietly tell the producer, "You know and I know

that this particular guy is all over the place." I don't yell over the mic's, "Hey, can you turn the bass player way down in my headphones?" They'll dip that person in the mix. You just try to plow through.

If it's a band situation and one of the dudes is way off, the producer already knows. And in that setting everyone knows you're not trying to get takes off the floor with everyone playing at the same time. They are there for the "vibe." Then they spend days punching in guitars or bass. It doesn't matter if I'm not listening to the bass player, though if he's a great player we will play better off each other.

Often the bands I work with will have a drum loop or a click with the music, and that can be more inspiring than working with dudes who are aren't playing well. Then I know everything is perfect. I don't have to worry about someone falling apart. In live situations, I only work with people who play great.

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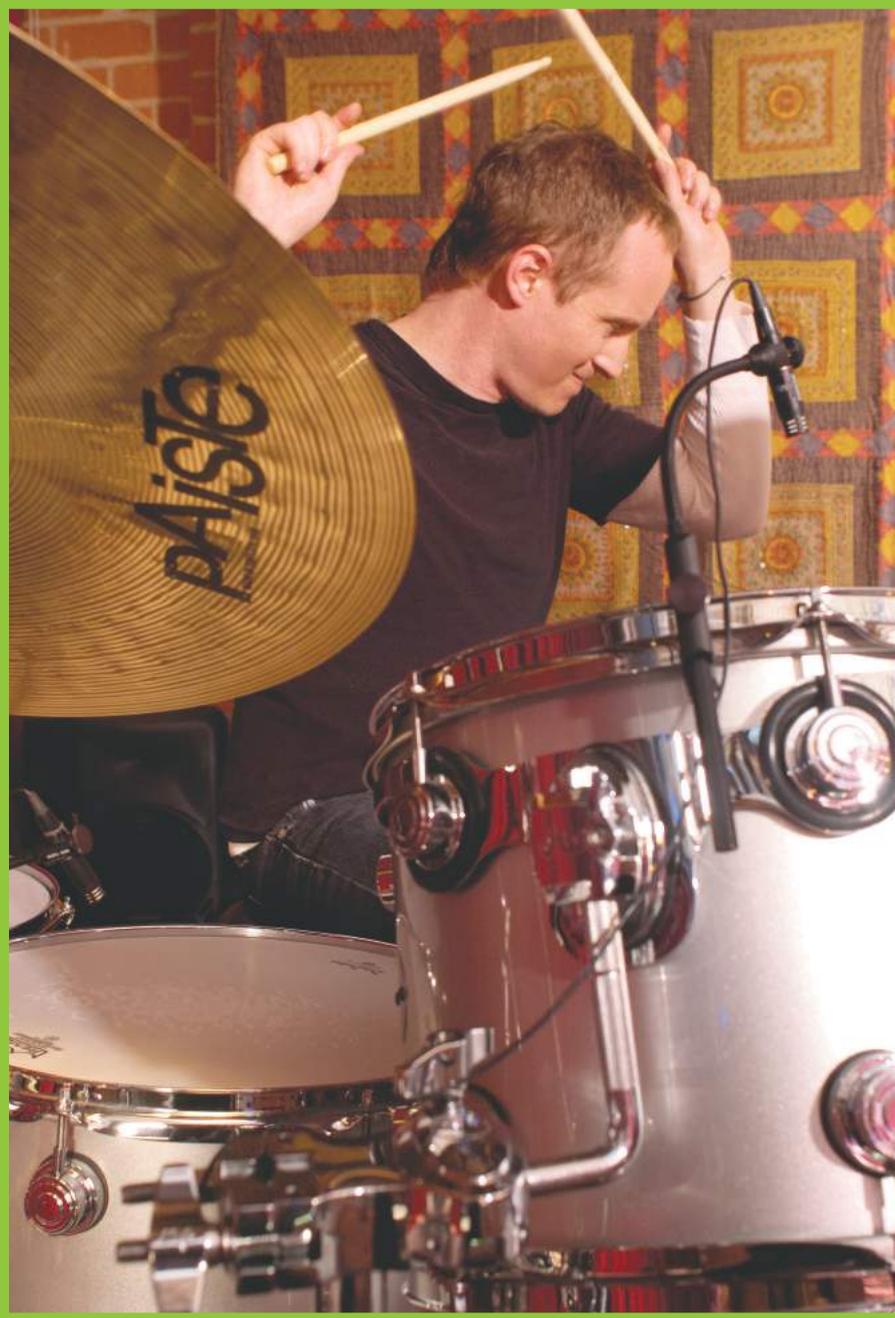
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have to interact. It's not just about you. I saw an ad in Modern Drummer about the world's fastest drummer; that's great. If you want to look at drumming as a sport, that's fun. But in the real world, that's the last thing to worry about. What would be really challenging is to

said there is way too much rock and not enough roll. It's all in the roll, and I knew exactly what he meant. Anyone can turn up an amp to eleven and make a big sound. That's easy. But the roll is the groove and the attitude and the style and the maturity of not



set up a click track and do a contest for the world's slowest drummer. You laugh, but there is something to be said for that. There's a space between the hits, and people forget about that space. They forget about the air between where the snare drum beat lands, which creates that unexplainable feel and groove that you can't learn out of a book.

I read a Keith Richards interview where he was discussing the state of rock 'n' roll. He

having to run out and play fast as soon as you hit the stage. Can you be intense with your amp on two? Can you be intense and blow people away while playing something slow? That's really hard.

MD: How do you maintain a professional attitude in the studio when the music is less than great?

Josh: The other day I worked with an artist who had some ridiculous requests. The pro-



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ducer was looking at me like he knew it was stupid, but that I should entertain the idea for a moment. I said, "I can try that, but it will sound weird." Sure enough, it sounded weird and we moved on. And there are other times

when they want me to try something and I know it's wrong, so I might pout for a minute and then do what they request—and it ends up sounding great. I can be wrong.

MD: Do you get impatient if things are going



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slow or are unprofessional?

Josh: I've had the good fortune to work with great people. If you're working with someone who is not as good, you might think "This is a drag." I hear stories about guys throwing fits in the studio, and I hope I never come off like that. If I pout, it's usually in my own head. I am not a confrontational person. I'm pretty diplomatic. You get used to working with pros, so when you work with someone who is green it can be difficult.

MD: Do artists or producers sometimes want you to play like someone else?

Josh: They'll try to paint a picture. Maybe they'll say, "Play like Ringo on those drum fills." I won't play like Ringo, but I'll play something that sounds kind of like Ringo. Or they'll want a "caveman Dave Grohl thing" on the chorus. It makes it easy to understand them.

One guy who hires me will say, "I want that total Josh Freese angular big Perfect Circle drum fill." I know what he means. But to be honest, with as much as I've done now and with as many people I've worked for, people hire me for the most part to do what I do.

Trent, Gordon, And Billy

MD: Working with NIN, are there certain sounds Trent Reznor wants to hear that you replicate electronically?

Josh: I trigger samples that Trent has made at his studio and layers of sounds right off of NIN records. Things come in and out of the mix. There are other things—drum loops, percussion, sound effects—that I play in conjunction with. It's fun. I like playing with machines, because you can play with them, you can play around them, and you can play off of them. We're able to reproduce a lot of the record in a live show.

MD: Do you have to think any harder to play with NIN as opposed to playing with Sting?

Josh: They are drastically different gigs. With NIN the arrangements never change. I'm playing an arrangement. I count the song off, and if the intro is sixteen bars, we never look at each other and say, "Let's take it another round!" There is something nice about knowing that if everyone follows the plan, there will be no glitches.

With Sting it can be fun and scary. He would change arrangements every day. It was about just having to look at him. For example, he would open up

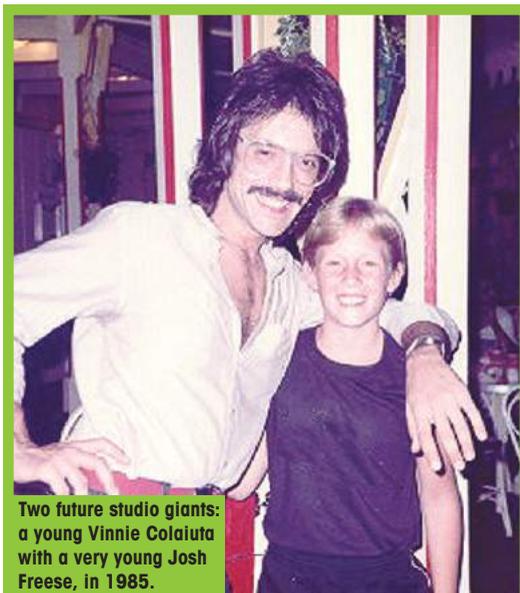
"Roxanne" where we would break it down and build it back up. But there was nothing set. You had to watch him closely, be able to think on your feet, and hopefully adjust and land on the downbeat when he lands on it. You have to read every last facial expression. I would have to gauge how far he was standing from the microphone to know whether we would be going to keep playing or break it down. He would just walk away from the mic and expect you to know what to do.

We were playing The Jimmy Kimmel Show, and at the soundcheck Sting decided that he wanted to cut the intro in half on "Message In A Bottle." We thought we could all do that in our heads. But we go to do it live on TV, and we're in bar 7 and expecting to change, but Sting is nowhere near the mic. Are we really going into the verse in two seconds or do I play another eight bars? Sting said eight, not sixteen, but I think he had already forgotten. You really had to read him constantly. But he was easier and cooler to work with than I thought he would be. He would laugh and say, "I give drummers a hard time, Josh," and wink at me. Part of the reason I get hired is because I'm a bit of a musical mind reader.

MD: How does one become a musical mind reader?

Josh: Having good musical common sense—and doing your homework. I didn't want to assume too much, but I knew enough about Sting's musical history and his style that I could "guesstimate" things. I sometimes assumed how he might approach something or what he might play. Do your homework on the people you're playing with and have good musical common sense.

MD: How do you approach working with a



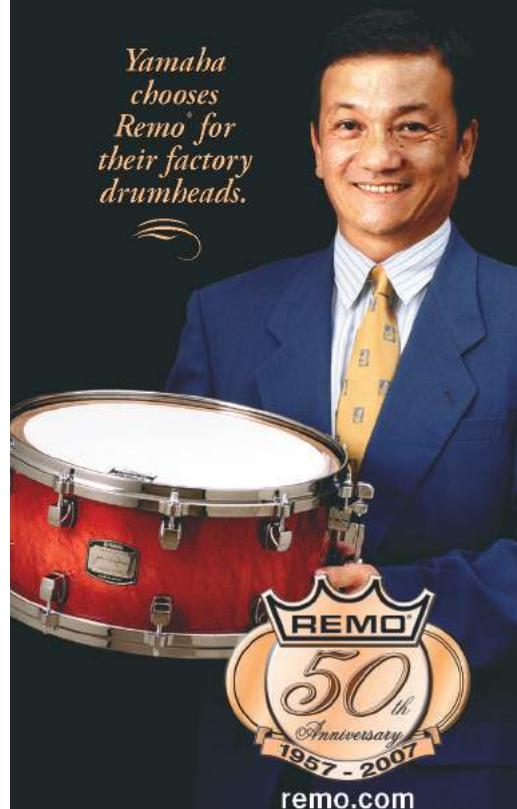
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JOSH FREESE

major artist for the first time?

Josh: I'll try to know something about them. I knew a lot about Sting. You can only do so much before playing with someone, but oddly enough, Sting was so much looser than I thought he would be. We would fade songs out, we never had endings. He'd say, "Don't worry about it, it will end on its own." He pays people who are worried about it who will watch him and be there when he needs them.

MD: You were a member of A Perfect Circle, and everyone is waiting for guitarist Billy Howerdel's solo album, which you've been working on. Can you describe the music?

Josh: Billy wrote the majority of the music for A Perfect Circle, so it's still his style, more than Tool. Some of it is a little more fun, more danceable, more rock, and not as atmospheric as PC. And it's similar to Black Light Burns in the way that it was recorded with friends in a home studio with no pressure. I don't have a ton of

certain fill that lets you know it's real drums. We recorded some of the songs at different times in different rooms, so you're hearing different sets on the same tune sometimes. And there were some cool overdubbed drum parts where I played weird tom feels over a beat.

Leaning-In Time

MD: As we talked about, your trademark is your energy; it just pours off your kit and out of your tracks. I imagine that Sting never told you to "pick it up."

Josh: No. But Sting would say things in rehearsal, like, "In that chorus I really want you to lean forward." Or I remember working on "Fortress Around Your Heart," that song Omar Hakim played on. In the chorus, when the band answers the lyrics, Sting said, "I really want you to lay back, just for that moment—just subconsciously lean back on the beat." So I counted off the chorus, we played it, and he said,



tricks up my sleeve, you don't listen to me the way you do to guys who blow the whole time. This is rock 'n' roll, but there are a few moments with Billy where I get to play. There are some odd meters.

On one song, I played smaller drums in a vocal booth—really tight-sounding and quick, almost like a weird drum machine program. It sounds weird and dry, and the drums are herky-jerky. But you can tell it's not perfect. I do a

"That's exactly what I wanted." He wasn't saying drop a beat or slow down, just lean back.

MD: Is it easy to rev up on the energy level rather than be told to hold it back in a given situation?

Josh: Either one is challenging, and I can do both. If the dude says bring it up, I can do it. I know exactly what he wants, and I'll lean forward as needed. But I don't necessarily want

to speed up or slow down. It's like asking a singer, "Can you sing really sharp here?" But if someone says lean forward, I can pick it up without picking up the tempo. It's an unexplainable thing, like any groove or any pocket; you can't teach it.

MD: Are you generally asked to shade the time feel in sessions?

Josh: It all changes on a daily basis. Ninety percent of the time they want me to play in time with the click track. I prefer a cowbell for the click. If you're landing with the click, a hi-hat or side stick will get lost. If you need to adjust with the cowbell there's no denying where it is. You can feel that through your brain. A rain stick or gong sound won't work. If it's a mid-tempo tune, set the click to quarter notes, 8ths for slower time.

Sticking The Click

MD: How do you lay your time with the click?

Josh: I don't really think about it. If I was practicing with a click, the point is to play with it the best you can. When I first started playing with a metronome, I didn't think, "I have to play ahead of it or be perfectly on top." Doing that or laying behind the click is a more mature way of looking at things. That comes when you're in the studio making records with folks who can use that terminology and expect that from you.

For the most part, I just try to play with the click. I play the whole NIN show with a click, and it still feels like rock 'n' roll. Same thing in the studio: It's gotten to the point where it feels natural. I don't have to think about it; you either sound good or you don't. But some artists or producers will give you direction, like barely lay on top of it or barely lay back. Or they might want you to sound machine-like and precise. The fact that my approach to the click is subconscious at this point is one reason I get hired.

Lagerborg-ing

MD: Is "Lagerborg" from Drum Nation IV another instance of you playing everything in sight?

Josh: I wrote that song for a drum clinic I did at the House Of Blues in LA. Then when I was approached to be on that Drum Nation record, I rerecorded it in Pro Tools. It's in 11/8. I laid down a click first, but the Alesis drum machine didn't have 11/8 in its repertoire. To create the click in 11/8 for three and a half minutes, I had to push play at the point where the time would start over. So after six quarter notes, I would jerk it an 8th note to restart the pattern to get 11/8!

Often when I write I'll do a click and then add the instruments. Other times I'll play drums first to lay down a song, humming it in my head while I play. It depends on my mood. I don't have to do a click and guitar first or only do drums first. It changes around.

MD: What tips can you offer to get that jackhammer Josh Freese groove?

Josh: It's important to do as much listening as you can. I've been watching a lot of Buddy Rich on YouTube lately, but do I listen to big band music? Never. You lean towards certain things. I've taken from everything, from Chick Corea, Frank Zappa, and Miles Davis to The Ramones and The Sex Pistols. I love Steve

Jordan, Jeff Porcaro, and Meg White of The White Stripes. She can barely play, but that's half the fun. One of my favorite drum tracks is Ricky Lawson on Steely Dan's "Gaslighting Abby." There are zero drum fills, no crash cymbals on the chorus, same groove almost throughout, but there is something cool about it that I love.

Figure out what you like. I've worked with Maynard James Keenan and Trent Reznor, but I really want to work with Donald Fagen. My drumming is a weird hybrid of all those opposite spectrums.



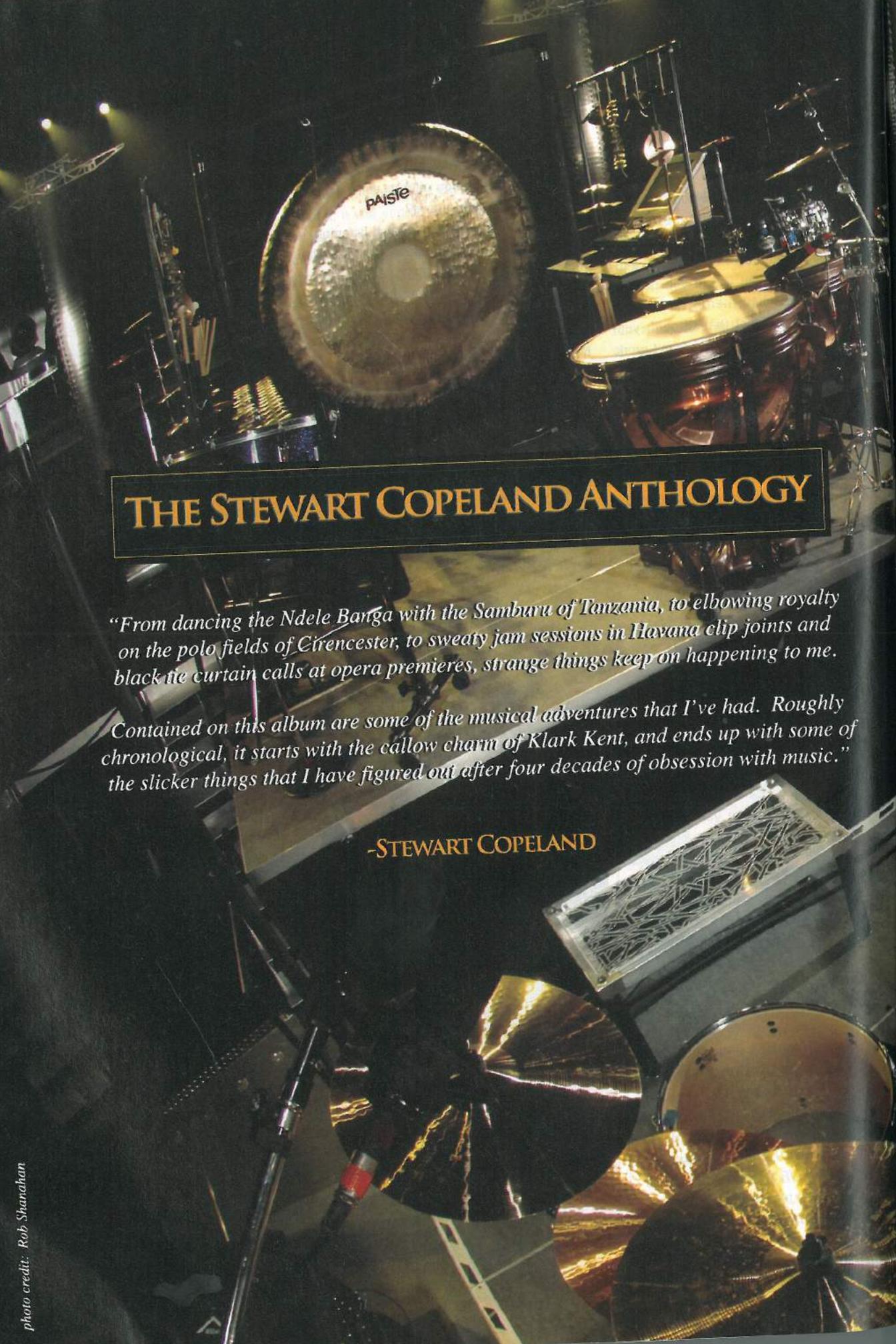
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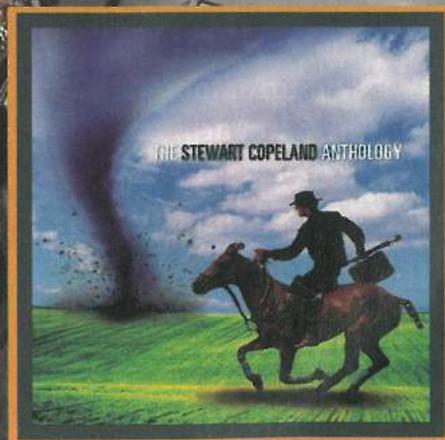
Contained on this album are some of the musical adventures that I've had. Roughly chronological, it starts with the callow charm of Klark Kent, and ends up with some of the slicker things that I have figured out after four decades of obsession with music."

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IT'S ALL ABOUT TIME!

by Mike Haid

TODAY'S GREATEST PLAYERS ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR TIME AND FEEL

Practically all drummers agree that time and feel are a drummer's primary concern. And yet, for far too many of us, these are things that we don't focus on enough.

In this special supplement, we'll ask some of the world's greatest timekeepers—drummers known for their expertise in various styles—for their time-improving tips. It's the most in-depth discussion of time and feel that has ever been printed. No doubt about it, the information that follows will change your drumming.

AARON SPEARS (USHER)

A drummer's time means absolutely everything to the music. The drummer is the foundation. If the foundation is faulty, then everything will fall apart.

When working with various time feels of other musicians, you want to make sure that you're considerate of each player. The object should be to make it as easy as possible for everyone to work together and get the job done. This won't be the time to break out that double-quad-triple one-handed cymbal/kick/tom fill that is bound to end in a train wreck.

It's important to practice to a click. It helps to make you more prepared for any situation you might encounter, from studio sessions to live performances. Put on that click and rock with it. Don't be afraid.

Practice with all different styles of music at all different tempos. When you sit down to practice, instead of just playing with a metronome or a click, try playing with some music. A good friend of mine once said, "Play Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean' back-to-back about thirty-eight times, and you'll be straight!"



Andrew Lepley

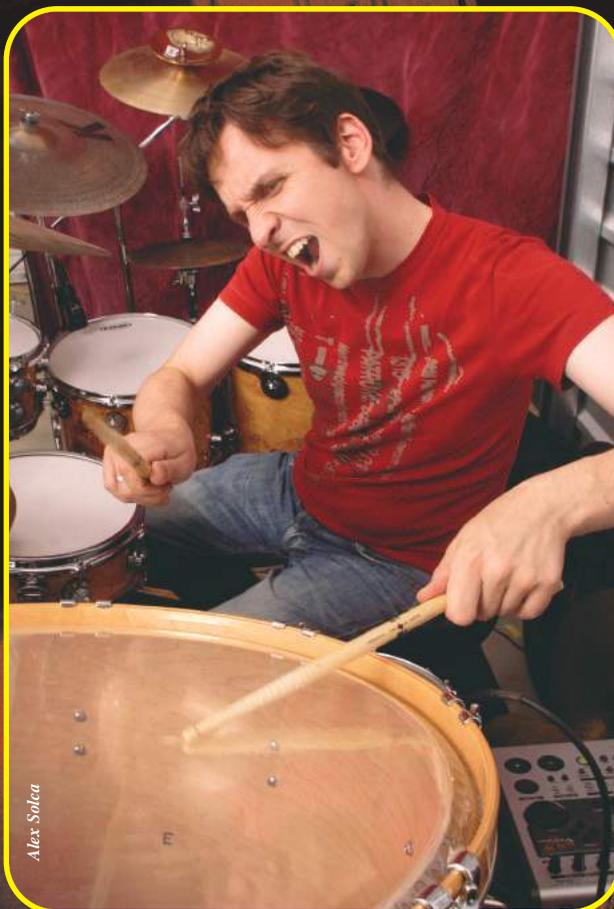
MARCO MINNEMANN (ILLEGAL ALIENS, SOLO ARTIST)

The drummer decides which way the music flows. Best examples: John Bonham in Led Zeppelin laying down a strong fundamental heavy groove—lots of times with a laid-back feel. And then you have Stewart Copeland with The Police, with his driving energy, lots of times rushing the music (in a good way). Both are among my favorite drummers, but with very different time feels.

When working with time feels of other musicians, you have to listen carefully and adjust. A lot of times I experienced pulling the guitar player back from rushing the song, or pushing a big band from slowing down. But in the end, I pretty much focus on my own time and try to make sure to deliver a solid base behind the band. I sometimes may slow down certain parts of the song, to get a heavy, laid-back feel. But again, in an uptempo bebop track, I want a car race—drive fast and push it!

I think there are very different time feels for different musical styles. Good examples to check out: "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin: heavy, laid back, behind the beat. "Synchronicity" by The Police: driving, almost ahead. "Owner Of A Lonely Heart" by Yes: pretty much edited and quantized right on the beat. "Seven Steps To Heaven" by Miles Davis, or "West Side Story" by the Buddy Rich Big Band: The time moves and changes within the music and is flexible. Another good one: "In The Air Tonight" by Phil Collins: right on the money.

To improve, or focus, your time, play to CDs, and program some cool grooves or loops and jam to them. That's often more fun and inspiring than rehearsing to click tracks. Play solid grooves for a while to your programmed stuff or a click, then add drum fills for four or eight bars, then go back to the groove. That's good training to make sure you're not rushing your fills.



Alex Soleda

STANTON MOORE (GALACTIC)

I started studying with Johnny Vidacovich in high school, and he turned me on to a lot of different concepts about time that really helped me. He stressed the importance of developing your internal clock. One thing he taught me, which I still use, is to compress the toes of your left foot (or the ball of your foot) on the hi-hat pedal while tapping out the quarter-note or 8th-note pulse with your heel on the hi-hat pedal. What happens is you rock your foot back and forth in time with the metronome and work on opening your hi-hat to create different patterns. But the main point is to develop your time, and your external clock, by rocking your foot back and forth in time with the click while grooving with the rest of your limbs. This has helped me a lot to develop my internal clock.

Now I can go for something on the kit, and if I come out a little out of time, that's okay because my left foot is still keeping time and it's right on. So I play off of that left foot clock and it always keeps me in line.

A lot of times I'll be asked to record to just a click, and they'll add all the tracks after that. Johnny Vidacovich told me not to think of the click as a machine, but as somebody with really good time. That's why I like practicing to a click that sounds like a cowbell or a tambourine.

There are certain styles of music that call for the drummer to play metronomically perfect and "bury" the click. I don't use it that way. I like to use it as a reference point and groove as hard as I can. But I'm not sweating it if I hit a backbeat that's a little behind the click, because the click's not going to be in the mix. Just because you're playing with a machine doesn't mean you have to sound like a machine.

I think it's very important to listen to all the great drummers to develop your time. Listen to the tracks that everybody talks about, like "The Funky Drummer," "Cissy Strut," "When The Levee Breaks," and "Rosanna." Play along to those tracks every day, and that will help build your time feel and turn you onto some great grooves.

If you have good time and you can play a shuffle, a slow three, and a couple of funk beats, you're gonna work for the rest of your life. But if you have bad time, even if you can play every Vinnie Colaiuta lick in the book, you're not gonna work.



Dwight Marshall

EDDIE BAYERS (NASHVILLE STUDIO LEGEND)



Rick Malkin

On working with various time feels of other musicians, that to me is called "chemistry." You usually get a quick reality of others in the mix. Rarely do I have any issue at all. I'm always moved to listen to the band I'm working with, and my internal clock automatically adjusts. The music tells you where you should be putting the beat.

With R&B, such as when I work with Steve Cropper, he always mentions putting the beat on the "bacon side." Many times the producers I work with will also ask for it to be more on top, laid-back, etc. I guess the key for me is diversity. I've recorded so many efforts over the past thirty-six years, when I reflect on them, I recall that I performed each one accordingly.

There are several of us in the studio scene that like guessing the bpm (beats per minute) when someone is just running down a song with a guitar/piano. Then it's interesting to tap it into my click and see how close each person was. It helps me to know approximately where 120, 75, or 165 is when I hear a song without clocking the time. I think the best way to improve your time is working with the click and really learning bpm.

STANTON'S ORGANIC TIME THOUGHTS

New Orleans-style drumming has a unique time feel that focuses on playing between the cracks. This means that the 8th and 16th notes are not swung, but they're not straight either. The feel has to fall somewhere between straight and swung. It's a very subtle thing that goes way back to Earl Palmer and Zigaboo Modeliste.

A good way to learn this feel is to keep your right hand locked into a straight 8th-note groove on the hat while your left hand does the morphing of the time on the snare. Start playing straight 16th notes with your left hand with a metronome at 88 bpm and gradually change the feel to swung 16th notes while keeping the straight 8th-note groove on the hats. Then slowly morph back from the swung 16th notes to the straight 16th notes.

You can hear this kind of time feel on traditional New Orleans funk tunes like "Cissy Strut" and "Hey Pocky A-Way." What gives this type of music such an organic time feel is that it can be a little straighter at the end of one phrase and then a little more swung at the end of the next. There's no constant time feel with the left hand, but the right hand (hi-hat) is always locked into the straight 8th-note or quarter-note time.

DAVE WECKL (CHICK COREA, MIKE STERN, DAVE WECKL BAND)

I think the feel and vibe of the song starts with the drummer, and how good of a time feel they create for that song, which means playing a part that works for the song and making it feel good. If the drummer's time is inconsistent, there's no basic foundation of trust for any other musician to grasp onto, therefore creating a very unstable and non-relaxed environment. The drummer's time has to be solid and consistent for the song to feel good.

I won't speed up or slow down to conform to someone else's radical time shifts. I may play on the edge or laid-back depending on what I'm hearing, but I'll always maintain a focus on keeping the time consistent. When playing live, all kinds of things can affect how each musician hears the other, so good monitoring is really important so everyone hears each other.

If we're in the studio, though, I get pretty anal about the time feel we are presenting as a group. It's especially a problem when we're playing with a click and someone is pushing or pulling on it. I always suggest moving the click to where the time might feel more natural and better for all involved. Many times, the wrong tempo is selected in the first place. This is usually determined by playing the song first without a click to see where the band falls into it naturally. I then try to get the click close to that tempo.

I also have no problem tactfully mentioning a problem to someone, once the culprit is determined, so they can make adjustments, or possibly lay out and overdub their part if it's not possible for them to play together with the band at that moment. If you're just jamming, sitting in, or in the studio with the clock running, be solid and let everyone else trust you and play with you. Remember, as long as the drums are solid, they can go back in and fix their parts.

In terms of your natural body clock feeling the time without a click, it depends on what feels right for the song. I can adjust my feel depending on what I feel sounds right. I'm not sure there's such a thing as a natural clock; too many things affect it, just within our own internals, let alone when



Heinz Kronberger

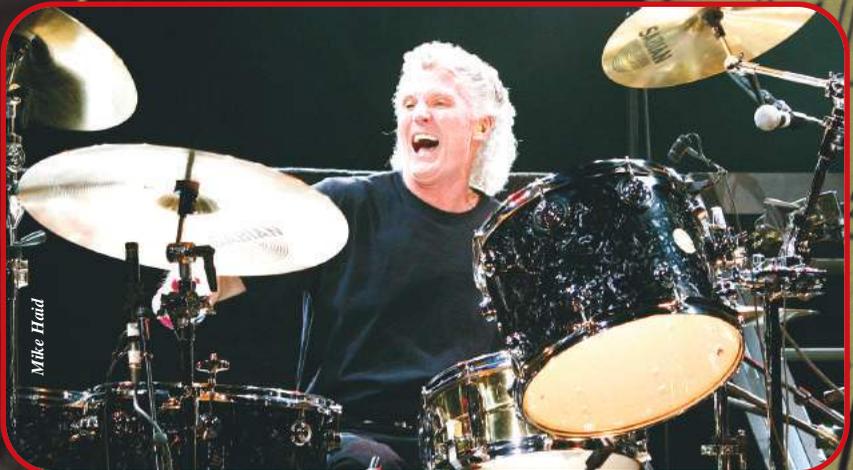
someone else is involved.

To play without a click, your body has to work with that natural human rhythm to give the music more life and organic flexibility to make the music feel good. If the body is stiff and resistant and is constantly in the way of the natural rhythm, it tends to feel that way—stiff, and non-organic.

I think it is very important to practice to a click for two reasons. One, it will become second-nature to do so, and you will develop the ability to play with a click without chasing it, and become natural with your playing within the click. Two, it will help you identify your bad habits of where you might alter the time, and teach you to be more "metronomic" and consistent. That doesn't mean you become mechanical; you can always loosen up as much as you desire to be more organic and flow with the time and the band as desired. But it's very hard to adapt to a click if you don't practice to one and are not used to or comfortable with it.

DON BREWER (GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, BOB SEGER)

Grand Funk originally disbanded in 1977, and we never used a click track to record any of the music we created up to that point. I think that's why a lot of that early GFR music feels so good, because it moves. It runs up and comes back down. It's got some emotion to it. That's what I don't hear much of anymore in pop music. Most of it sounds like a guy who produced the whole thing in his home studio with a bunch of machines.



Mike Hard

BERNARD PURDIE (STUDIO LEGEND, STEELY DAN, ARETHA FRANKLIN)

My sense of time came from my teacher, Mr. Leonard Hayward. He explained to me that my inner clock is what generates my time and my sensitivity to time. In order to focus on the inner clock, while also being sensitive to the time, you must always know where "1" is. No matter what you play in between the time, as long as you know where "1" is, your inner clock will lead you through the music. In order to know the "1," you have to count. Counting is everything.

The click track has never bothered me, because I've always looked at it as another instrument. No matter what sound you're playing along with, it shouldn't keep you from being a confident, creative player. Again, it's your confidence and positive attitude that must come through, whether you're playing live or in the studio with a click.

As the drummer, you are carrying the load. It's your job to keep the time. The other musicians must trust you and trust your time. You've got to play as though you're putting your arms around them and saying, "Fellas, follow me, look at me, smile with me, listen to the sound of my drums, and it will put you right in the cradle. I will carry the load for you. I am the driver and I will steer you in the right direction."



Alex Sobca

PURDIE ON POSITIVE GROOVING

A very important key to having strong time is playing with a positive attitude. A drummer should always work on his time and on counting, and put them together with a positive vibe. This will reward you with the time feel that you're looking for. This will develop confidence in your playing, because you're concentrating on your time. Your feel will dictate how the other musicians and the audience will feel about you.

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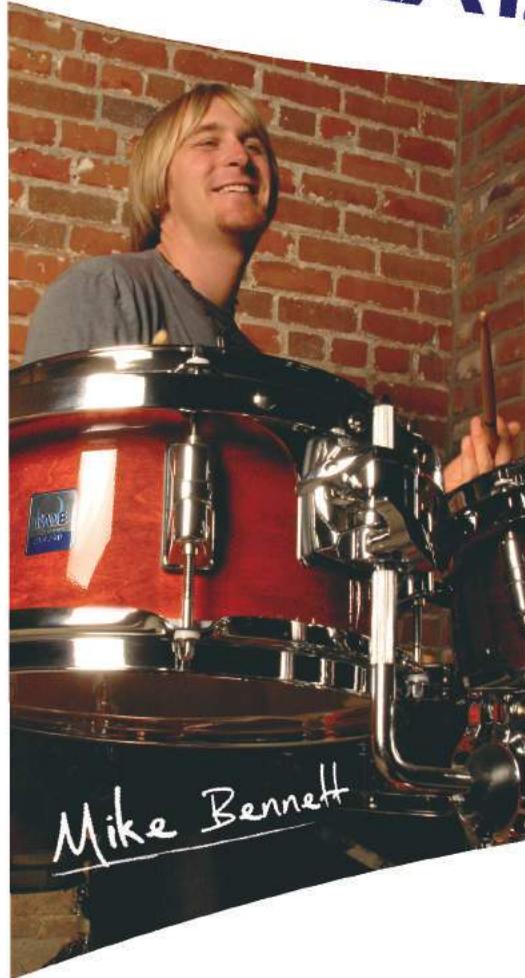
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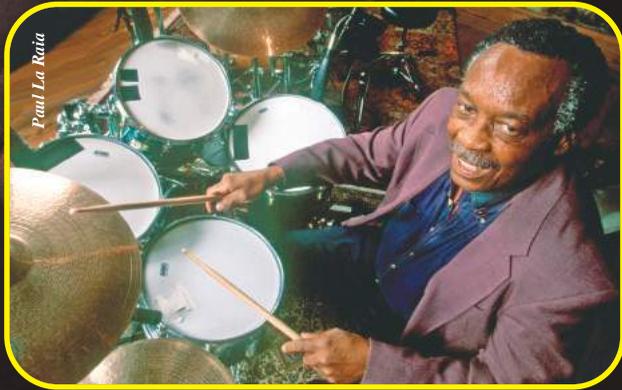


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CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD (JAMES BROWN, FUNK DRUMMING LEGEND)



Paul La Raia

I learned to keep time when I was a kid by focusing on my walking. I really listened to all the sounds around me and always heard rhythm in them. Whatever the leg and foot patterns of my walking may be, that's the time I focus on. Those are my timekeepers.

I lived in Chattanooga, Tennessee as a child, and there was a big factory there where they made cardboard boxes. The factory had a big smoke stack. Every morning it would start puffing smoke out, and you could hear it all over the city. So from early in the morning until about 4:00 P.M., you heard this smoke stack going PUFF-puff-PUFF-puff-PUFF-puff all around you. I also remember the sound of the old

washing machine at home going slish-slosh-slish-slosh all the time. And hearing that tick-tock of our big clock—it all stuck in my head. I would fall asleep to the sound of that clock. I feel that all of these things helped develop my time as a drummer.

When I get with a bunch of new musicians, it can be shaky. I want to please them and give them what they're looking for. But at the same time, I don't want to throw my thing out the window.

The first time I went in the studio and they said they were going to use a click track, I asked, "What's a click track?" They turned it on and asked me to play along with it. I said, "No, no, no! Don't do that! I don't want that! It's too perfect!" I've never played to a click track. I am my own click track.

I can't stand click tracks. My time is solid, and where I start it is where it ends up. We're human beings, and sometimes we move a little up or down, but the flow is always there. I stay away from that click track. That click track will tell on you! [laughs]

Jabo [Starks] is my mentor, and beyond him, I have only three other drummers that I love, in terms of time, groove, and feel: Bernard Purdie, Steve Gadd, and David Garibaldi. They are so funky and so talented. They're so strong-minded and such great people. When I hear them play, they sound happy. Time—they put it out there! That's what it's all about, being happy and doing your thing.

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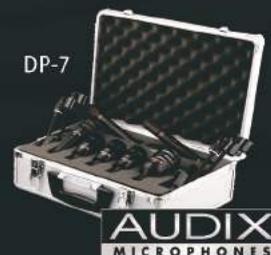
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PETER ERSKINE (SOLO ARTIST, WEATHER REPORT)

In regards to time in the evolution of pop and rock music, I'd like to speak of Jim Keltner. He was one of the guys that came from a jazz background. As jazz drummers, we like to embellish the music with the ornamentation and counterpoint that jazz drummers use. To be able to strip that down and still provide creative input, in addition to a beat that can sell a song, there's a lot of genius to that.

Keltner stands out as one of the guys who really figured that out. He's too modest to claim much credit, but I've been listening to him since the mid-'60s on stuff like Gabor Szabo albums, when Jim was still playing jazz. Listening to him has helped me to marry that creative simplicity with some of the things I'm doing. Then you listen to a drummer like Mel Lewis, who's a very different kind of drummer, and how well he played time, and how beautifully he set things up. So there are a lot of different ways to play time and still do it "correctly."

Every style of music is defined by the subdivisions within the rhythm. You set up a repeating pulse, which we call tempo. Then the way that the notes are phrased between those primary pulses determines the style. The best way to achieve a driving yet relaxed time feel is to concentrate on the spaces between the notes themselves.

Jeff Porcaro did this incredibly well. His left hand played behind the beat, which widened the groove. The tempo didn't change, but his left hand fell closer to the back end of the beat, which made for a fatter sound and feel. Nobody likes the feeling when the space between the notes gets cheated. Rushing the space between the notes is one of the most common pitfalls that many drummers make, because they're not focusing enough on that valuable space.

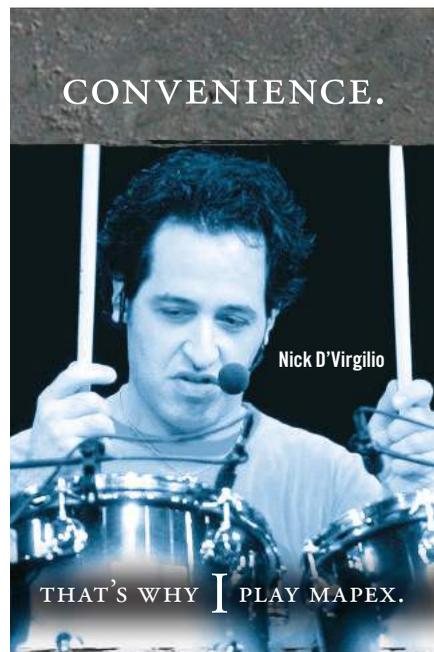
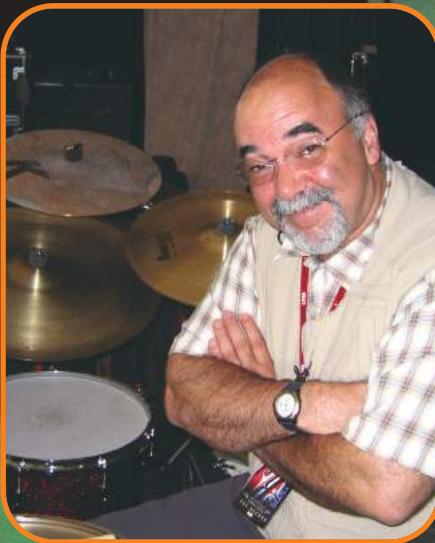
Time and feel, to me, are very much the same thing. If someone has a strong sense of time, they are bound to make the music feel good. As soon as I started recording professionally, I thought I was doing what needed to be done in my performance. But when I heard the playback, it was a rude awakening. I never practiced in as focused a manner as I should have when it came to tempo. It took me a long while to develop consistency in time, touch, and coordination.

I used to fight my instrument, and did it very tensely. But when your muscles are relaxed, you get more efficient use from them. This allows you to get a better sound out of the instrument. Mel Lewis played relaxed, and so did Buddy Rich. Even Billy Cobham, when he played with The Mahavishnu Orchestra, played pretty relaxed, which allowed him to play those fast single-stroke patterns smoothly and effortlessly.

Time, in reference to jazz, should swing. It should sparkle. It should dance. In any style of music, if the rhythmic pulse inspires one to dance, then the rhythm-keeper is doing his or her job. Breathing is so important, too. Your relaxation grows if you're breathing properly.

One of the things I work on with my students is to try and get them to make a groove feel good with just one limb. If you can do that, then you're starting to think in terms of creating musical time. I've also started using the Roland Rhythm Coach with my students, and it's been very enlightening to see just how accurately you can play a groove and then leave a one-bar gap to play over until the time comes back in. It's actually helped me to correct some rough spots I was having with my Elvin Jones-style ideas.

Remember, less is more—and make it swing!



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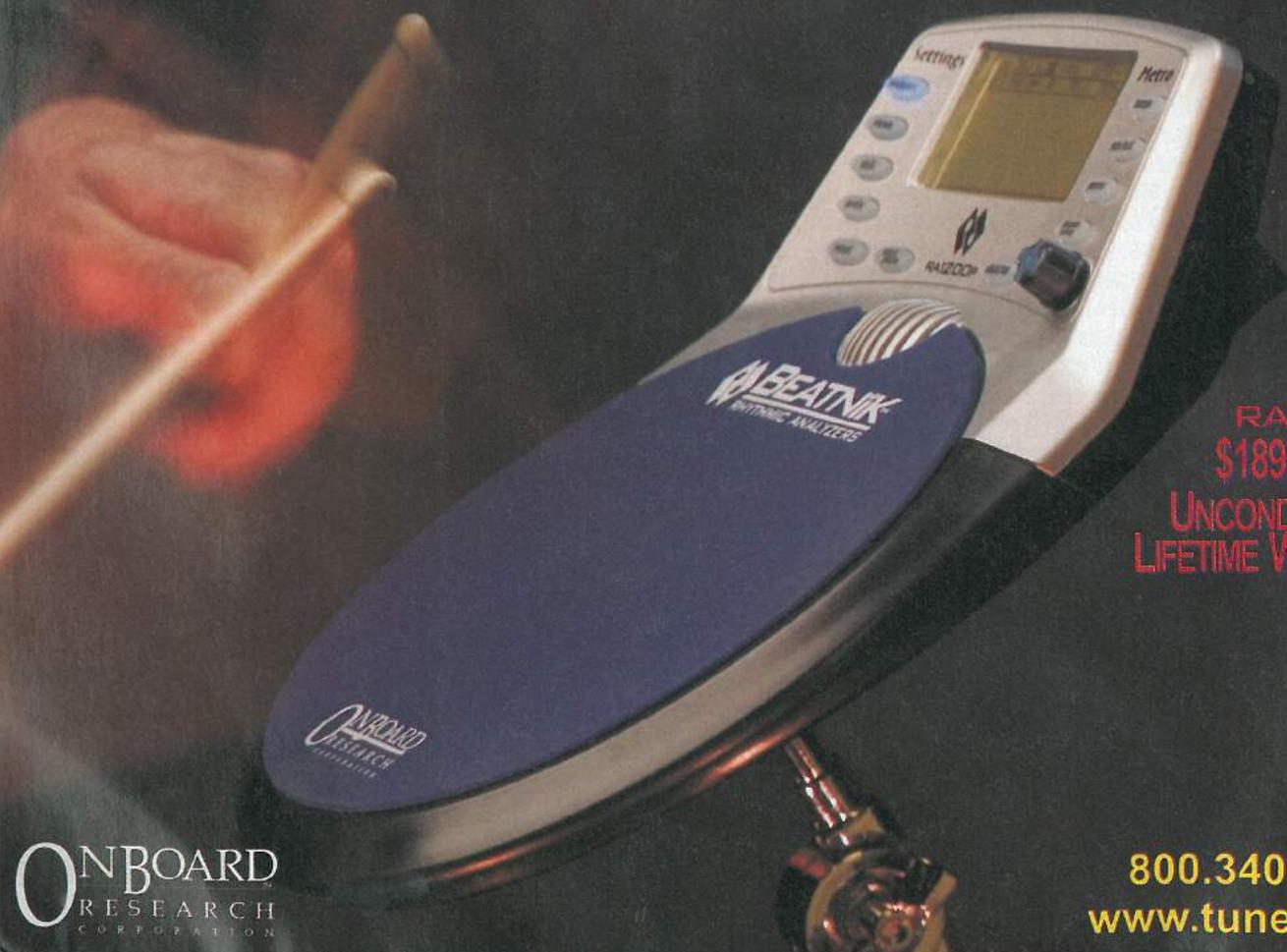


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IAN PAICE (DEEP PURPLE)

Going into the studio for the first time is when I realized just how precise you have to be to make a strong recording. When you're not physically wound up in that moment of playing, and you've taken that step back to listen to what you played with a more critical ear, you can clearly hear the variations in things that you thought were perfectly correct when you played them.

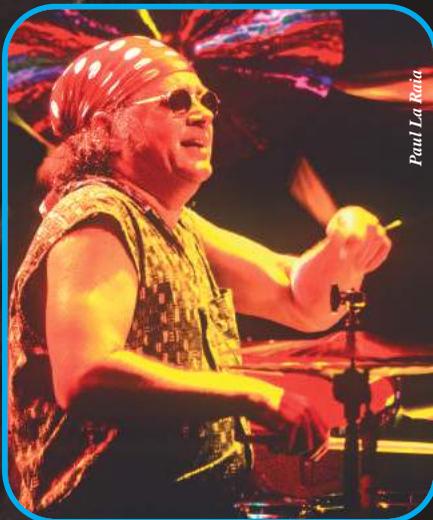
What you learn is that it's easy to get excited and push that first beat a little when you're going into a fill in the anticipation that you're going to play something more complex than the groove. So the key is to be very aware of your time when you enter into a fill so that it remains consistent with the tempo of the groove. When you're playing on stage you rarely realize this, but in the studio it becomes very apparent.

Nearly every recording today is controlled by a click. Sometimes the click is your friend, and sometimes it's your worst nightmare. That's the world we live in today. Years ago, before click tracks, a drummer was expected to keep strict time. Within that strict time, there was latitude to push the chorus, then pull it back into the verse, and push again in the bridge, and so on. That's the way music really works; it's human. We don't have that anymore. What we have now when we make a record is a piece of perfection. Sometimes that perfection in time completely takes away any human feel. I'm an advocate of strict time; I'm not a lover of machine time.

Playing with a click is a discipline you have to learn. It took me a long time to develop the ability to treat the click as a friend. I still don't find it any use for really creative parts. Some of the best things I've ever recorded, meaning the recordings that made me happy, would have been impossible to record with a click track. You can't play those kinds of creative ideas unless you have absolute freedom and don't have to worry that one or two beats might be fractionally off from machine time.

The first time I listened to a drummer really holding everything together in a way that was musical and with effortless time was Bobby Elliott on early Hollies records. He had an inherent swing, with control of time and adventure. This guy's time never moved. In the terms of humanity and strict time, he was rock solid.

Then came the period prior to when I was starting to become a professional, when the popular drumming changed to more of a free style, with bands like Jimi Hendrix and



Paul La Rosa

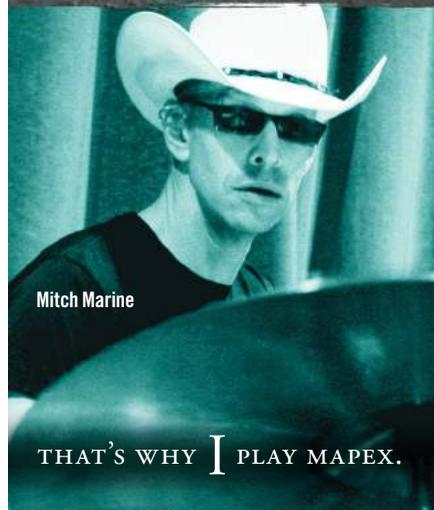
Cream. That type of drumming was total invention. Without that freedom, all those great drum parts would never have been possible. The time within the songs and arrangements had to move. And as long as all the musicians listened and moved together, it was not a problem.

Then Carmine Appice with Vanilla Fudge came along. He opened my eyes to more musical possibilities on the drumkit. Carmine, like me, does not have machine time. But he has a real good clock. He had the ability to play hard rock music with a great funk feel. He really had that crossover feel between what we felt from black drummers at the time and what the adventurous white drummers had. He really opened my eyes to the possibilities of being an exciting player but holding the time with absolute control.

I have to fast forward past the '80s and '90s, because there was really nothing there that was exciting to me from a drumming standpoint. Today there are drummers with such amazing technique that I have no idea how they do what they do. That being said, most of them leave me cold. My foot doesn't tap when they play. I'm amazed at what their hands and feet are doing, but I'm not grooving on it.

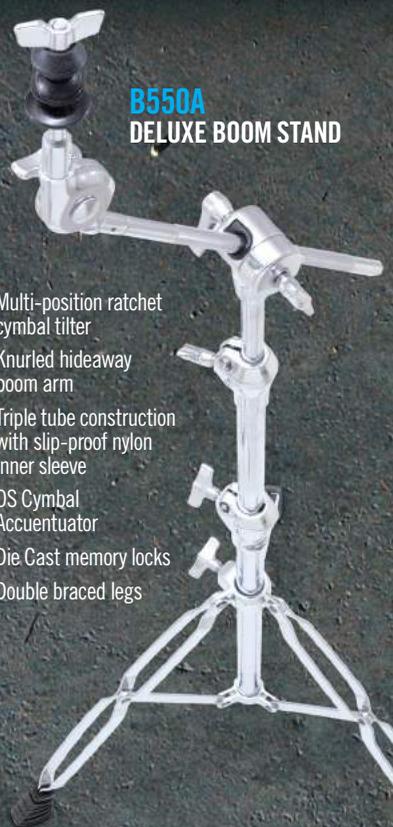
Yet within all of these monster drummers there is a master that isn't really looked upon as a master, because he doesn't have to play much in the band he's with. The band is The Red Hot Chili Peppers and the master drummer is Chad Smith. His band doesn't need him to be a virtuoso soloist, but ask him to play a strong groove and he'll create a rock solid, funky beat for five minutes and the time will never move, without a click track! That's impressive to me.

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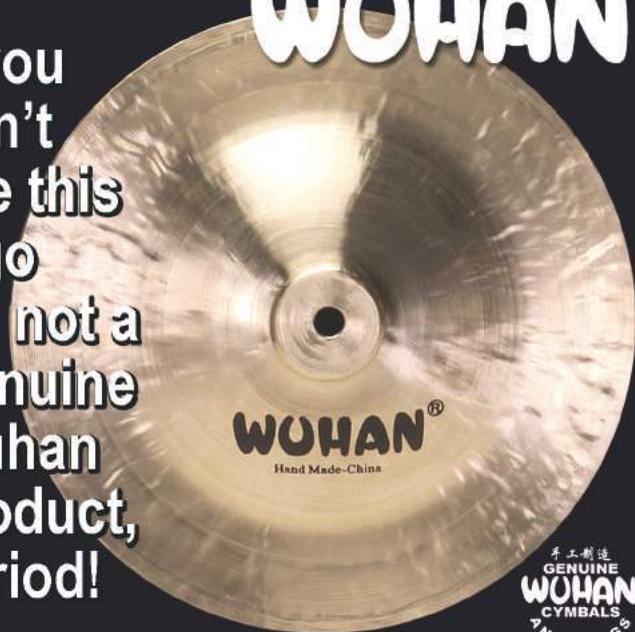
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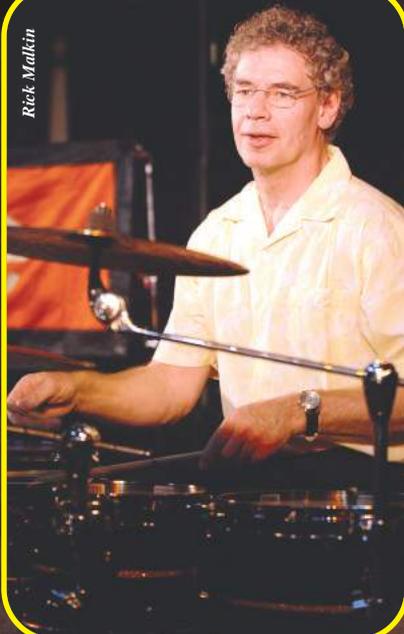
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BILL BRUFORD (YES, KING CRIMSON, EARTHWORKS)

Rick Malkin



What does a drummer's "time" mean to the feel of the music? Plenty! For the average listener, the affect of an individual drummer's time on the music is mostly subliminal, but nonetheless powerful for that. When James Taylor uses Steve Gadd for a sublimely relaxing evening of his material, my wife is going to enjoy "the feel" of the music, and thus probably the "feel" of the whole evening. If he'd used Paul Motian or the guy from Meshuggah—guys with a different sense of time—she'd have got a different, and maybe less appropriate, feel for the music. The leader is trying to find a drummer who will impart the correct time, and thus feel, for the music.

Sometimes, particularly with odd meters, it's good to find the slowest, lowest common denominator in the pulse, and that becomes the anchor. So if it's an odd number, I'm usually banging my foot on a quarter note, waiting for the rhythm to come round again on the right side of the beat. When you can do

that, it makes it feel very secure, especially if the bass player can tap his foot through it too. Then the tempo isn't going to go anywhere.

Does the heartbeat of natural human rhythm give the music more life and organic flexibility? Naturally. It's perfectly normal in speech to breathe, slow, get excited, move forward a bit—so why not in music? The only kind of music I can listen to must breathe, or I feel asphyxiated.

When we grew up in progressive rock, we assumed "orchestral time"—if there had been a conductor, we would have followed him. Moving the time forward and back a bit between sections was not an issue until the arrival of the Linn drum machine in the mid '70s, which appeared overnight, like a rash on the producer's arm. My ability to play metronomically improved instantly, mostly out of sheer terror. Now the producer had a machine, which said you were either "in time" or "out of time," and by heck, he was going to use it. Studio stuff was a nightmare for a while.

To improve your time, consciously give each note, including rests, its full value. It's by "hurrying on" to the next note—easy to do with a fast decay instrument like percussion—that the tempo creeps forward.

More generally, a lot has to do with just being aware of your responsibility as you play. The flow of time, in the cosmic sense, was doing just fine until you showed up. If you want to impose yourself on the flow of time by cutting it into beats, by all means do so, but be careful. If you interrupt this flow, everything's going to go pear-shaped.

The great drummers can play with the flow of time, superimposing pulses, making it seem to stretch, slow, quicken—exerting tension and release. The modest drummer can cut time into beats quite neatly and leaves time undisturbed, a neutral effect. The beginner may stumble and interrupt the flow of time, and hence the music, and will have left a net negative effect. That's usually where we all start!

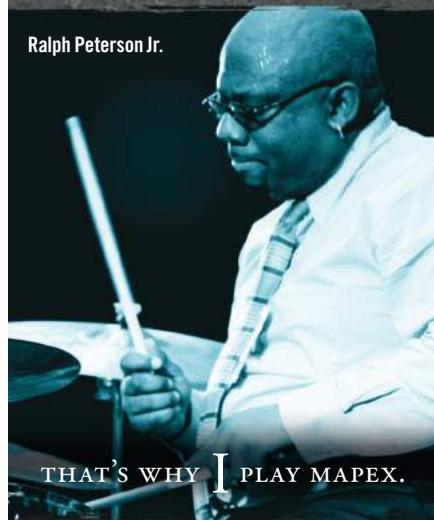
BILL SAYS BOO TO JAZZ CLICK

I think it's important to practice exercises with a click, certainly for the beginner, so you hear the subdivisions accurately. But you wouldn't want to be practicing jazz with a click.

Personally I can't stand performing with a click—somehow all your concentration goes to that and you stop listening to anybody else. When the click is happening, the only thing that can happen to you, the drummer, is bad. The music can never go anywhere or get anywhere.

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REMEMBERING JEFF PORCARO



AND HIS INCREDIBLE TIME FEEL

by Mike Haid

Rick Malkin

As the guitarist in Toto and as an experienced session musician, Steve Lukather was able to experience the brilliance of Jeff Porcaro firsthand. Best friends as well as musical partners, Jeff and "Luke" worked together for many years.

For this special issue on time and feel, we asked Steve to provide insight into Jeff's phenomenal groove. He did just that.

I met the Porcaro family when I was a teenager, and I learned how to groove and play time from Jeff. For studio drummers at that time, he set the standard. The groove didn't get any better. Jeff took the time to explain to me where the time was supposed to be and how the groove was supposed to feel.

In terms of time and feel, Jeff came from the school of Jim Keltner and Jim Gordon. They were his idols. Keltner taught Jeff how to capture the laid-back feel. They were doing some double drumming things together, and that's where Jeff really learned how to lay it back.

The concept is that the backbeat is the last thing that gets played, and everyone is supposed to play behind that. But it can't sound jerky or like you're dragging. It has to become a natural thing, and you either have it or you don't.

God gave Jeff a little extra something special. It wasn't just his playing, but also his personality. He had an aura that lit up a room. He was very humble and, when it came to recording, he could polish a turd like no one I've ever seen.

We'd be on lots of dates with the greatest rhythm section in the world, but playing the most uninspiring music, and Jeff would get us in and out of there in a flash. He'd do one take with perfect time and some amazing fill or some little twist, and then he'd go into the control room and start schmoozing the producer. During playback, Jeff would point to the speaker and say, "Yeah, that's the real stuff there!" Then he'd wink at us, like, "Yeah boys, we're outta here."

All the record producers respected Jeff and would look at him during playback. If he was grooving in his chair, then they knew that particular take was a keeper. And Jeff knew that they were watching him. So he was always in control.



Steve Lukather

Jeff had incredible chops, but he wouldn't show them off. I would show up for rehearsal and listen outside the door to him playing these amazing drum solos. I would ask Jeff why he wouldn't do that in front of people, and he would just start laughing and say, "I don't want to play all that crap. I just want to groove."

As for my thoughts on time, ideas I discussed with Jeff, it's not something you learn, it's what you have naturally built inside of you. You can play to a click track all day, and you might be able to lock in with it, but that doesn't mean it's going to feel good. Feel and time are two different things. Time is a God-given thing that we all have, but not everyone feels it in the same way.

There are two types of time in music: individual time and group time. Group time happens with bands like The Neville Brothers, where everyone's pocket becomes one huge pocket. You've got five guys playing different parts, yet it becomes a unified, homogenized, amazing groove. Individual time is your own internal clock, which can vary, depending on the musicians you play with. When you're in a band with the same guys long enough, you'll develop group time.

The style of music will always dictate the time and feel. Punk music is aggressive, so you have to play on top of the beat. Funk music is laid back. Check out where Bernard Purdie put the backbeat on "Babylon Sisters." It's way back, and it's funky!

Having the pleasure of playing with so many different drumming legends over the years made me learn a lot about my own time. You have to make adjustments to your time when you work with different drummers, because they all feel it a little differently. That's what gives each of them their own unique style and personality.

KEITH CARLOCK (STEELY DAN, STING, WAYNE KRANTZ)

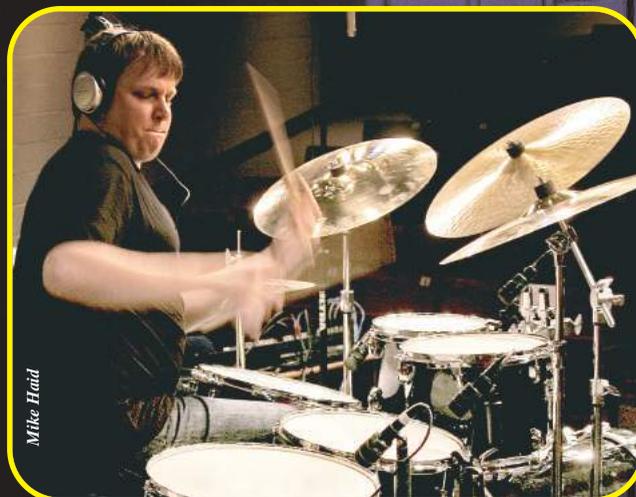
I started playing in bands around age ten, with musicians much older than me. These are the guys who taught me how to lock my time with a bass player and play as part of a rhythm section. I never thought about chops; that all came later. It seems I started in a reverse order from the way most young players today learn their craft. I see most young players starting out learning from videos and books before they enter the real world of drumming.

I've been fortunate to work with players with strong time, and it has challenged me and made me focus more on the time. Eventually the goal is to not think about the time so much, and develop the confidence that your time is strong. This allows you to focus on listening and making the music feel good.

We all play with different body movements that make our drumming feel different. Because I use a lot of motion, I think I have a lot more air between the notes. I like to move with rhythm and find the zone where I'm rocking my upper body, or moving my feet in a stride with the music. That way I feel there's a constant rhythmic motion in my body that keeps the distance of the notes consistent and creates a good feel.

Everything that I've recorded with Steely Dan was done with a click track. When we play live I only use the click to count off the tempos, just to keep things fairly consistent from night to night. In the studio, Steely Dan will usually track the rhythm section together first. That consists of drums, bass, two guitars, and two keyboards. We'll do several takes, and then they'll listen back to find a take that feels the best all the way through. They don't like to spend time splicing things up. Donald and Walter usually like the time to sit right on the click with the time as perfect as humanly possible. My goal is to be consistent and make it feel good. The most important thing I've learned from playing with Steely Dan is note placement, really paying attention to where the notes fall within the tempo.

When I toured with Sting, there were various time references. Some tunes I would use the click to start the time, some tunes I would have to play with a click all the way through because of sequenced tracks, and some tunes Sting would just count off. I had to learn to adapt to his feel because we come from two different worlds. I grew up in Mississippi playing soul and blues



and New Orleans-type music. Sting comes from the English punk style of playing. It was challenging for me to really push and drive the music in a way I never had before.

With Wayne Krantz, the way we stay connected, time-wise, because the music is so improvisational, is that we're always thinking in eight-bar phrases. That's where your internal clock comes into play. We break things up so deeply that the audience may think that we're playing in odd times, but we're simply playing 4/4 in eight-bar phrases.

To develop my time with this concept, I began playing along with metronomically perfect music like Michael Jackson. I'd do that in order to hear melody and form over perfect time, and then I'd rhythmically play inside and outside in odd phrases. This made it more fun than just playing to a click as a practice tool.

Work with a metronome for metronomically perfect music, record yourself, and listen to where your notes fall within the time. Also, it's very important to practice very slow tempos as well as fast tempos. We always seem to practice things in the 120 bpm range. The ultimate question you have to ask yourself is, does it feel good?

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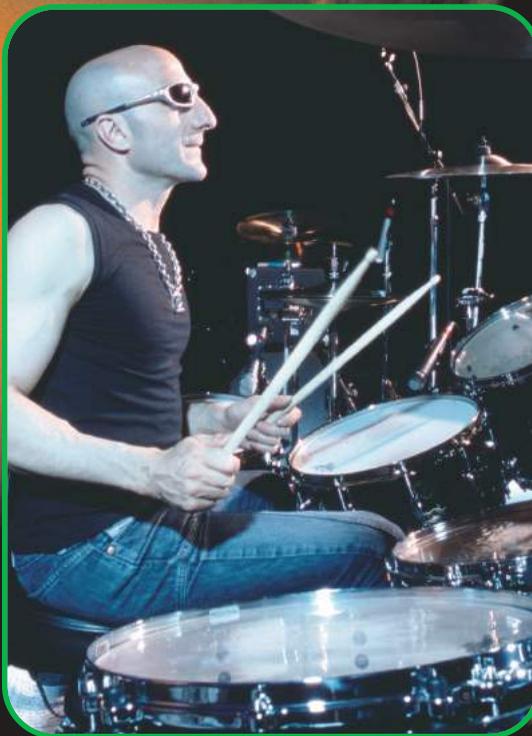
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KENNY ARONOFF (STUDIO AND TOURING GREAT)



There are drummers who are born with that perfect sense of time, but I've never felt that I was one of them. As my drumming career became more serious, there was more of a demand on me to play with stronger time. I had to work on starting songs at the correct tempo, keeping the groove steady, and still sounding organic and natural.

My first big break was with John Cougar Mellencamp. Because we weren't playing with a click or a metronome, and I was the new guy in the band, I felt that I was becoming a scapegoat for everything from guitars being out of tune, to other people playing the wrong parts. They were blaming my lack of solid time as

the root of all the problems in the band. So I got a drum machine and convinced John to allow me to use the drum machine in my headphone mix as a metronome, so that the band would have a consistent time reference.

Once I did that, I was able to prove to the other bandmembers that my time was not the source of all their problems. This also helped strengthen my time and drumming skills, because I was young and trying to adjust to the big time, playing in front of 20,000 people every night. After I got comfortable playing with the machine, I would turn it off once we got into the songs, but it was a very important tool for me to develop my time and keep the band in line.

I've done lots of session work, and because now I'm comfortable with a click, I can use it simply as a reference point and adjust the time feel around it without worrying about playing exactly on the click. For instance, if I want to push the time a little in the chorus of a song to create some energy, I can move a little on top of the click without losing the tempo, and then bring it back closer to the center during the verse.

You have to really learn to get comfortable with a click, because it can be intimidating and cause you to sound too mechanical. The click has become my best friend, and it makes my job easy, especially nowadays when they want you to do multiple takes of one song so they can splice and edit your parts to piece together a single track.

To play any particular song at whatever tempo feels best for the moment and own that tempo is very important. To have the confidence to know that whatever the tempo, the band will kill it and make it the best it can be for that moment—I love that! That's true professionalism and truly living for the moment.

KENNY ON CONTROLLING YOUR EMOTIONS

If you're a very emotional, high-strung, energetic person like me, it's very easy to rush the time. As you start to play, your blood pressure changes, and all through the gig your body is going through all sorts of chemical changes that will affect your feel, mood, and personality. That's why I enjoy working with a click. It helps level me out as I experience these physical and chemical changes during a live gig.

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JASON BITTNER (SHADOWS FALL)

When I first started playing, I would sit down with the metronome and just play time with 1 and 3 on the bass drum and 2 and 4 on the snare. I've practiced with a metronome for years. My double bass drumming was built strictly from playing along with Slayer, Anthrax, and Metallica records, but my time was built from woodshedding with a metronome.

I pride myself on having the consistency to play the music of Shadows Fall at the correct tempos night after night. It doesn't matter what kind of music you play, if your time is not consistent, you're in trouble. People relate metal music with speed. But if you're trying to play Slayer or Metallica beats, and you can't even play a solid groove to AC/DC tracks, then you're putting the cart before the horse.

Even though many of my students are into metal, I tell them to go back and listen to old James Brown recordings to learn how to groove. You have to think outside of the box from the styles of music you enjoy listening to, and explore other styles. The most important thing to being a good drummer is to understand that, if people can't tap their foot or bob their head to what you're playing, then it all ends right there.

My best advice is to get a metronome and work out! Then play with as many musicians as you can to see how your time feels with other players. Also record yourself and listen to the time and the feel of what you're playing. Does it make you tap your foot? I also recommend Gary Chaffee's Patterns book for the Fat Back exercises. I use them all the time with my students, playing it with a metronome.

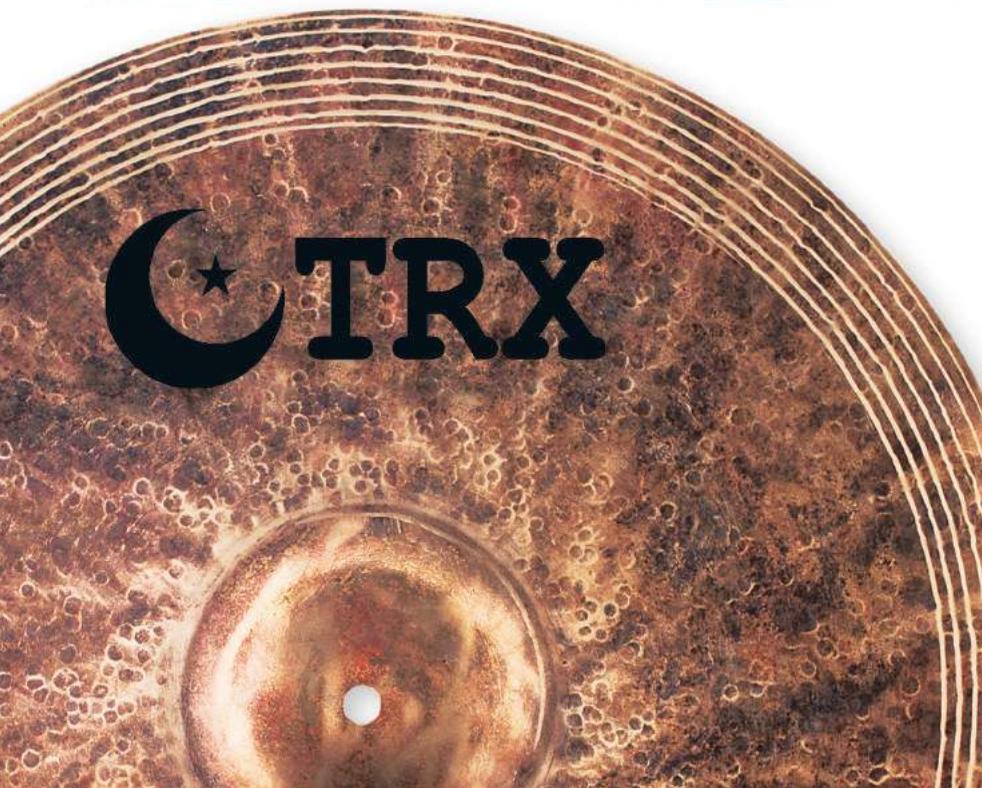


JASON ON HOLDING DOWN THE FORT

I listened to and played along with some of my dad's records, which included Steely Dan, Toto, Boz Scaggs, and all the great groove music of the '70s and early '80s that featured Steve Gadd and Jeff Porcaro. I was into Iron Maiden and Slayer, but I played along with all of these other records to learn how to play grooves. I think that's something that young drummers today are missing. They're looking at the metal guys like me, Chris Adler, and Joey Jordison, and asking how they can learn to play fast. I tell them to go back and listen to AC/DC and the great drummers of The Doobie Brothers and The Allman Brothers. Those are perfect examples of holding down the fort.

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ALEX ACUÑA (LATIN DRUMMING/PERCUSSION GREAT, WEATHER REPORT)

I was aware of the importance of time when I was very young. But definitely, it was the music that made me aware of keeping time. It's such an important factor for every musician.

Counting out loud while practicing reading and playing, sometimes with a metronome, has strengthened my internal time. I also physically conduct the time while listening—the first few times to define the time signatures and the accents—syncopations. Whenever I listen to any kind of music (not just when I'm practicing), I'm always listening for the grooves, feel, and pulse.

Through the experiences of playing with so many musicians and so many musical styles, I've learned to adjust to their pulse. However, if you have somebody whose time is all over the place, you have to speak up respectfully. The music should not be a victim of bad interpretation because of the lack of time.

In a case like this, you have to be sure to help them with the time by giving very noticeable downbeats, and at the same time, always trying to groove with them. The key word here is definitely "respect" and working with everybody in a positive way.

There is a difference between the Latin and jazz feels. The feel of jazz is more of a shuffle because it comes from swing—dotted 8th notes. Latin rhythm has more of a triplet feel. But there is no difference in my approach to creating a strong time feel for jazz and Latin. They both swing hard and they both are edgy.

I was blessed to grow up in Peru, where our music has a strong African influence. I also lived in Puerto Rico from 1965 to

1974, where I learned the real deal for Latin music. I became very adept at the African three-against-four, and of course clave. But before I even went to Puerto Rico, I was already immersing myself in jazz, listening non-stop to Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. So by the time I left Puerto Rico and came to the US, I was already combining the best of both worlds in my playing, making Latin jazz a natural transition. I still work to continue developing my time feel for Latin jazz. I never want to stop growing.

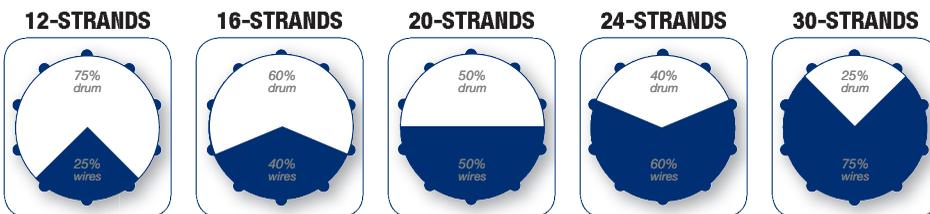
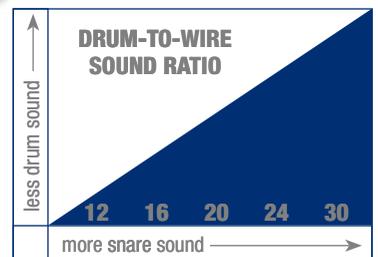
A percussionist/drummer's time is meant to be the heart and the movement of the music. We can make or break the feel of the music. The passion is what's going to drive the music when it calls for it, and also pull it back. It's deeper than just keeping time. That's why ballads can be some of the most challenging music to play. It's important to play melodically and listen. Finally, if you enjoy the music and have fun playing, these emotions will come through in the feel of the music.



Rick Malkin

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BILLY WARD (STUDIO GREAT, SOLO ARTIST, JOAN OSBORNE)



Paul La Rotta

I moved to New York in 1976, before drum machines came out. I was really into jazz in those days. I started to do some recordings around town in 1979. By that time, drum machines were on the scene and producers wanted totally perfect drum tracks. I had sessions where I was clearly not up to the task. So machine-like time was something that I really had to work at.

I have the attention span of a gnat. So it was really hard for me to focus on slamming out basic 2 and 4 for three and a half minutes. These producers only wanted simple, non-interesting drum parts, so they basically hired humans to play what a Linn Drum was doing. That's when I was confronted with the massive differences between jazz time and pop/rock music time.

When most novice drummers play time, they'll have their body following their lead hand. So the left or right hand leads the charge, and the rest of the limbs follow that hand. That's okay, and it can almost work. But one of the cool things about more sophisticated drumming styles, such as jazz, or with pop drummers like Bernard Purdie or Jeff Porcaro, is that there are more shadings and more notes going on. This means you've got more gears going on in your clock, and you're less likely to follow that lead hand. Then your body actually becomes a band. Your left hand playing that triplet ghost note that leads into the right hand on the hi-hat for that sexy little "Purdie thing" is something that will help keep your time together.

In the end, what I believe in, and count on, is that I try to

be more like a real watch. My outer limbs are only expressing the gears that are turning inside of me. If you ever open up a watch, it just blows up with gears. Some are big and move very slowly, and some are very small, spinning very quickly. That's the whole point of my theory about Big Time. It's a great visual for me. What got me started on this was when a producer once told me, "Billy, you don't just play the groove, you are the groove." What happened is that he was watching me play and he saw the pocket of the groove happening in my body language.

When I'm really locked into a groove, my playing is happening inside me. My lungs, my stomach, my breathing, everything that doesn't make a sound is creating the groove. If my left heel stops clicking because I want the hi-hat open a little, I don't even think about it and automatically my right heel will start clicking. So going back to the clock analogy, my "minute hand," which may be my snare drum, and my "hour hand," which may be my bass drum, and so forth, are simply outer expressions of what's really going on inside me.

If the bass player has dragged or rushed, or the artist is suddenly singing in another time zone, but you're taping The Tonight Show and it's also 40° in the studio, that's when I'm really glad I have all these gears working. My whole thing is about removing the need for lucky underwear and just focusing on the body to motivate the time and groove.

It's also not the drummer's sole responsibility to make the time feel good and make the song groove. But the drummer should be the most skilled at analyzing what needs to happen to make it work. Joan Osborne has amazing time, but she lays it so far back behind the beat that the band frequently slows down. It's like you're driving the car but somebody's hanging their butt behind the back bumper. And the person that's doing that is the boss. [laughs] So you've got to be strong enough to say, none shall move!

Feel is about being compassionate with your time and being enough of a musician to know how to adjust your playing to do what works best for the band. When the groove sits inside of you, you're internally playing more notes than anyone is really hearing, which means you have to be overqualified for whatever notes you are physically playing. That's the hard part!

BILLY'S PREFERRED CLICK LEVEL

What I do—and I know drummers like Mike Baird and Jeff Porcaro did this—is set the volume of the click so loud in my headphones that it's like the neighbors banging on the wall next door. That way, you're not listening for it, yet you really don't hear it. Even though it's not part of the music, it's just another impartial witness that's going on alongside of you.

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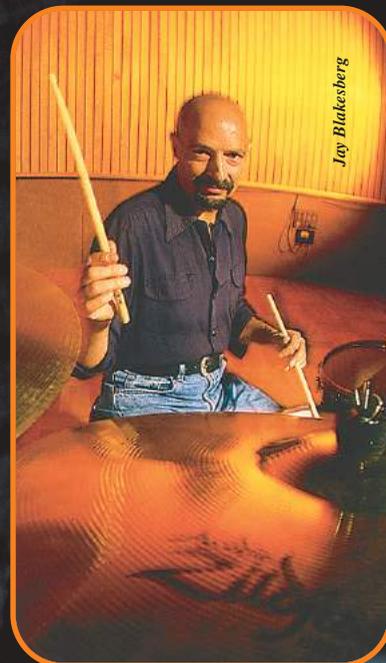
STEVE SMITH (VITAL INFORMATION)

I perceive a difference between pulse, feel, and time. The fundamental pulse of US-based drumset music is the swing pulse. If we internalize this pulse and then play a groove, it will have a certain swing to it, and this is the feel. There are other elements that contribute to the feel, such as the overall volume that you're playing, the internal dynamics between your limbs, the spacing between the notes, touch, sound... But how you relate to the pulse is the most fundamental ingredient. If we keep this feel steady, then we're playing "in time."

We can play a pulse that has a great feel, and the time can move around a bit and it will still feel good if the whole band moves together. This is very natural, and there are thousands of great recordings that have been made that have this natural ebb and flow of the time. For example, all recordings by The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, John Coltrane, Roy Haynes, and The Meters were played with this approach.

On the other hand, one can play a pattern and keep it perfectly in time, but it isn't necessarily going to feel good. Drumming based on keeping patterns in time is a different concept from generating a pulse and keeping the pulse steady. Because of click tracks and Beat Detective, I hear many records today that are more "correct" time-wise than the records made, for example, in the '60s. But they're less successful musically, in my opinion, because they lack the natural pulse and feel that I relate to—they're so right, they're wrong!

I grew up listening to and playing in big bands. As a result, my tendency was to drive or push the time, because this was necessary to keep fifteen musicians from slowing down. My experience in Journey taught me to "open up" my



Jay Bladesberg

playing as we played with a big, open feel that worked to fill a stadium with sound. Then learning to play with clicks and computers has helped to center my time even more. I feel that now, in general, I play in the middle of the beat with a tendency to push, so I stay conscious of that and work on keeping the time steady through the ebb and flow of the emotion and energy of the music.

When practicing with a click, one exercise that I find helpful is establishing a feel and then playing in half time or double time to the original feel. Experience what your tendency is: Do you want to play the double time faster than what the click is dictating, or play the half time slower? Then play one third faster than the click, which is playing each measure as 3/4 or 6/8, and see what that feels like. I find this type of practice to be very educational.

TIME FEEDBACK FROM STEVE

I've found that the best way to develop my time is to record my playing and listen very closely to my timing. I use that direct feedback to identify my timing problems.

Then I would work on those problems alone or with a bass player. We would record ourselves and then analyze what we did. Later I started practicing with clicks and computers to fine-tune my time to today's standards of "perfect" time. In this process I developed a form of drumming bio-feedback; I learned to identify what I'm experiencing physically when the feel is groovin' and the time is steady, and then I make sure that I get to that place every time I play.

GAVIN HARRISON (PORCUPINE TREE)

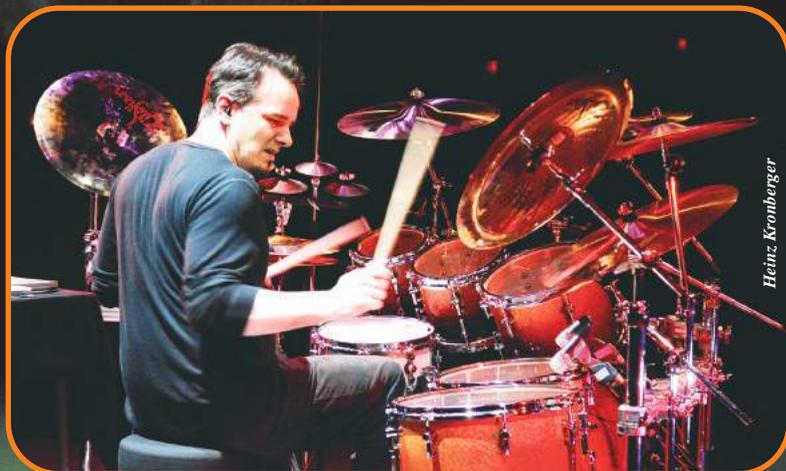
On my first gig, when I was sixteen, the bandleader told me that my time sucked. I had no idea. I went out and bought a metronome and started practicing with it. I started to record myself and analyze the timing and the feel. I could tell that my feel wasn't as comfortable as, say, Steve Gadd or Jeff Porcaro, the two drummers I was listening a lot to in those days. My feel was kind of rushing, uncomfortable, and on the edge.

I wanted to sound like Gadd and Porcaro, which to me felt really laid-back and comfortable. I spent ages playing along to those records and

about correcting it.

Here's a way to work on your sense of inner clock. Record yourself not playing to a click—give yourself a nice long four-bar count-in, clicking the sticks together, and then play a simple rhythm. Play a fill on bars 8 and 16, then play a half-time feel for sixteen bars, then go back to the original rhythm. A bit later, play a fill and do a "break down" section (like quarter notes on the hi-hat and 2 and 4 on the bass drum). After eight bars, play a fill back into the main rhythm again.

Make up arrangements using this method—classic song shapes. Also



Heinz Kronberger

recording just my drums to try to emulate that feel. It had a lot to do with the way I was lining up the hi-hat, snare, and kick—and then the way I laid those elements against a click or backing track.

It's much easier to hear timing errors when you record yourself and then slow down the recording. I used to do this with an old 4-track cassette tape porta-studio. There's probably easier ways to do it now with modern technology. But not only could I hear things not lining up comfortably between the kick/snare/hat, but it was particularly helpful to hear myself playing to a click. The more I slowed down the recording, the more I could hear if I was out with it. Fairly tortuous stuff—but it certainly pays off in the long run. You get to really improve your sense of detecting timing errors—and it's only from really "hearing it" that you can go about doing something

include sections where you play really loud and busy, followed by other sections that are really soft and sparse.

Okay, so you've recorded something like four minutes of an imaginary song. Play back the recording and play quiet hand-to-hand 16ths along to it on the hi-hat as you listen. You might find that the count-in goes out of time before you've even come in. You might find that you start drumming at a different tempo to the "one" that you've counted in to. You will be able to feel if all the sections and fills speed up or slow down. Just keep playing those quiet hand-to-hand 16ths on the hi-hat as you listen carefully especially when there's a fill or change of feel or dynamic. Play the last few bars of your recording and then immediately play the first few bars. Does it sound like the same tempo? If any of it felt out of time, go back and do it again.



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JOJO MAYER (NERVE)

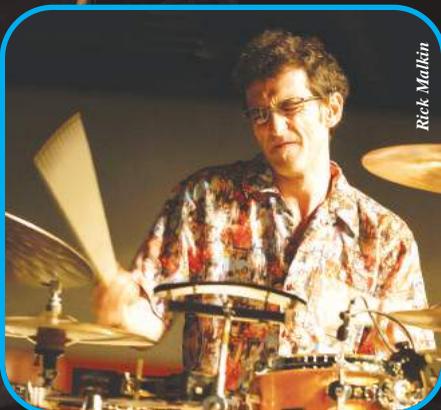
The discipline to lock in with a metronomic guideline has become standard within the last ten years, with the advent of digital recording on the computer. It doesn't matter if you have two tracks, twenty-four tracks, or two hundred tracks, with MIDI sequencing, everything can be perfect. Now the drummer's timekeeping skills become even more crucial to where, in order to lock with these machines, you have to develop micro-time. Dave Weckl was actually one of the first drummers that was able to do this well, which opened the doors for him in MIDI production in the '80s, because he could nail a 16th-note hi-hat pattern perfectly in time with a machine.

My take on time is more aesthetic, which is one of the main reasons I created the band Nerve. Nerve plays acoustic music heavily inspired by DJ culture—which is not generated with arms and limbs, but with the mouth and fingers—and electronic music. Physical accomplishment on the drumkit doesn't matter to the programmer of electronic music. He is free to create unconventional rhythmic patterns that a drummer wouldn't really think about. So the physical accomplishment of playing a Charley Wilcoxon snare drum exercise with the feet at 200 bpm is completely useless for a producer whose main tool is Pro Tools. I became more interested in understanding their take on the drum culture, and then the magic of human time became a very fascinating issue for me.

Civilization has imposed unnatural rhythms into our lives, and we are forced to accept these unnatural rhythms. Modern drumming has become just that. And now you are forced to play in super quantized time. As an active producer and programmer, I have to stand up and say, "We cannot allow this to happen."

Man is not a machine, and was not designed to play like a machine. But we have something that can make us better than machines, and I'm getting more interested in the creative difference between zero and one. That's what I want to explore. That's the magical stuff. It's not tangible, but people can feel it.

The way I play time and understand time is no different when I play break beats than when I play a jazz tune with brushes. I try to capture an emotion within the time. When you play a second-line beat, or a New Orleans-style groove, you have to learn and understand what it's like to hurl out on Bourbon Street at 5:00 A.M. and get behind a drumkit and get funky!



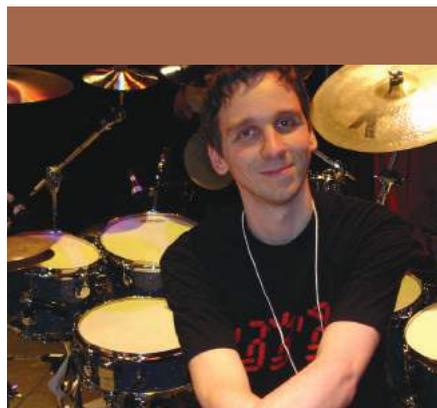
Rick Malkin

A lot of drummers put their focus on developing the ability to play with a click track. And that is important. But that's the easy part. The hard part is to create magnetism between two notes. When I listen to what Harvey Mason played in the early '70s with Herbie Hancock, that stuff speeds up and slows down. It moves. I don't know who would be capable of doing a recording today that would have the same time feel as Sly Stone's music of the late '60s. The time is all over the place, but it's some of the funkiest music ever made. So I think about how I can get closer to that, and be aware of what creates that aesthetic.

I figured out that if I put my focus on the amount of intention that I put into every note, and not just let my body do what it naturally wants to do, and I sing every fill in my mind while I play it, then it usually will come out feeling good. Oddly enough, it's easier for me to lock into micro-time when I do this. So I totally concentrate on every 16th note.

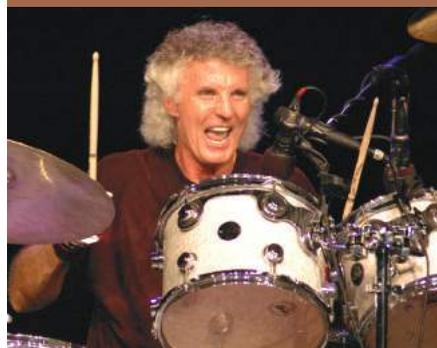
When drum machines became my friend and not my competition, my ability to communicate with them and play more like them dramatically increased. But I want to stress the importance to drummers to never lose sight of what Elvin Jones did. That feel is timeless.

It's interesting to me when I hear someone say that someone is a really great drummer and has really good time because they can completely eclipse a sequenced track. If this is true, then it becomes the tangible or "Olympic factor" of how good a drummer can be just because we can measure how perfect he plays or how many parts he can play at the same time with four different limbs. When those things become more important than the feel and the groove, then we're in big trouble! Because people will look elsewhere for art and will not come to drummers anymore for creativity.



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BILL STEWART (JAZZ MASTER, JOHN SCOFIELD)



I grew up in a musical household. Both my parents were musicians. So I became aware of the importance of solid time at an early age. If they heard me rushing or dragging when I was practicing, they would come in and tell me.

I played along to a lot of records, and I could tell when my time was getting away from the music. Playing with recordings can be good and bad. One of the negative aspects of that is that you're following the music and not leading. In many situations, as a drummer, you end up having to lead the band, in terms of keeping time, and they depend on you for that time reference.

I also began practicing simple time by myself, as opposed to working on soloing concepts or technical things. I worked on

various styles and tempos, and I discovered certain tempos were more difficult for me than others. In the process, I discovered that technical problems could prevent me from playing good time, but sometimes the problem could also be a matter of conception. I eventually started working with a metronome, but for many years I never used one.

You can't have machine-like time and expect to work in the jazz field. We're expected to put something on the time that is difficult for me to describe. It's an intangible factor that makes you want to get up and dance. In this way dynamics and timing—when you play what you play within the music—are inter-related with keeping time.

I learned about time by listening to many great drummers and focusing on how their time felt and how it affected the music. There are certain drummers that I consider to be time specialists, like Ben Riley and Idris Muhammad, who work all the time because of that special "thing" that they put on the time, and on the music in general. They're not flashy players; they don't have to be.

With certain musicians that I feel comfortable with, I feel more of a freedom to try things with the time and trust that the music will come out okay. At the same time, the music can still become creative and interesting with no tempo changes or metric modulations. So these are intuitive choices. It just takes experience to learn when to stay home and when to go out on a limb with the time.

I've practiced some concepts of metric modulation and superimposing time signatures along with records, with a metronome and without a metronome. I don't want to always rely on a metronome to practice, but it is a good tool to let you know what your tendencies are.

ARI HOENIG (JAZZ GREAT)

From an early age, I was increasingly aware of the importance of time by the music that gave me the feeling of wanting to move to the rhythm. I was drawn to the music that moved me, and then I tried to incorporate that feeling into my playing. Some of the artists that captured my attention with their strong grooves were Oscar Peterson, James Brown, The Meters, and Ray Brown. It wasn't just the drummer, but the sound and feel of the whole band.

Some musicians naturally play on top of the beat and some play behind. If you play with a group that tends to play on top of the beat, then you need to balance that by playing a little behind the beat, and vice versa. I used to think that these types of situations were more problematic, but what I've come to realize is, this is what gives the music a certain kind of tension, which is really necessary. I think it's actually good for the music.

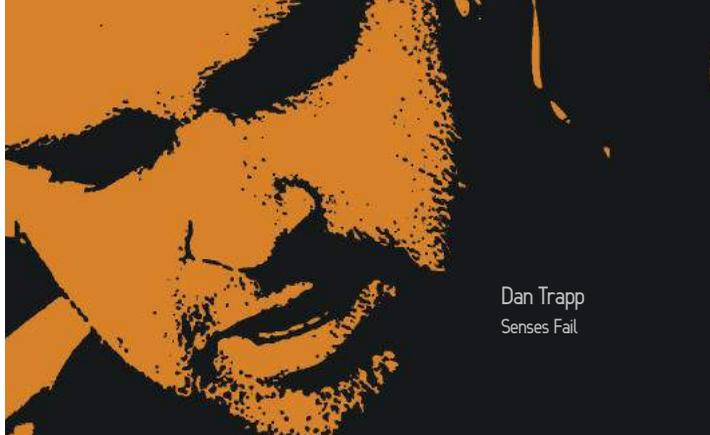
I practice with a metronome all the time and play games in developing my time, like playing along with a record and counting a chorus of blues. Then for the next chorus, you turn down the volume. Then turn up the volume at the top of the next chorus and see how close you are to the correct tempo. I'll also slow down the metronome to a tempo like 30 bpm and then play rhythms and phrases around the time. I'll change the feel from



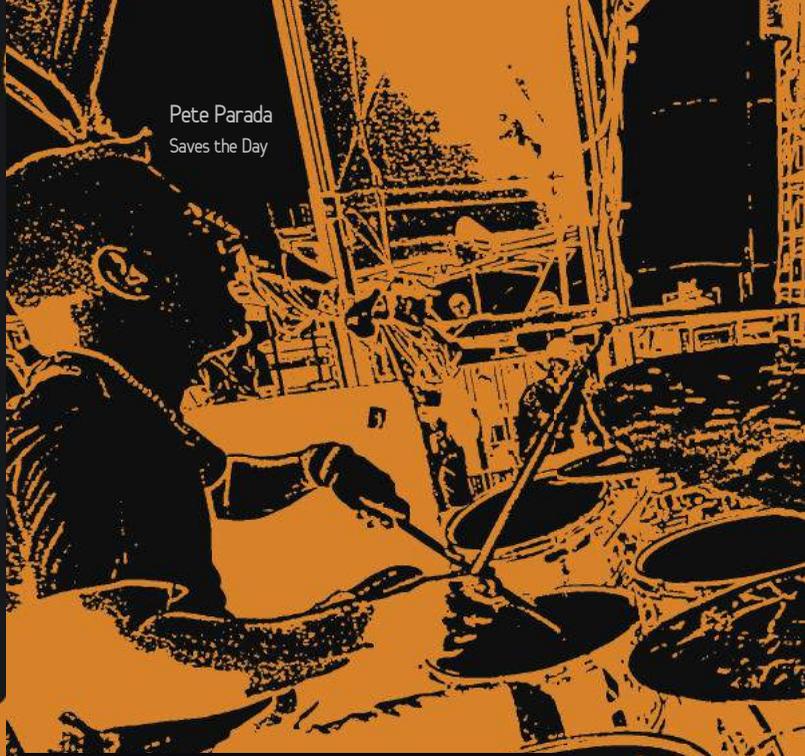
triplets to 16th notes and so forth. It's not as easy as it sounds.

I'll also practice playing off the click by a 16th note or an 8th note to develop that odd sense of time phrasing. Get creative with the metronome and you'll find that strengthening your time can become a lot of fun.

Whether you've been playing for two months or twenty years, time is something that you have to constantly focus on and be aware of. I don't ever stop thinking about the time, from the beginning of the gig to the last note of the night. It may not be in a technical way, but that's certainly where my awareness is.



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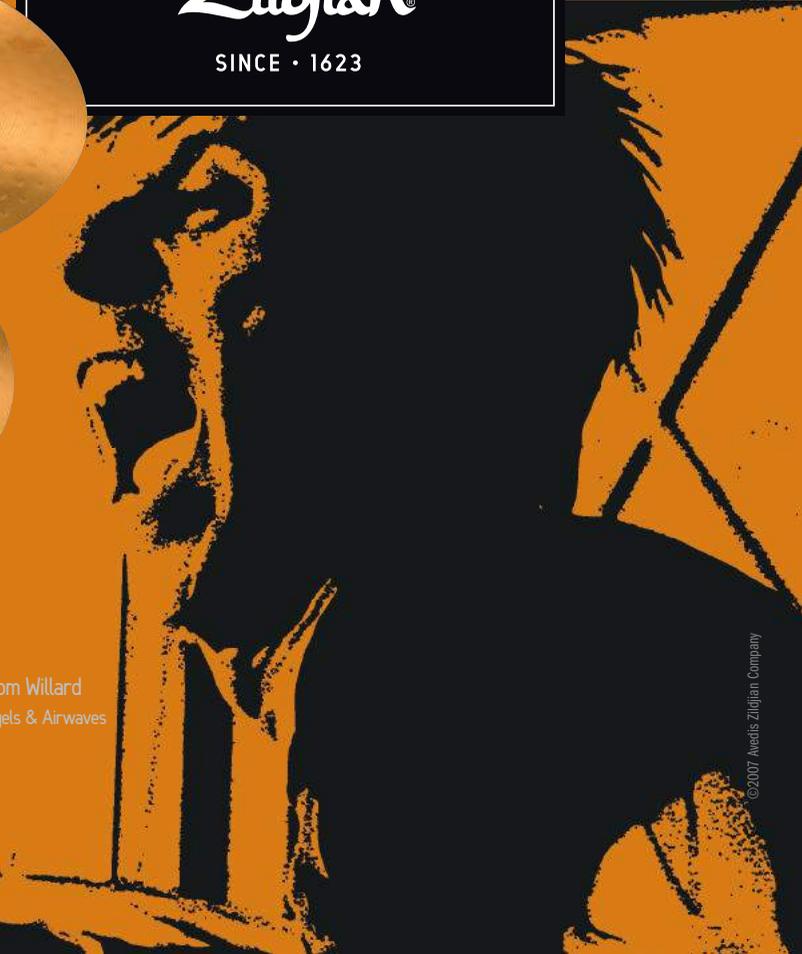


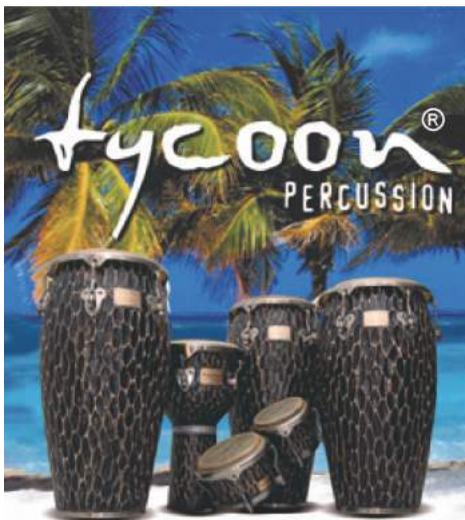
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SIMON PHILLIPS (STUDIO LEGEND, TOTO)

My father was a bandleader and had excellent time. When I was about six years old, I would go to a lot of his sessions, and I would sit behind the drummer and watch and listen to the band. When I began playing, my father was the first one to tell me when I was speeding up or slowing down. That was probably the single most influential thing that began my development for solid time.

I started out playing along with records like The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, and The Dave Clark Five. But I wasn't that much into the drumming. I was into jazz drummers like Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Gene Krupa. When learning to play drums from records, you have to listen carefully. It also helps to listen to music that features great musicians. I think it's the best way to get your time in order, because you're really listening to the music, you're learning to play a song, and you're playing with great musicians.

When clicks came into the studio, I think what I hated most was the actual sound of it. Eventually I was able to change it to a cowbell sound. I still prefer the click as a small cowbell sound.

As for dealing with time in a live setting, the problem is that there are many elements that can affect your time. The stage monitors make a big difference. If you have no monitors, everyone's going to sound like they're playing behind the time.

One of the biggest problems when playing a large venue is that you have a tendency to slow the time down because you're hearing a lot of what everyone's playing a little bit late. What you hear from your monitors is very direct, but there's also a huge reflective sound coming back at you from the front of the stage that messes with what you're hearing. That can really pull you back sometimes. The other side of the time issue of playing live is that, because it's live and there is an audience and there is excitement, this can cause you to naturally speed up a bit.

It's very important that a musician is able to adapt to the musical environment, especially in the studio. In the early days, I played several sessions a day. From 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., I would play with more seasoned, older session guys doing jingles. Their time was good, but their groove wasn't very keen. I would try to bring a strong groove to the session, but most of the time the music wouldn't allow it. So I had to adapt to the music. But the most important issues were that the tempo was steady and the phrases were played in time.

Then you would break for lunch and the next session was from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. It featured a different group of musicians, so you had to adapt again to that scenario. Then you'd have some dinner, and that evening you'd go to a heavier rock session where you would be stuck until 3:00 A.M. playing the same song for hours. So I had to adapt to all of these various time and feel situations.

SI-PHI'S TIME TIPS

Developing strong time is a combination of playing with a click and also getting comfortable with playing without one. There were no click tracks when I was starting out. I could read music, and my time was good. The thing that strengthened my time the most, in my career, has been playing with great musicians.





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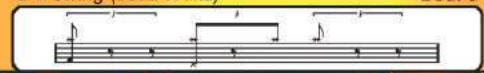


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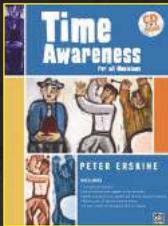
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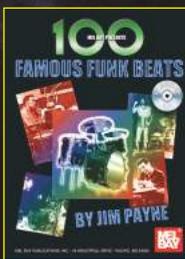


TIME AWARENESS FOR ALL MUSICIANS BY PETER ERSKINE

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Peter Erskine's latest book explores the inner clock, thinking in subdivisions, tempo, and phrasing, among other important aspects of time. Throughout the book are examples that any musician can use, illuminated by Erskine's commentary and judicious quotes from others.

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100 FAMOUS FUNK BEATS BY JIM PAYNE

LEVEL: ALL
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Most of the written material in this book appeared in Payne's excellent but out-of-print 1996 work, *Give The Drummers Some*. Among the drummers *100 Famous Funk Beats* puts a spotlight on: James Brown's Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, and Jimmy Madison, Andy Newmark with Sly Stone, and Mike Clark with Herbie

Hancock. These are the masters, and Payne gets to the core of their styles.

EXTRAS: CD

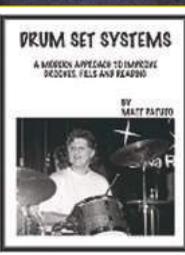


CONTEMPORARY DRUMSET TECHNIQUES BY RICK LATHAM

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED
Carl Fischer, \$29.95

Latham's groundbreaking 1990 instructional text resurfaces with the inclusion of four CDs on which he performs each of the fifty-nine pages of exercises in an easy-to-follow format. Interesting, useful drumset patterns, particularly for advanced hip-hop and metal grooves. User-friendly and affordable.

EXTRAS: 4 CDs



DRUM SET SYSTEMS BY MATT PATUTO

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED
mattpatuto.com, \$24.95

Matt Patuto stresses common-sense fundamentals of drumset performance here, beginning with warm-ups and proper alignment of the limbs. Patuto's "Steady Flow" system of 16th-note and triplet exercises around the kit are excellent for motor-skill development and learning to create melodic fill ideas.

EXTRAS: CD



CONTEMPORARY DRUMSET PHRASING: CREATIVE GROOVES AND FILLS FOR FUNK, FUSION, JAZZ AND MORE BY FRANK KATZ

LEVEL: ADVANCED
Hal Leonard, \$19.95

One-stop shopping for outrageous fusion grooves? Look no further. Frank Katz (The Collective, Brand X, Dave Douglas)

demonstrates some of the most arresting, syncopated, and contemporary hip-hop, jazz, rock, and future-funk grooves ever assembled in one book.

EXTRAS: CD



THE CODE OF FUNK BY DAVID GARIBALDI

LEVEL: ADVANCED
Hudson Music, \$29.95

This multi-media presentation features legendary funk master David Garibaldi and includes fully transcribed and analyzed charts of eight recent Tower Of Power tracks from the super-funky *Oakland Zone* CD. An advanced, unique, and very useful educational package.

EXTRAS: music-minus-drums play-along CD, DVD, DVD-ROM

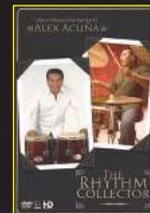


THE FUNKY SIX: THE DRUMMER'S GUIDE TO THE FUNK SHUFFLE AND OTHER SEXTUPLET BASED GROOVES BY D. SCOTT WILLIAMS

LEVEL: ALL
Mel Bay, \$19.95

Triplet-based rhythms in shuffle and 6/8 patterns appear in beats and polyrhythms everywhere from hip-hop to prog rock. This book helps cement your 6/8 groove, wherever you want to take it.

DVDs



ALEX ACUÑA THE RHYTHM COLLECTOR

LEVEL: ALL
www.dwdrums.com, \$39.95

The legendary percussionist shares invaluable insight and experience on grooving on the congas, bongos, timbales, and drumset in many popular Latin rhythms.

EXTRAS: 5.1 sound, transcription booklet



JAZZ DRUMS FEATURING PETER MAGADINI

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED
Hal Leonard, \$24.95

An informal survey of jazz styles, skills, form, and handy pointers. Most compelling is when Magadini emphasizes relationships between grooves, as when he uses the same pattern in multiple styles.

EXTRAS: booklet

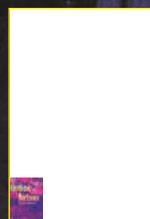


ISLAND GROOVES WITH CHRIS HANNING

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE
Panyard Inc., \$16.95

An excellent instructional package dealing primarily with soca and calypso, featuring a short history of the music, giving a context to the drumset in the percussion section. Professionally done, informative, and effective at bringing up to speed drummers interested in these drumming styles.

EXTRAS: CD-ROM



RHYTHMIC HORIZONS BY GAVIN HARRISON

LEVEL: ADVANCED
www.drumset.demon.co.uk, \$34.70

Porcupine Tree drummer Gavin Harrison demonstrates grooving in polyrhythmic odd-meter settings in this excellent package.

EXTRAS: PDF files of all the lessons, play-along MP3s, alternative audio mixes



TIME, TASTE, TECHNIQUE & TIMBRE
BY ED SHAUGHNESSY & CLEM DeROSA

LEVEL: ALL

Hal Leonard, \$29.95

"Basic, good time is still never called 'accurately metronomic time,'" contends long-time *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy on this DVD, and he should know. A solid primer on jazz and big band timekeeping.

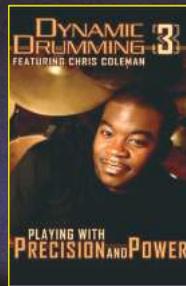


GLOBAL BEATS FOR DRUMSET AND PERCUSSION
BY WALFREDO REYES JR.

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED

Hal Leonard, \$24.95

Drummer Walfredo Reyes Jr. adapts traditional beats like the samba to the drumkit, discusses playing percussion rhythms and drumset beats simultaneously, and shows off some of the hybrid beats that he's used with Steve Winwood and Santana.

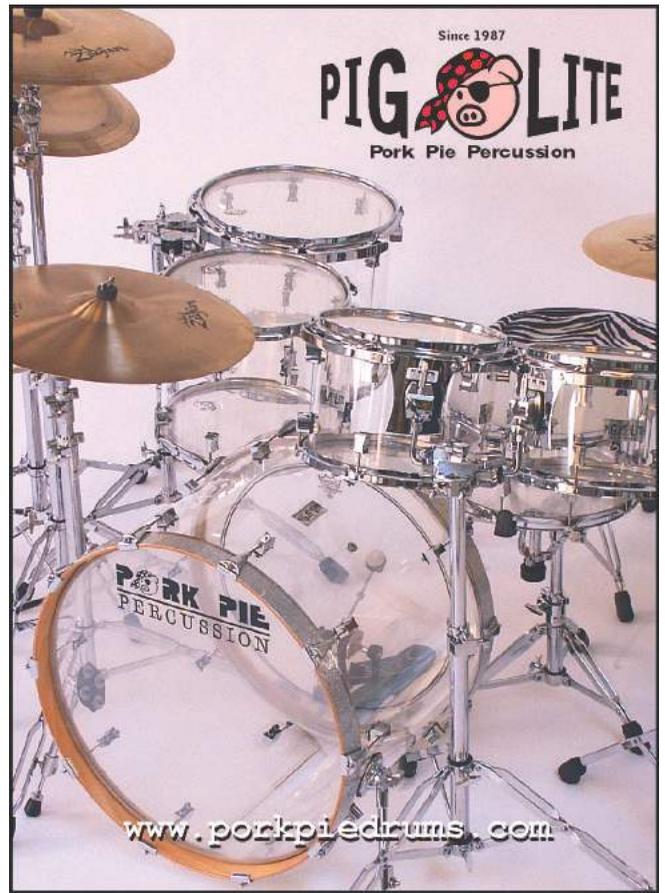


DYNAMIC DRUMMING 3: PLAYING WITH PRECISION AND POWER
FEATURING CHRIS COLEMAN

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED

www.drumworksinc.com, \$44.99

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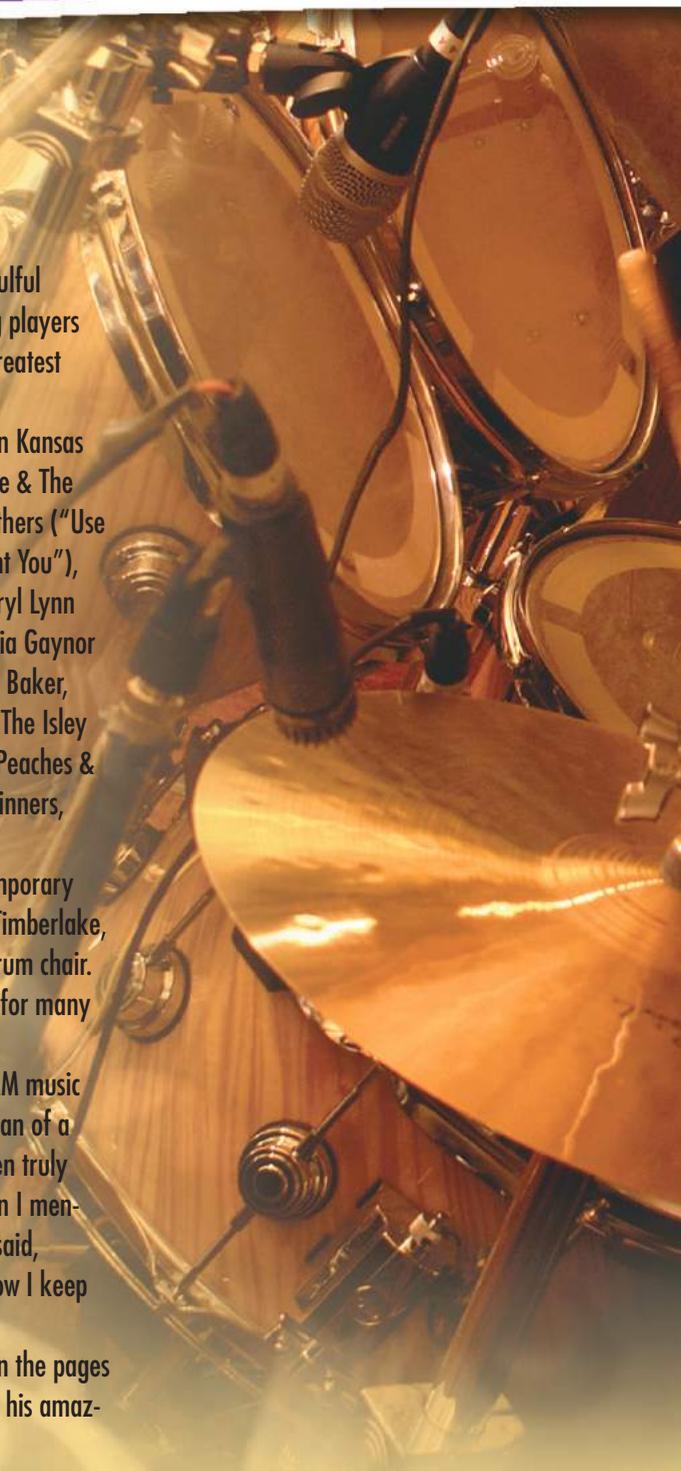
Most longtime readers of *Modern Drummer* are familiar with the soulful grooves of the great James Gadson. But for younger, up & coming players who may not know, you're about to be introduced to one of the greatest timekeepers of the past forty-plus years.

Gadson, one of the most recorded drummers in R&B history, was born in Kansas City, Missouri on June 17, 1939. His career started in the late '60s with Dyke & The Blazers, The Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band ("Express Yourself"), and Bill Withers ("Use Me," "Lean On Me"). In the '70s, Gadson worked with Marvin Gaye ("I Want You"), The Jackson Five ("Dancing Machine"), Diana Ross ("Love Hangover"), Cheryl Lynn ("Got To Be Real"), Tavares ("Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel"), and Gloria Gaynor ("I Will Survive"). The drummer also recorded and/or performed with Anita Baker, James Brown, Ray Charles, George Duke, Aretha Franklin, Herbie Hancock, The Isley Brothers, Quincy Jones, B.B. King, Gladys Knight & The Pips, Little Richard, Peaches & Herb, Billy Preston, Smokey Robinson, Frank Sinatra, The Supremes, The Spinners, Tina Turner... the list seems never-ending.

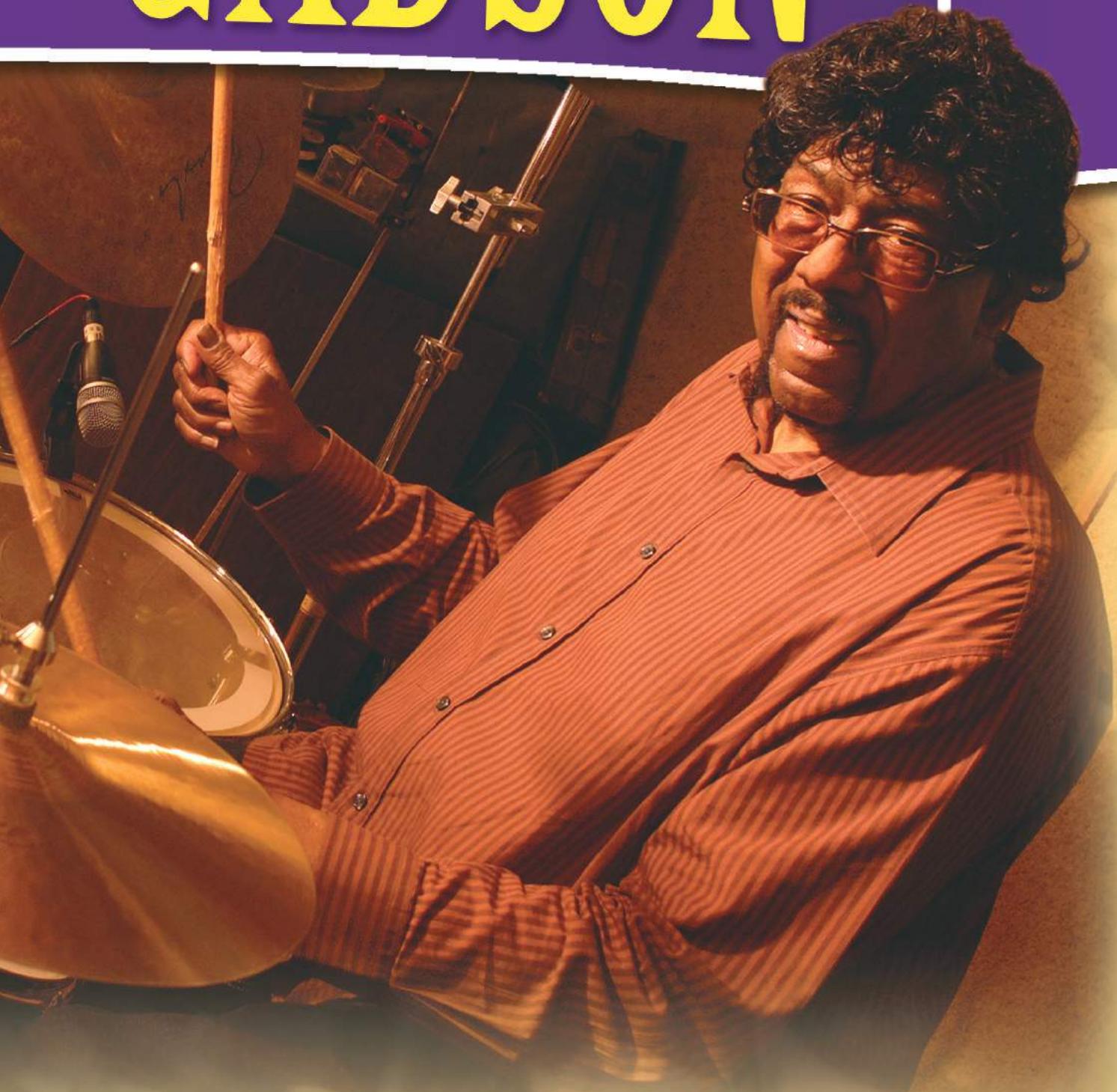
These days, besides being one of the most sampled drummers in contemporary music, you can hear Gadson on recordings by Paul McCartney, Beck, Justin Timberlake, and Joe Cocker, whose recent CD finds James and Jim Keltner sharing the drum chair. Speaking of Keltner, James affectionately says, "I've admired Jim's playing for many years, but I never knew it was him on all those great records."

I had the honor of meeting James Gadson this past January at the NAMM music convention in California. When we first spoke, I reminded the modest musician of a few of his great recordings, and he smiled and replied, "Thank you. I've been truly blessed. I was in the right place at the right time—a lot of times." And when I mentioned his appearance "air drumming" in a recent Beck video, he excitedly said, "Everyone's seen it but me. Everybody tells me about it, but I don't know how I keep missing it!"

Although Gadson has been mentioned numerous times over the years in the pages of *MD*, this is his first interview. We're thrilled to introduce or remind you of his amazing career and his great body of work.



GADSON



Story by Billy Amendola • Photos by Alex Solca

MD: Let's go back to the beginning. ...

James: My parents didn't want me to be in the music business. They both frowned on it and wanted me to be something else, anything but a musician. My dad was a drummer, but I never had the chance to hear him play. He must have been pretty good, though, because he had a lot of different percussion instruments around, although he wouldn't allow me to touch them. Then my mother and father separated.

I had a little drum corps experience in school, and I'd even taken up the cornet, but I really didn't care for it. I liked the drums, but I didn't have a kit. Then my family moved into an apartment building of a piano player friend of my mine named Floyd Williams, and he gave me drums.

When I first had the drums, I wasn't as interested in them because I liked doo-wop music at the time and really wanted to sing. So I sold my set for \$5 to jazz drummer Jimmy Lovelace. And then I got into a bit of a juvenile delinquent thing and figured it would be better for me to join the air force. While I was serving in the air force, I was still singing doo-wop—I wasn't playing drums. But when I got out of the service, my brother had a band and he let me join. I would sing and dance, and I knew about three chords on the piano. I kind of became the frontman.

MD: What did your brother play?

James: He played guitar. When the bass player left the band, the drummer wanted to play bass. So that left me to try out on the drums. I would practice and practice until I finally got it together.

MD: How old were you at that time?

James: I was around twenty-one. So I played and sang with my brother's band around Kansas City. And then we traveled a bit.

MD: What were you practicing to get it together?

James: I was listening to Coltrane all day and got my free jazz happening.

MD: Are you completely self-taught?

James: Yes. I only knew a few rudiments from playing in drum corps.

MD: What drummers were you emulating?

James: Mostly Elvin Jones and other jazz players. No one wanted to hear or cared about R&B music at the time.

When I went back to Kansas City, there was a musician there who knew my father, so he hired me to play brushes. I learned a lot of standards from him. From there I was able to get a job playing behind a guy named Frank



CLASSIC GADSON

ARTIST

Dyke & The Blazers
Marvin Gaye
Peaches & Herb
Gloria Gaynor
Bill Withers
Bill Withers
Bill Withers
The Emotions
The Jackson 5
Beck
Steve Wilkerson
The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band

ALBUM

Dyke's Greatest Hits
I Want You
2 Hot!
Love Tracks
Live At Carnegie Hall
Just As I Am
'Justments
Rejoice
Dancing Machine
Sea Change
Shaw 'Nuff
In The Jungle Babe

HIS FAVORITES:

ARTIST

Jimmy Smith
Curtis Mayfield
John Coltrane
various artists
James Brown
Ed Thigpen
various artists

ALBUM

The Sermon!
Greatest Hits
My Favorite Things
Stax Greatest Hits
Live At The Apollo
The Essence Of Brushes (DVD)
Motown Gold

DRUMMER

Art Blakey
Idris Muhammad
Elvin Jones
various
Clayton Fillyau
Ed Thigpen
Benny Benjamin

Edwards, who played the Hammond B3 organ. I liked that. We'd be playing and people would be dancing, and the music had the swing thing happening.

Then some friends of mine called me, saying that they were going to be on The Dean Martin Show on TV and that they wanted me to come out to California to work with them. I thought, "Oh, yeah. They made the big time! So I came out with my family on the train—I had just gotten married. Anyway, Dean Martin was a big star, but they weren't. [laughs] They tricked me into coming out here. I thought they had an apartment for me, but I wound up staying at one of the guys' sister's apartment, and then the sister said, 'You have to move out.' It was pretty rough.

you play." I kept his number and I called him—even though at that time I couldn't really play R&B that well. I would hear it on a record and wanted to play it, but I couldn't hear what it really was. John got me with Charles Wright, but Charles fired me about five times. [laughs] But he couldn't get anybody else! All the guys he wanted were always busy.

I wasn't as experienced, and Charles was already a studio musician. I had my own style—I didn't play like anyone else—which was a blessing. That's how I developed my own style, doing little embellishments here and there. Eventually Charles said, "If you want the gig, you've got it." And he would always tell me, "Just play four on the floor, four on the snare, and four on the hi-hat—and

time. I couldn't keep a steady pattern because I was coming from a free-jazz mindset.

The first professional thing that I cut was with Dyke & The Blazers. Then I recorded with Charles Wright and the Watts Band on "Express Yourself" and "Love Land." On the latter song, I sang and played drums. My studio chops really came together after I came out to LA, when I first starting working around town and doing certain gigs.

MD: So your whole early training was basically just constantly playing.

James: Exactly, constantly playing with other musicians and picking up little things here and there. I practiced a little bit, but I lived in an apartment, so I couldn't do too much. But I was playing constantly.

GADSON'S RECORDING KIT

While James uses different kit configurations based on the music he's called to record, the following setup is the one he uses most often.

Drums: Drum Workshop

- A. 6x14 or 7x14 snare drum (Pearl, Ludwig, DW)
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 10x14 tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 16x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste (various models)

- 1. 14" hi-hats
- 2. 16" crash
- 3. 18" ride (used as crash/ride)
- 4. 20" ride
- 5. 20" China (not in photo)

Hardware: DW 9000 series stands and pedals (spring tension on bass drum pedal very loose)

Heads: Remo (various models)

Electronics: Syndrums

Sticks: Cappella 1A model (hickory with wood tip)



MD: You were definitely paying your dues.

James: When I came to LA, I'd walk seventy-five blocks just to sit in, and then the guys would say, "Hey, we don't know you, so you can't sit in." But what happened was, I had come out once before to California with Frank Edwards and played San Francisco and LA. While I was out there, I had met John Bodreaux, who was a famous drummer—he'd played on that song "I Know You Don't Want Me No More" and a lot of the New Orleans stuff.

So we talked, and he said, "I like the way

that's it!"

MD: What year was this?

James: This was around 1966. By that time we had started to get it together, but I didn't know anything about the business. I was writing parts and singing and didn't get any credit, so I left the group.

MD: What was your first time in the studio like?

James: At first, during the time I didn't really know how to play R&B, it was awful. I wouldn't even charge them it was so bad. [laughs] I felt bad about wasting their studio

MD: Did you teach yourself to read charts as well?

James: Yes. A contractor by the name of Ben Barrett and arranger James Carmichael started getting me Motown gigs after seeing me a few times around town. So they recommended me, but asked, "Can you read?" I told Ben that I could, even though I didn't at the time. I remember I would go home and study my reading at night. But they liked me at Motown because I could keep time and strike a solid groove.

I remember the first Motown session I did,

which was The Jacksons' "Dancing Machine." We were out there creating, and I put that 8th-note hop in, and they said, "Hey, do that again." They liked what I was doing, and they said, "Let's keep him because he has good time." And then the song became a hit.

MD: Who was the first drummer you took an interest in?

James: I was listening to Idris Muhammad, who back then was known as Leo Morris. He

played with Curtis Mayfield at the time. He had also done all those records in Chicago. I liked his style because you could hear he had jazz overtones in his playing. I also liked the way he was playing R&B. He influenced me a lot.

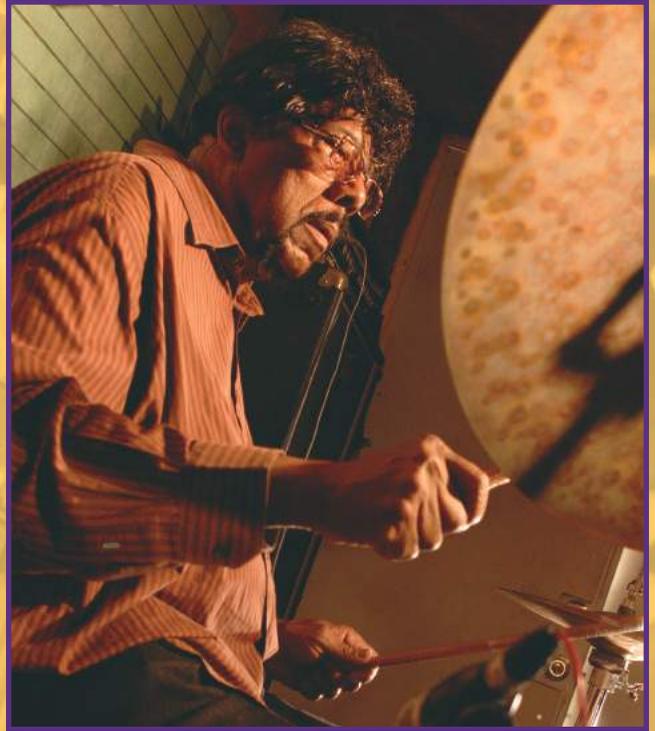
I remember seeing Idris when I was back in Kansas City. I wasn't playing drums at the time, but he came through with Jerry Butler. I saw him play one time backing Butler in

Atlanta, at this big show with Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson—everybody. I remember Idris played an R&B song with just mallets, and it was beautiful. Artists would let him play the way he wanted to play, so he was definitely influential.

Around that time I started hearing Al Jackson on all of the Stax material, and I liked him as well. I also loved what Earl Palmer was doing. I started being able to hear where they



From One Legend To Another: JIM KELTNER ON JAMES GADSON



I had the great pleasure of being in the studio with James Gadson a few months ago while working on the latest Joe Cocker CD. I was invited to play percussion on a track while he played drums. Watching James up close was a beautiful thing. His touch is magical.

James is truly one of the nicest people I know. He's been around a long time, and he's a great singer too, which is what probably shaped his exquisite phrasing behind the drums.

There are so many things I could say about why I love James Gadson's drumming. He's played on so many great records. But like so many of my favorite drummers, his performance on one song in particular is so totally unique, original, and funky that I could and do listen to it endlessly. That song is Bill Withers' "Use Me." The drumming on that tune says it *all* for me."

Billy Amendola

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were taking it. And when I heard R&B later on—because I hadn't paid attention to it like that before—I realized that the stuff that they were playing was mind-blowing.

MD: What advice would you have for drummers interested in improving their groove?

James: Understand what it is, and simplify. Most grooves, especially for dance music, are very simple. Even so, to learn them, you have to slow them down. A lot of times we do all these rudimentary things to see how fast we can play. I think you have to slow it all down and simplify it. Then you can kind of feel whether it's danceable or not.

MD: How important is practicing with a click?

James: It's very important, because what that does is discipline you to stay right with it. It's good concentration. One thing I learned about the click—because I've done a lot of sessions with it—is that you have to be able to hear it. A lot of times I played with the click with the other musicians in the room, and I couldn't listen to them because everyone played on "1" differently. So I had to have the click up real loud, and I played to it. I'd look at the music and I'd play to the click.

A lot of times when you're playing with a click, the producer might want it to be set to a specific bpm [beats per minute], but that groove might not sit well at that tempo. Even though it may not feel right to you, you've got to do it and make it happen.

I know when we did Peaches & Herb's "Reunited," that felt really good. I knew with that tempo it was going to be so easy to play with the click. It just naturally felt good. As

soon as we finished recording that tune, I said, "This is going to be a big one."

MD: Let's take a song like "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel," by Tavares. Was that recorded with a click?

James: No.

MD: I didn't think so, because it breathes. And what a great feel!

James: There are two ways of looking at it—with or without a click. I can't really say which is better. They're different, and the click is about discipline. It's good for you to practice with it, because it will make you listen a lot closer to what you're playing.

MD: Whose idea was it to do that classic drum fill at the top of "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel"?

James: The producer, the late Freddie Perren, had that idea. We were running something down and I played something similar to it, and he said, "Hey, let's use that." The first record I did with Freddie was "Do It Baby" by The Miracles, and that was with a click.

MD: Was "I Will Survive" done to a click?

James: Yes, because it was a certain bpm the producer wanted to have. That tune was actually the B-side of the record, and we did it in one take. The A-side track was something we worked on all day, because the phrasing was kind of different. And then the record came out and "I Will Survive" became a huge hit. It's funny, because when we were recording it we didn't even worry about the beginning. We just ran it down.

MD: How was it working with Paul McCartney on his last CD, Chaos And Creation In The

Backyard?

James: It was very interesting as well as amazing. He knows exactly what he wants, and he's a very hard worker. He comes to the studio to get the job done.

MD: How do you feel about sampling, considering that you're one of the drummers people have sampled the most?

James: Well, they're supposed to pay you for it. It's a shame that only the writers get paid. I think the union could have fought more for the musicians. But what it goes to show you is that when they're using a sample, they call it old-school, but that is the school. They want to get that feel, and that's what's missing today. A lot of the younger drummers have these great chops, and I love them, but a lot of them don't know about the pocket. They never got to experience it.

MD: Did you embrace the whole drum machine and loops phenomenon early on?

James: Personally, I like playing with people, because you can play off of another person. If you listen to the records cut live, they're the ones that live on, compared to the ones that are put together by machines. It seems that the "humanization" of the performance is relaxing. You can relax more with an album made back then than the ones made today.

One thing about "new" music, last year it had a certain sound—whatever it was—and now that sound might not sound so good. But the old-school records, as they call them, are still great. Don't get me wrong, I do like music that is programmed well. I like all music—rock, jazz, some punk—I listen to it all and I like

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JAMES GADSON

everything. And I like a lot of the different ideas that I hear some of the young guys coming up with.

MD: Like whom?

James: Questlove. I love what he does. I also love Dennis Chambers. He can play funk and he can play all the notes. Lil John Roberts, Teddy Campbell, John Blackwell, Will Calhoun, Zoro—they're all great. What's good about these guys is that they all have their own style.

The only thing that's missing today is, back in the old days, we had different regions for music. You had the Stax sound, and you had the music coming out of Chicago, Atlanta, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and Nashville. Now you can't tell where it comes from. I loved the Philadelphia sound because it had a big band sound.

MD: With drummers Earl Young and Charles Collins.

James: Right! Great stuff, beautiful music.

MD: Do you think someone can be taught to play funky?

James: I've taken on a few students recently, and some of them have great chops, but they need to be focused on the right thing. I think if someone can play, they can be guided. You can be taught, and it has nothing to do with

the color of your skin. Look at Roger Hawkins, who played at Muscle Shoals.

MD: And Ed Greene.

James: Yes, Ed is a great friend of mine. He's living in Nashville now. Nobody knew he was white. And believe it or not, he's a great violinist.

MD: Are you actively playing live?

James: Yes. It keeps me in shape playing-wise. Back in the '60s and '70s, the East Coast studio musicians were all doing club dates to keep their chops up. A lot of us out here in LA during that time were just doing sessions, and we didn't play in the clubs. I feel you lose it by not playing live. You lose your edge.

I remember I was doing so many studio dates at one time, playing on the click, that when it came to playing live, I couldn't breathe—my playing didn't breathe. Now it's different. I'm doing a lot of different gigs, including some jazz gigs. I just love to play.

MD: Let's talk about gear. Did you have favorite kits and cymbals that you used in the studio back in the day?

James: At the time they were Zildjian 13" and 14" hi-hats. But I'm using Paiste now, and I can't say enough good things about them.

For the Tavares records, I used a 1973 Pearl kit. In fact, for a lot of the disco stuff, I was

using a Pearl fiberglass kick drum with wooden toms. I still have two of those kits, and I use them sometimes. Come to think of it, I used that kit on Paul McCartney's last recording.

I've got a certain way that I tune drums. When I was doing Motown dates, they used to make me come two hours before the start time, and I'd tune a lot of different ways. I'd tune the drums "flat" so that the engineer could EQ them. If the toms didn't have bottom heads, then I tuned flat. If there are bottom heads on the toms, then I tune the drum to itself, tune it to what it will do best.

On "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel," we used wood toms with the bottom heads and the front bass drum head removed. And I was using a deep snare. There was a certain way that I tuned for that one. That was the same snare I used on "I Will Survive." It's tuned very low. The tension rods were almost falling off. If the producer wanted that dark crack, I'd leave the drum tuned low but tighten the snares very tight.

It's good to know how a drum sounds. Good engineers will come into the room that you're recording in and listen to the drums. Then there are others who just sit in the control room because they want to get their sound—they don't even come out to listen to how your drums sound acoustically. Drums can sound very different in the recording room as compared to the control room.

MD: What drums are you currently playing?

James: I'm playing DW drums. I'd never had a drum endorsement before, but I recently got an endorsement deal because my dear friend Jim Keltner helped, and it's been a blessing to me. But I happen to favor DW drums because the first recordings I did with Bill Withers were on Camco drums [DWs were originally based on the Camco design], and they were great drums!

MD: Speaking of Bill, how did you hook up with him?

James: I met Bill Withers through Charles Wright, who was managing Bill at the time. Booker T produced Bill's first record, "Ain't No Sunshine." Booker was busy when Bill wanted to do the second album, Still Bill, so we worked on that album and put it all together in my garage.

I have to tell you, I'm awestruck to have been a part of all those great recordings. And I'm not bitter about anything, musically. I'm very fortunate to have been able to contribute whatever I contributed. I feel very blessed.

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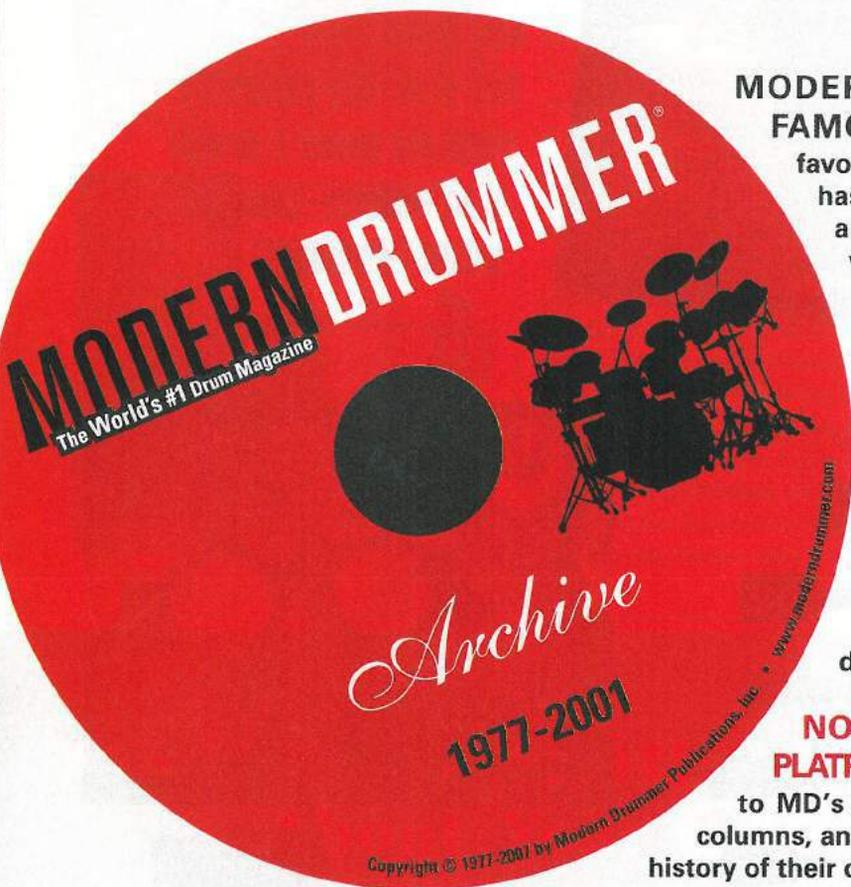
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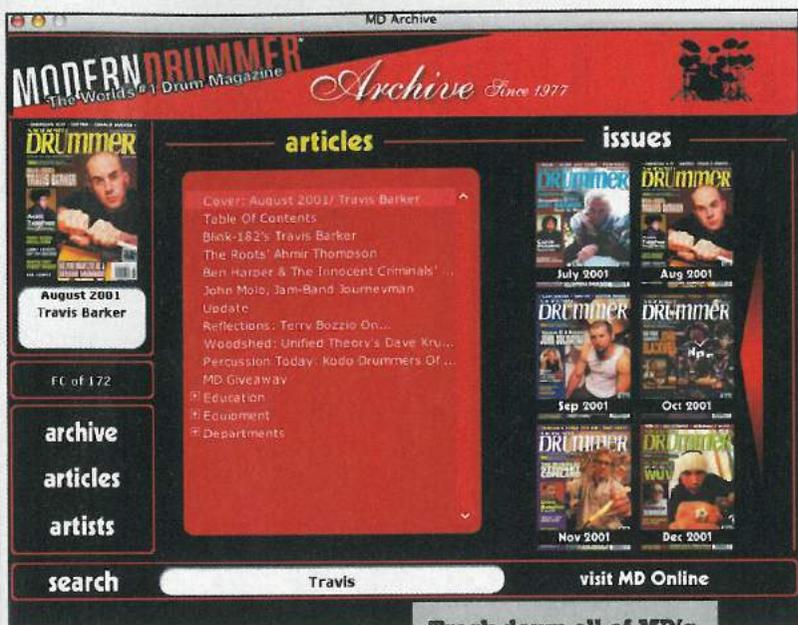
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Take Command Of The Time Eliminating The Common Causes Of Tempo Problems

by Paul Wells

In my December '06 MD article, I presented a number of techniques for practicing with a metronome to help improve your time. This month, I'd like to examine some of the common causes for time problems and what you can do to eliminate them.

The Right Technique

The first culprit in the struggle against time problems is technique, or the lack thereof. Developing your technique is not all about learning to play fast and fancy licks. While it's certainly important to stretch your physical and creative boundaries, it's also essential to develop and reinforce basic grooves and fills. I sometimes hear drummers who can play extremely fast 32nd-note single strokes and tricky linear patterns around the kit, but can't play a basic 4/4 rock groove with 8th-note fills without pushing and pulling the tempo.

Make sure you have all of the tools necessary to play simple grooves, beats, and fills at all tempos, from very slow to very fast. More complicated ideas take more technique, so make sure you've developed that technique before you try to go for that tricky lick on the gig. If you're physically straining to get your ideas to come out, you're very likely to run into time issues.

I find that the more I practice technical exercises, the better my time becomes. It lessens the possibility that I'll hear an idea in my head and discover the hard way that my hands and feet can't play it. My favorite exercises for hand technique come from pages 7 through 17 of Joe Morello's *Master Studies* book. Besides helping you develop chops and coordination between your hands, working on these pages with a metronome will increase the precision of your timing.

Locking In

The second problem that can lead to tempo inconsistencies has to do with the other musicians on the bandstand. Young drummers are always encouraged to "lock in" with the time feel of their bandmates. However, in some cases this can be a bad idea.

Different instrumentalists—even those with steady time—can have certain stylistic tendencies that drummers need to be aware of. Some rock and R&B bassists like to "lay back," placing their time a bit behind the drummer's groove.

If you follow them too closely, the tempo will end up pulling back. And anyone who has played with a jazz big band knows that brass sections often phrase ridiculously behind the beat.

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In contrast, certain guitarists and keyboardists enjoy playing on top of the drum groove. From a listener's perspective, the combination of a grooving drummer, a behind-the-beat bassist, and a pushing guitarist can make for a massive, heavy feel. Led Zeppelin pulled this off better than just about anybody. Again, this sounds great from a listener's perspective, but it can wreak havoc on our ability to keep from dragging.

The solution to this type of time conflict is to develop confidence in your own ability to play assertive time, even if it sounds like you're out of sync with some of the bandmembers. It's essential to have faith in your own ability to keep the tempo steady. When you practice on the drumset, spend plenty of time playing very simple patterns with a metronome, focusing on locking in with the click. Also, listen to as much great music as you can.



Four Tips To Control Time

1. Practice the basics: playing controlled, steady time on simple beats.
2. Identify when "locking in" is called for—and when it's not.
3. Look at the big rhythmic picture.
4. Concentrate on pushing and pulling the time intentionally.

Learn to recognize the relationships between the time feels of the different instruments on your favorite records.

The best thing to do on the gig is to keep one ear on the band as a whole, and one ear on yourself to make sure your tempo doesn't waiver. Sometimes it's okay to stretch a phrase or push a section of a tune for musical effect—as long as the song's overall tempo doesn't fluctuate. The more secure you are in your own time, the easier it is to take these liberties.

See The Big Picture

All too often, inexperienced drummers think of their playing in a song as a series of unrelated beats and fills, without understanding the consistent rhythmic grid or subdivision that ties a piece of music together. For instance, a song may have a fast tempo groove in the verse, but the chorus may go into a half-time feel. Even though you've changed your drum part to reflect that new feel, the fundamental tempo remains constant. The subdivision that was quarter notes in the verse (1 2 3 4) is now 8th notes in the chorus (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &).

Once again, the best solution is metronome practice. Try the above example with a click running, and try to recognize the common subdivision running between the two tempos. When you turn the metronome off, try to hear that same quarter-note/8th-note pulse clicking away. This pulse is what needs to stay in your head when you're on the gig and playing songs with these kinds of tempo changes.

Time Is In Your Hands

It's certainly true that a lot of wonderful and important music has some tempo and time inconsistencies. However, a good drummer should have the ability to control whether or not he or she lets the tempo move. If your ears tell you that a certain section of a song should speed up slightly, perhaps to convey a little extra energy, then go ahead and push. But

when you rush or drag simply because you can't help it, you're not really serving the music.

Once you have confident control over your own time, you'll have equally confident con-

trol over the time of the music played by your band. And when all is said and done, that's your fundamental role. Everything else builds on that foundation.



Paul Wells is a member of the band Spiraling. He has also performed with Joe Williams, Marion Raven, Norman Simmons, Glen Burtnik, Randy Brecker, Dave Valentin, Rufus Reid, and The Duke Ellington Legacy. Paul can be reached through www.paulwells.info.



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