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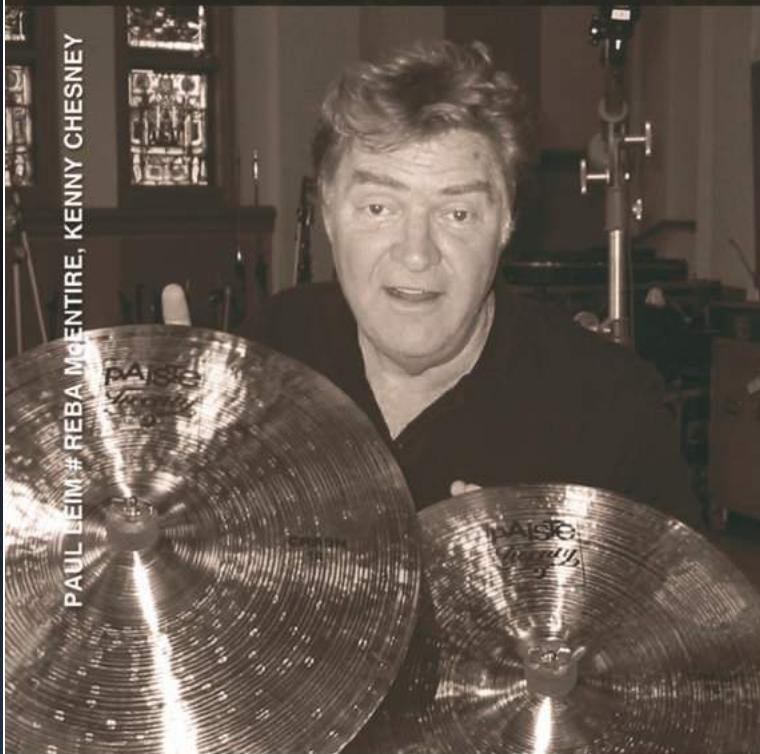
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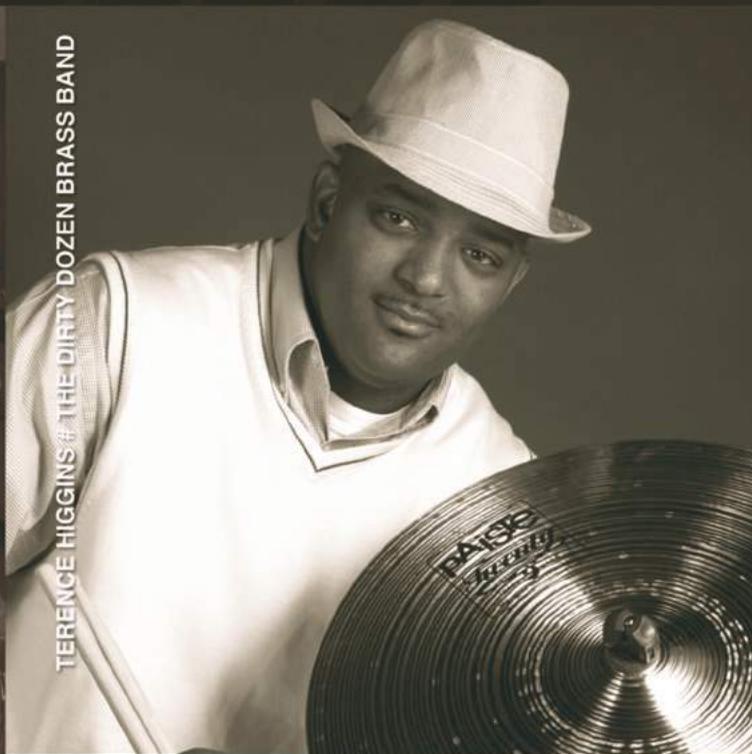


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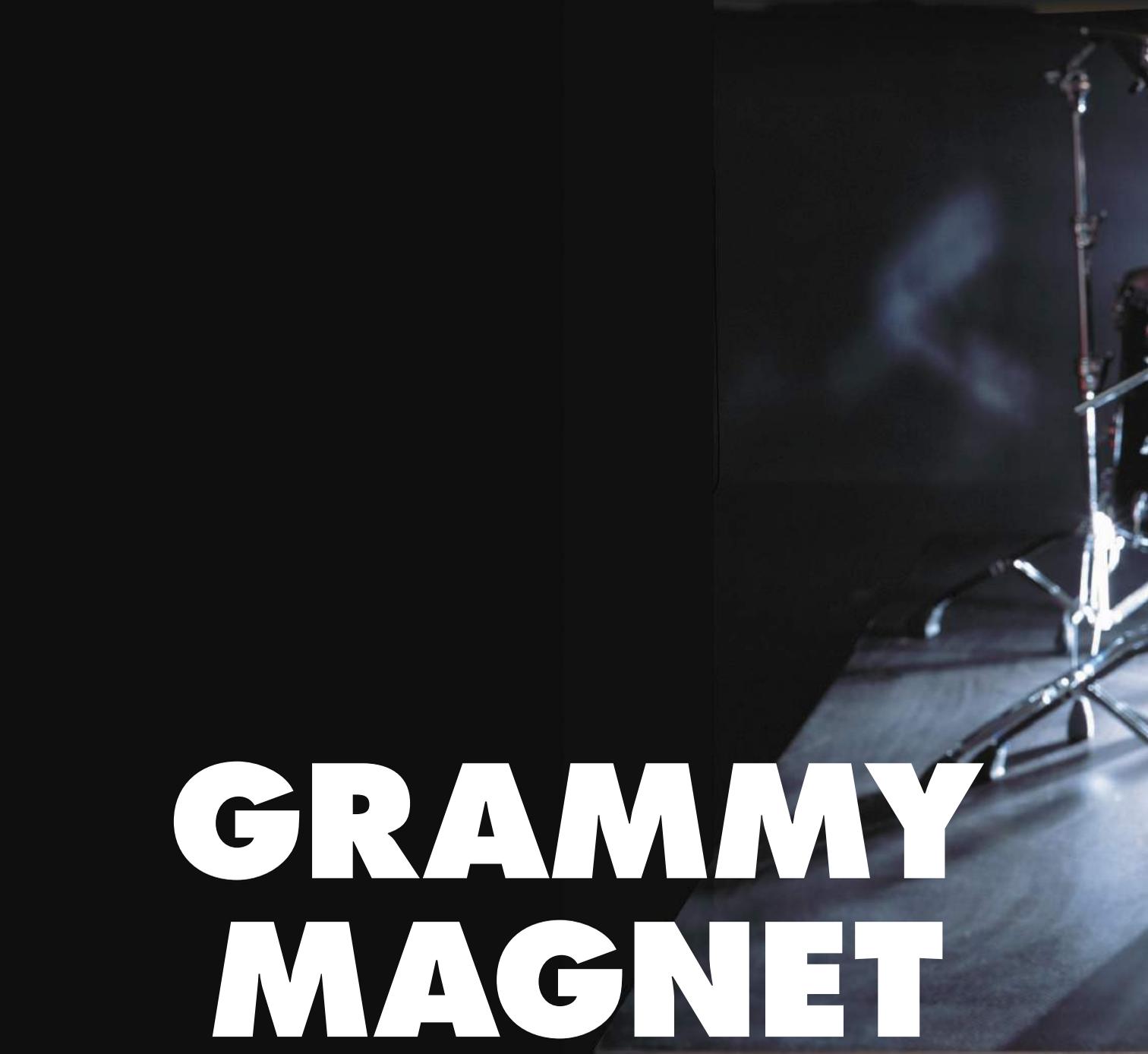
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FEATURES

<< 52 Jojo Mayer

Perhaps no drummer of the past decade has been name-dropped more than Jojo Mayer. With New York's drum 'n' bass royalty, he's boldly pushed live drumming into the digital realm. He's a major drumming thinker. He's got *sick* technique. And now he's finally released his highly anticipated instructional DVD. The drumming future is now; read about it here.

72 Tabla Maestro Zakir Hussain

The world-traveling Zakir offers insight into the history and technique behind tabla, and talks about his hypnotic new album with Mickey Hart.

86 Modern Journeyman Dave DiCenzo

Early in his career, Dave DiCenzo caught a lot of drummers' ears with his burning technique supporting Hiromi, John Petrucci, and Steve Morse. These days he slays with taste, consistency, and depth.

98 Maroon 5's Matt Flynn

At this point there's no arguing the fact that pop sensation Maroon 5 is in it for the long haul. Drummer Matt Flynn is riding stardom's wave with some well-paid dues behind him.

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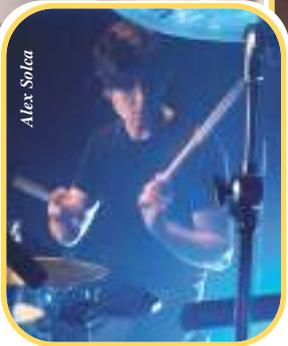
MD special report: From finding the right school to passing the audition.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

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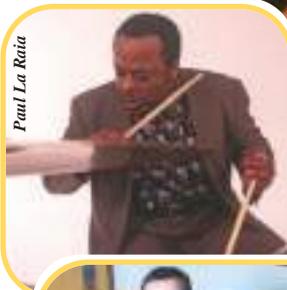
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With each new recording, as a leader or backing jazz giants like Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Jeff "Tain" Watts reminds us where the bar is set for jazz drumming art and adventure.



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At his own Soma Studios in Chicago, drummer/engineer-about-town John McEntire has played—and recorded—some of the most intriguing music of recent times.





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Danny Seraphine



Charlie Watts

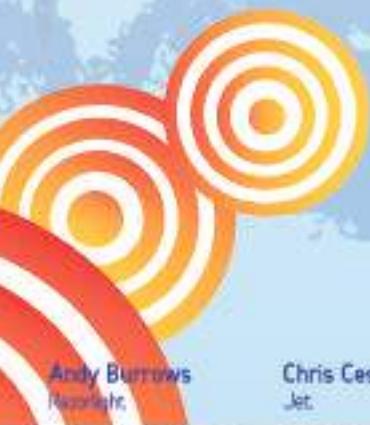


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Searching For A Clue

Rick Phillips

I don't know about you, but every year I go through periods when I feel like musically I can do no wrong—my time is rock-solid, my groove is deep and full of energy, and my sense of dynamics is ultra sensitive. To me, there's no greater rush than playing a gig when everything's flowing so effortlessly. It's as if all of the hours that I've spent hacking through Master Studies, transcribing Art Blakey solos, and playing along to my groove trifecta of James Brown, The Meters, and Booker T. & The MG's has finally paid off.

Then there are those other times, when I'm inevitably frustrated from the moment I sit down at the drums. My backbeats are sloppy and inconsistent, my fills rush like crazy, and my feet move like concrete blocks. It takes everything in me to keep from tossing my sticks into the Hudson River when one of these painful days, weeks, or even months rears its ugly head.

Until very recently, I was in one of the biggest slumps of my career. (Ironically, it was also one of my busiest periods.) I was gigging a few nights a week, teaching a handful of students, and recording a bunch of tracks for friends' projects, demos for my band's sophomore CD, and samples for MD Online. But despite all of this time spent behind the kit, nothing seemed to be gelling like it had a few months before. What was going on? Was I using the wrong sticks? Not getting enough sleep? Eating too much junk food?

Thankfully, the answer to my drumming woes fell right into my lap (or more literally, on my desk) when we received a promo copy of Jojo Mayer's new instructional DVD, *Secret Weapons For The Modern Drummer*. With all the hype surrounding this release, as well as my memory of Jojo's tremendous performance at the 2005 MD Fest, I had to check it out.

At first, I was apprehensive. The Gladstone technique? The Moeller stroke? Do we really need another video on these concepts? Well, judging by my newfound comfort and command at the drums, I would say, quite confidently, "Yes. You need this." After only a few hours spent tweaking my hand technique using Jojo's suggestions, I suddenly felt like I was back on track. Since then, I've played a few gigs and done a couple sessions. And I'm happy to report that I'm playing with more power, control, and finesse than ever. (Thanks, Jojo!)

So without further ado, we're very excited to present this month's issue. Not only do we have an insightful cover story with Jojo that'll hopefully help to break some of you out of a rut, but we also tracked down one of the greatest living percussionists, Zakir Hussain, for a once-in-a-lifetime tabla lesson. Meanwhile, Berklee professor Dave DiCenso and Maroon 5's Matt Flynn offer up some priceless advice on groove and feel. And for those of you considering applying to music school, we have a great step-by-step guide to help you find and prepare for the institution that will best serve your musical needs.

Enjoy!

Mike Dawson

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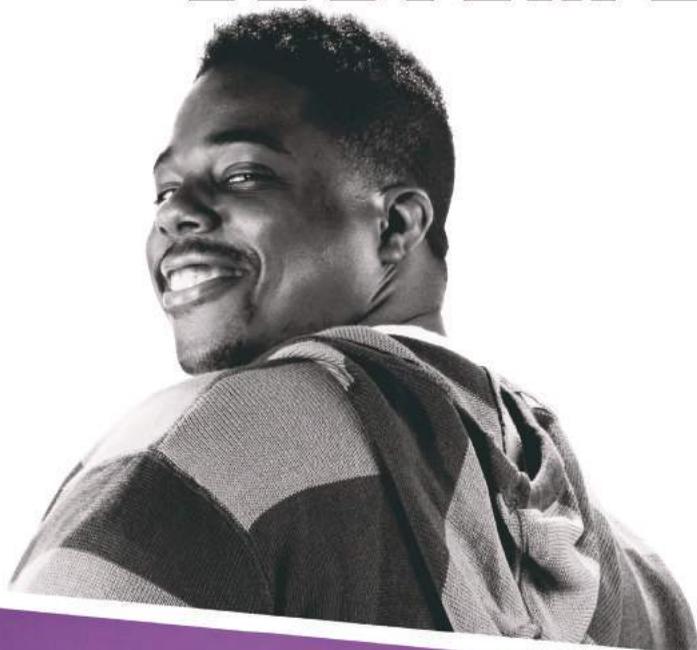
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Mike Portnoy

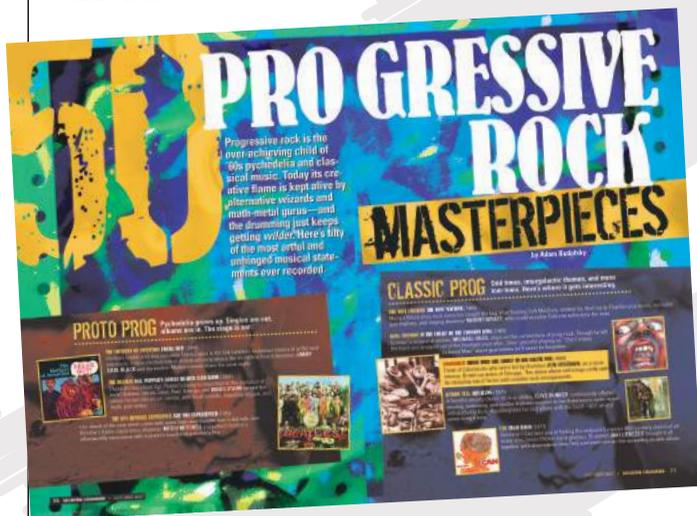
I have to admit that I was among those who questioned Mike Portnoy's induction into MD's Hall of Fame. However, Mike's candid discussion of "taboo" subjects like hyperkinetic/athletic drumming and over-thinking one's playing was quite refreshing. It reminded me of the many reasons I love music and drumming so much. I'm quite fond of much of the work showcased in your prog feature, and I've really come to admire Mr. Portnoy's place in drumming history. Thanks for the great issue.

Darin Elwell

Prog Issue

As a fan of prog music and prog drummers for four decades—from Bill Bruford and Phil Collins back in the day to Danny Carey and Gavin Harrison today—I loved every page of your October issue. But I do offer a couple of very small corrections. First, Ed Breckenfeld's Off The Record identifies 1972's Foxtrot as Phil Collins' first album with Genesis. Phil's debut was on Nursery Cryme from the previous year. Also, in the Aynsley Dunbar Playback, it's true that Aynsley played on the version of Jeff Beck's "Rock My Plimsoul" that was the B-side of the "Tallyman" single, as shown. However, according to the liner notes from the 2006 CD reissue of Truth, the original album version featured Mick Waller on drums. Aynsley's version is included as a bonus track on that same reissue CD.

Mike Davis



Your magazine has helped expose the public to the underground phenomenon that is progressive rock. While much of the music press has tried to bury what was once an extremely popular and lively movement in music, you show some guts in occasionally featuring prog drummers, and for that I thank you. It's a wonderful genre with no boundaries, in which musicians can truly reach as far as they can. Please continue the support.

That said, I've one quick bone to pick, in regard to your inclusion of Yes' s Fragile among your "50 Prog Rock Masterpieces." Close To The Edge is generally considered to be Yes' s masterpiece, even by those who liked Fragile better. When anyone asks what prog is, I simply hand him or her Close To The Edge; it pretty much defines the genre. Even Bruford considered that the band' s masterpiece: He left, figuring it couldn' t be topped.

Mikhael

Dan Weiss

Thanks for the great article on Dan Weiss. I first saw Dan play two years ago with Rez Abassi. Dan was using the house kit in a small club in which I had also performed many times. It was the worst piece of crap around, with minimal tuning or gear-adjustment possibilities. You needed a wrench to tighten things, and then it was questionable whether or not they'd stay in a fixed position. That night, however, Dan made that kit sound like it was a high-end beauty. His playing was amazing, with power, speed, and musicality all in one.

I've seen Dan a couple of times since, and I've had the opportunity to chat with

him. He's truly a world-class musician and a humble guy.

Rick Pearlman

A Happy Camper

My name is Manuel Gerardo Ruiz Rodriguez. I'm seventeen years old, and I'm from Mexico City. I attended the 2006 Modern Drummer Festival Weekend, where I won a scholarship to the 2007 Rock & Roll Fantasy Camp in New York City as a door prize. I didn't know how I could get to New York, but the camp's producer, Mr. David Fishoff, paid for me to fly there.

The Rock & Roll Fantasy Camp is the best experience that I ever had. My counselor was drummer and teacher Sandy

Gennaro, who helped make the camp a dream come true for me. So I want to thank Sandy, Mr. Fishoff, and Modern Drummer for this great experience.

Gerardo Rodriguez

DROPPED BEATS

In the "Tips From The Pros" section of the November '07 Guide To Setting Up feature, drum tech Jimmy Robison's last name was misspelled.

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Regal Tip Artist Keith Carlock

A high-contrast, black and white illustration of a drummer, Keith Carlock, in a dynamic pose. He is wearing a black t-shirt and has a focused expression. The background consists of vertical yellow and white stripes. Two red banners are overlaid on the image, containing the text 'WE'VE BEEN ON TOUR' and 'FOR 50 YEARS.'

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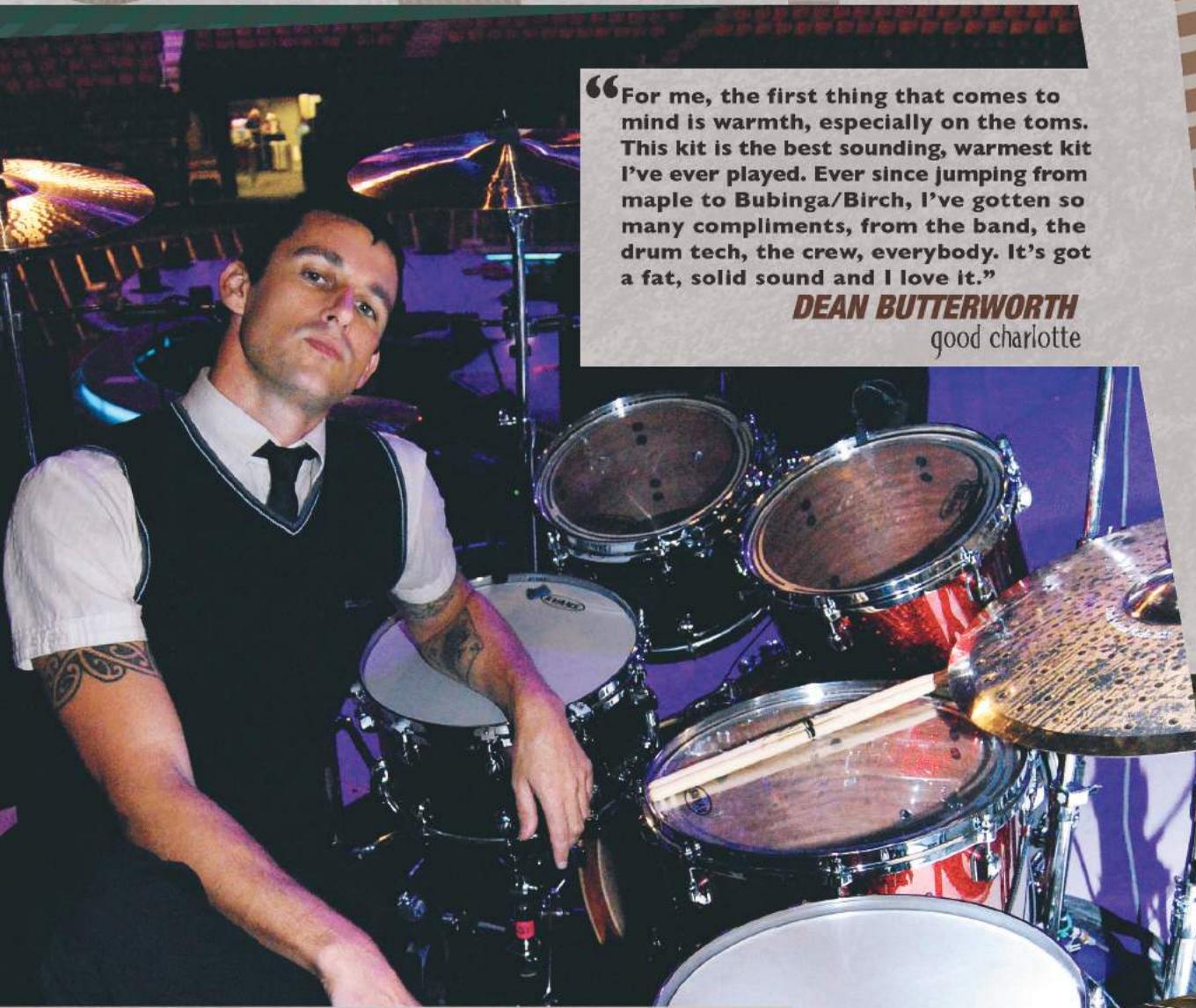
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DEAN BUTTERWORTH
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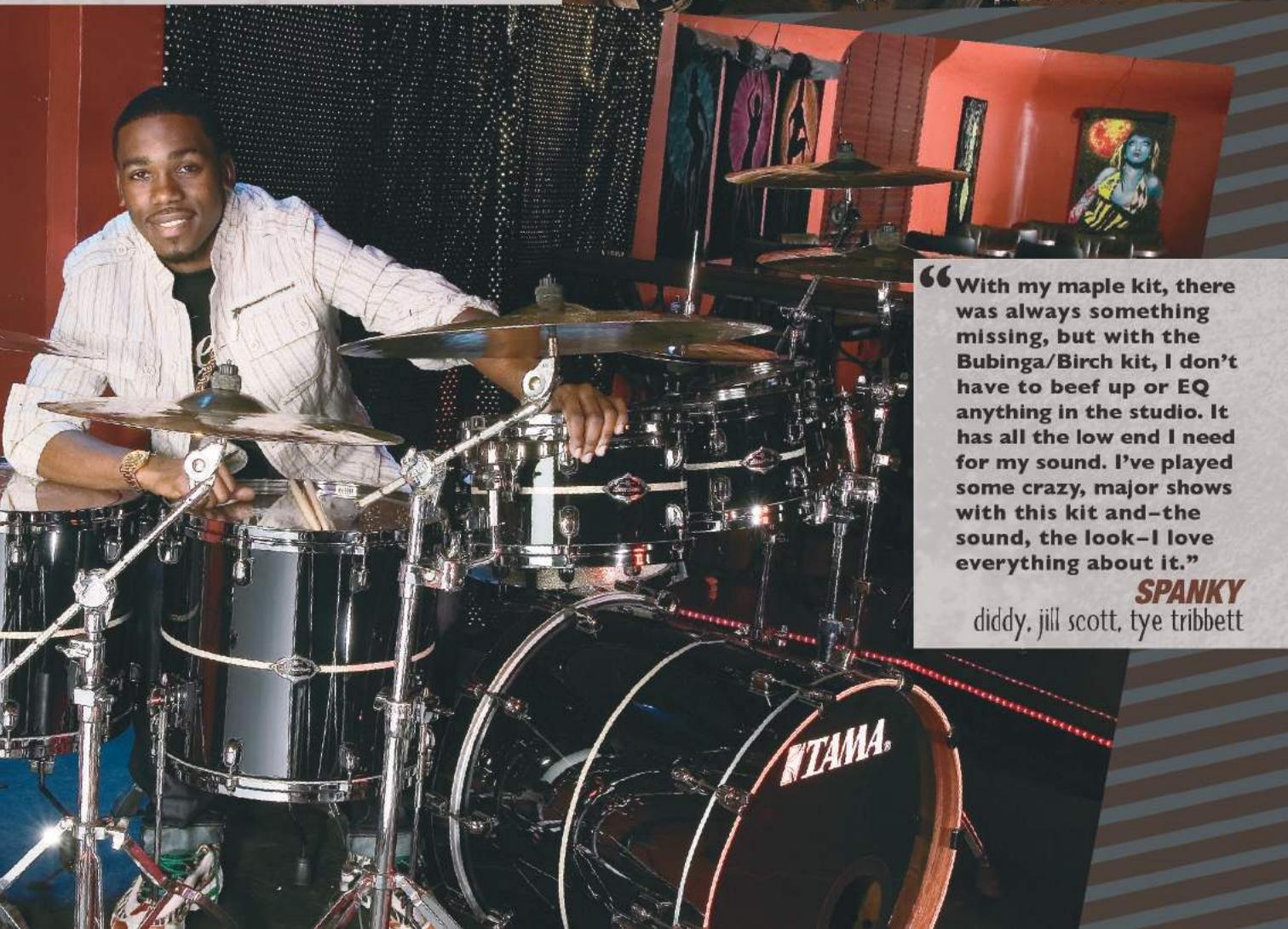




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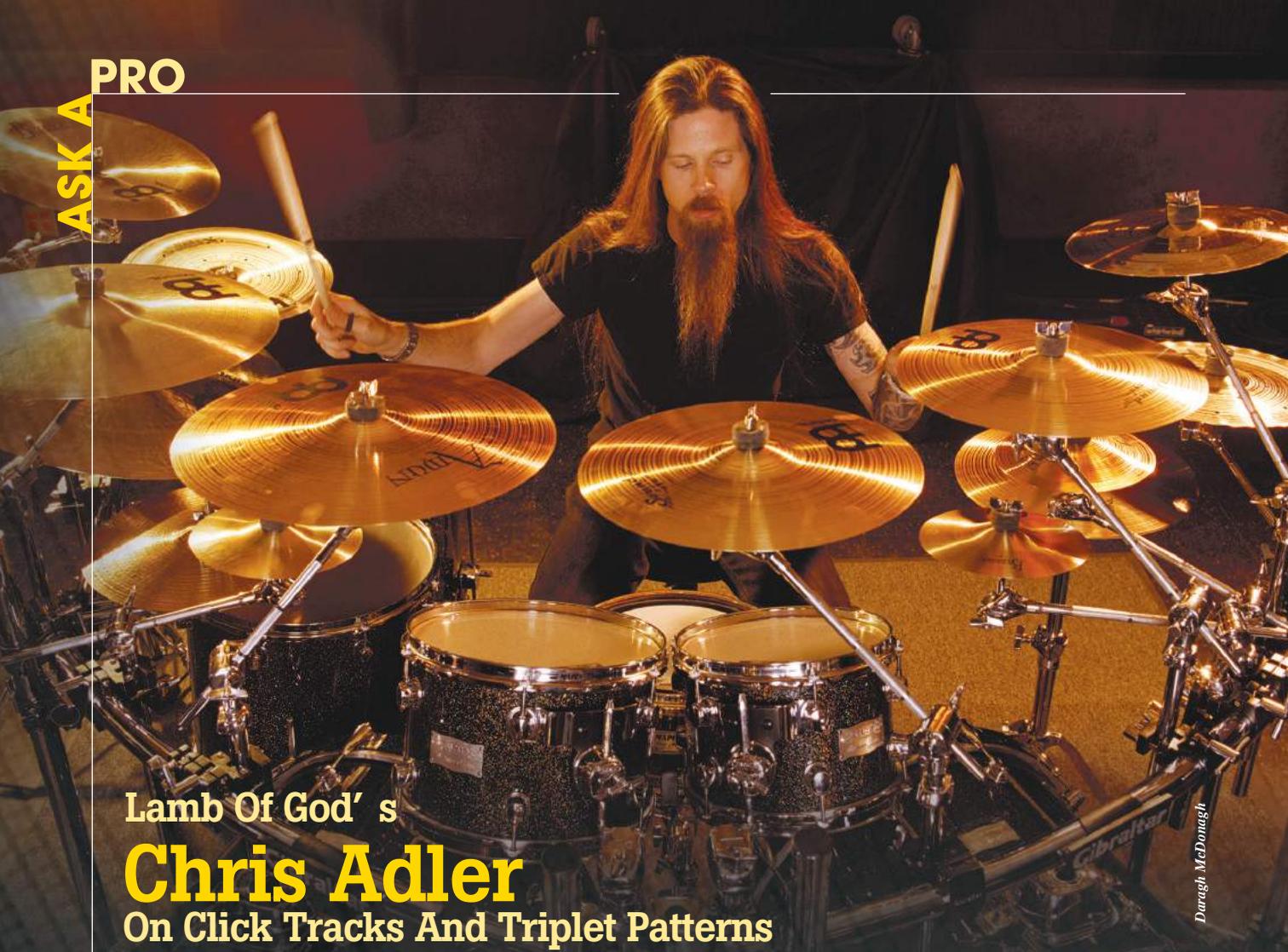
DAVE MACKINTOSH
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photo: David Hall



“With my maple kit, there was always something missing, but with the Bubinga/Birch kit, I don’t have to beef up or EQ anything in the studio. It has all the low end I need for my sound. I’ve played some crazy, major shows with this kit and—the sound, the look—I love everything about it.”

SPANKY
diddy, jill scott, tye tribbett



Daragh McDonagh

Lamb Of God's Chris Adler On Click Tracks And Triplet Patterns

I want to compliment you on your incredible double bass playing. On LOG's *Ashes Of The Wake*, your bass drum triplets and 16th notes are incredibly even. Does that ability come from using a metronome and practicing for hours? Did you use a click track on that album? Also, when you're recording a drum part, are you listening to some other part for reference, or do you have the drum part memorized?

Dan Voltz

Solid meter is one of the most necessary, yet often elusive, abilities for us drummers. When I started playing, I avoided click tracks, because I didn't think I was good enough to use them. So all of our demo material and our first two albums were recorded without click tracks. You can hear a lot of the push/pull on those records—which isn't a bad thing as long as everyone in the band is on the same page. But it becomes difficult when, for the sake of clarity, you track instruments separately. For this reason we began creating tempo maps (since we don't have a single song that maintains a constant bpm) and using click tracks during the recording of *As The Palaces Burn* and in all the demo work for *Ashes Of The Wake*. It made a huge difference. The thing I'd been intimidated by in the past now became my best friend, allowing me to pay attention to other aspects of my playing. I absolutely credit the click—and my practice with it—for the evenness and clarity you're hearing.

As for the actual recording, I'll typically have the drum part memorized and play to the click. I do use a demo or pre-production scratch guitar recording if there's ever a question—or if I just want to rock out a little harder during the process.

I've been listening to Lamb Of God's *Sacramento*, and you sure throw in some crazy patterns for a guy who didn't take formal drum studies and is a leftie who plays right-handed. How did you learn to play right-handed? Also, I notice that almost all LOG songs have a shuffle (triplet) feel. Can you suggest a way to develop double bass triplet fills?

Vothie from Indonesia

When I first started playing, I set up my drums the way the drummers in my previous bands had set up their kits. I never thought about right or left. There seemed to be a standard way of setting things up, and I went along with that. I do think it introduced a few extra obstacles, but I never considered them to be more or less than anyone else who was learning to play had to deal with. Looking back now, I think it helped me create a fairly unique playing style.

I played guitar and bass for years before I learned to play drums, and in metal guitar, playing tight triplets is essential. So I applied the same concept to the drums right from the beginning, and, as you noted, I use triplets often. I wish I could share some sort of easy-play secret, but in my experience it's been all about taking the time and wanting it enough to keep trying, no matter how many times it takes.

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QUICK BEATS

text and photo by Joe Perry

Chicago's Tris Imboden

Place of birth: Baltimore, Maryland

Influences: Mitch Mitchell, Louie Bellson, Steve Gadd, David Garibaldi, Ginger Baker, John Bonham, Dave Weckl, Tony Williams, Dennis Chambers

Hobbies/interests: Surfing

How I relax: Surf, do yoga, go to the gym

Favorite food: Mexican

Favorite fast food: Taco Bell

Favorite junk food: Chocolate

Favorite drink: Diet Coke

Favorite movie: *Blade Runner*

Favorite TV show: *The Sopranos*

Favorite album: *Axis: Bold As Love* by Jimi Hendrix

Vehicle I drive: 2002 Porsche CS 4

Other instruments I play: Harmonica, guitar

If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A beach bum/surfing instructor

Place I'd like to visit: Fiji

I wish I'd played drums on: "Spain" by Al Jarreau

Musicians I'd like to have worked with: Jimi Hendrix, Joe Zawinul

Next up & coming drummer: Nate Wood

Most prized possession: My 10' balsa and redwood big wave gun surfboard shaped by Dick Brewer

Person I would like to talk to: The first person ever to have deliberately jumped out of an airplane with a parachute. That takes balls!

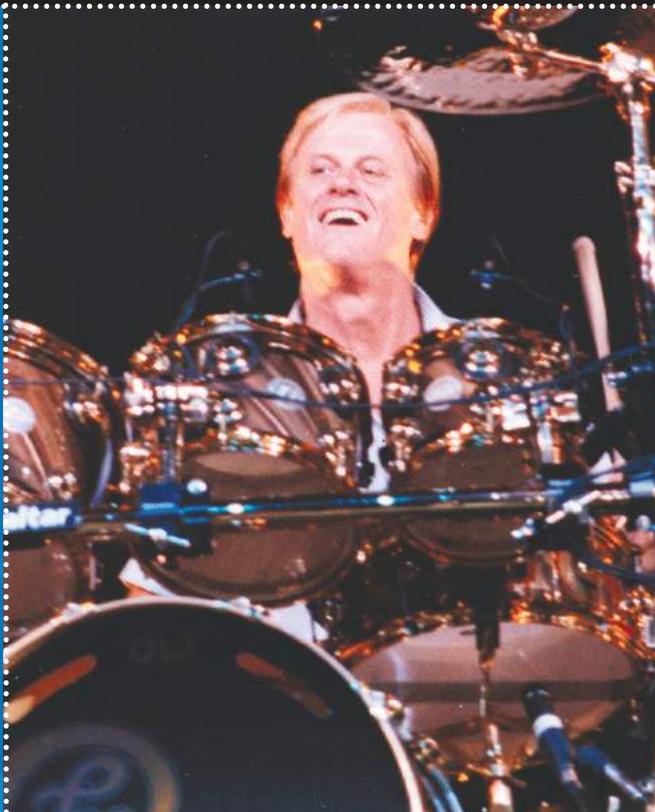
Person I admire: My wife, Kelly

Most memorable performance: With Al Jarreau in Europe, in 1986. Peter Erskine and Joe Zawinul were sitting right behind me. That made me nervous.

Most embarrassing moment on stage: With Kenny Loggins, on the last night of our tour in 1977. My tech duct-taped me to the drum chair and took pieces of my kit away, one by one, during the encore.

Most unusual venue played: Shamu Stadium at Sea World in San Diego, again with Kenny Loggins. We were right next to the whale tank, getting splashed by Shamu.

Biggest venue played: The World's Fair in Tsukuba, Japan, for 500,000 people



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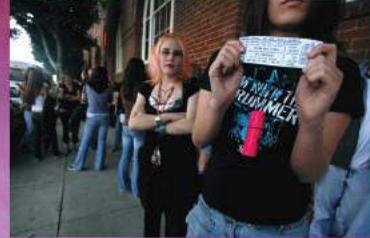
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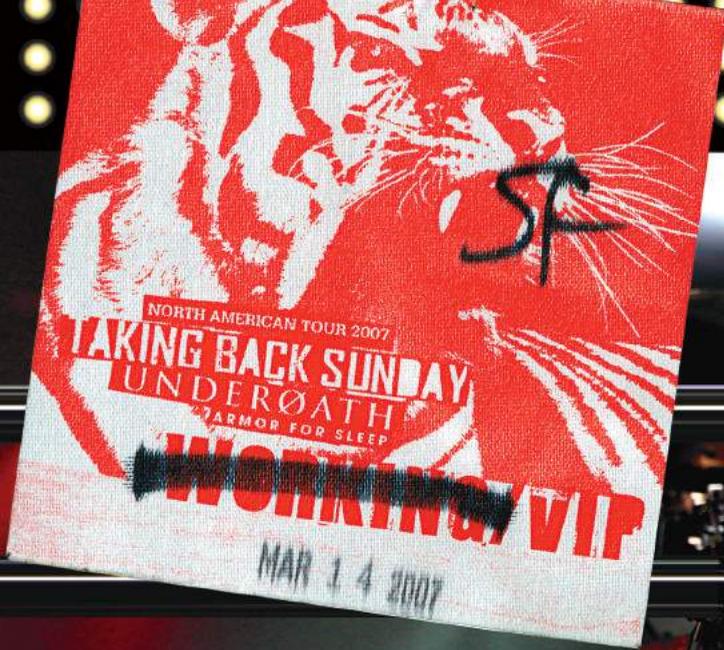


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SPIN



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BLUE CHANNEL
MY BLUE HEAVEN
AGAINST



MARK O'CONNELL

TAKING BACK SUNDAY

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Bryan HITT Rockin' The New And Improved Speedwagon

Eighteen-year REO Speedwagon drummer Bryan Hitt says that the band's new album, *Find Your Own Way Home*, took a couple of years to make. Taking their time seems to have paid off for the band, who are primarily known for huge power-ballad hits like "Keep On Loving You" and "Can't Fight This Feeling." Their new single "I Needed To Fall" recently made it into the top-30 of the adult contemporary charts—not too shabby for a completely self-financed, self-marketed effort.

"All of us think it's the best record we've ever made," Hitt enthuses. "There's no denying that it's REO Speedwagon, but it's definitely a new and improved Speedwagon. I think there's some great playing on it, and a whole lot of emotion. A lot of things were going on in everybody's lives [during the making of the album], which sometimes makes for great songwriting.

"My favorite song is 'Smilin' In The End,'" Hitt continues, "which is probably the most rockin' tune the band has done in thirty years. Another one of my favorites is 'Everything You Feel.' It's very different and starts out with gongs. In fact, I played a lot of percussion on this record—djembes, cajon, shakers, gongs, you name it, which was a lot of fun."

After eighteen years, Hitt says he keeps the REO material sounding fresh by continuing to practice. "I've been on a tear recently. None of my bandmates will stay on the same floor of the hotel with me!" Bryan brings his complete E-Pad practice kit on the road. "I've been more studious in the past few years than ever before. I don't think I figured out a lot of things until I was fifty. But one thing I figured out is, you get out what you put in, whether it's in a relationship or in your profession."

Robyn Flans



Prince's Cora COLEMAN-DUNHAM Rising To The Challenge

For the past two and a half years Cora Coleman-Dunham has been fulfilling her drumming dreams as part of Prince's latest band—which also includes her husband Joshua Dunham on bass. (The couple has played together since high school.) Cora says she's had a few especially memorable experiences with Prince, including a rain-soaked Super Bowl performance, a TV commercial, and playing on his new CD, *Planet Earth*. No question, Cora's come a long way since winning Guitar Center's Drum-Off competition in 2002, shortly after her move from Houston, Texas to California.

MD caught up with Cora one afternoon while she was on break from rehearsal at Prince's Paisley Park studios in Minneapolis. The band's been playing week-long dates in Las Vegas, Hollywood, and Long Island's Hamptons before heading over to Europe. "Playing with Prince is an adventure," Cora smiles. "I'm always learning something new."

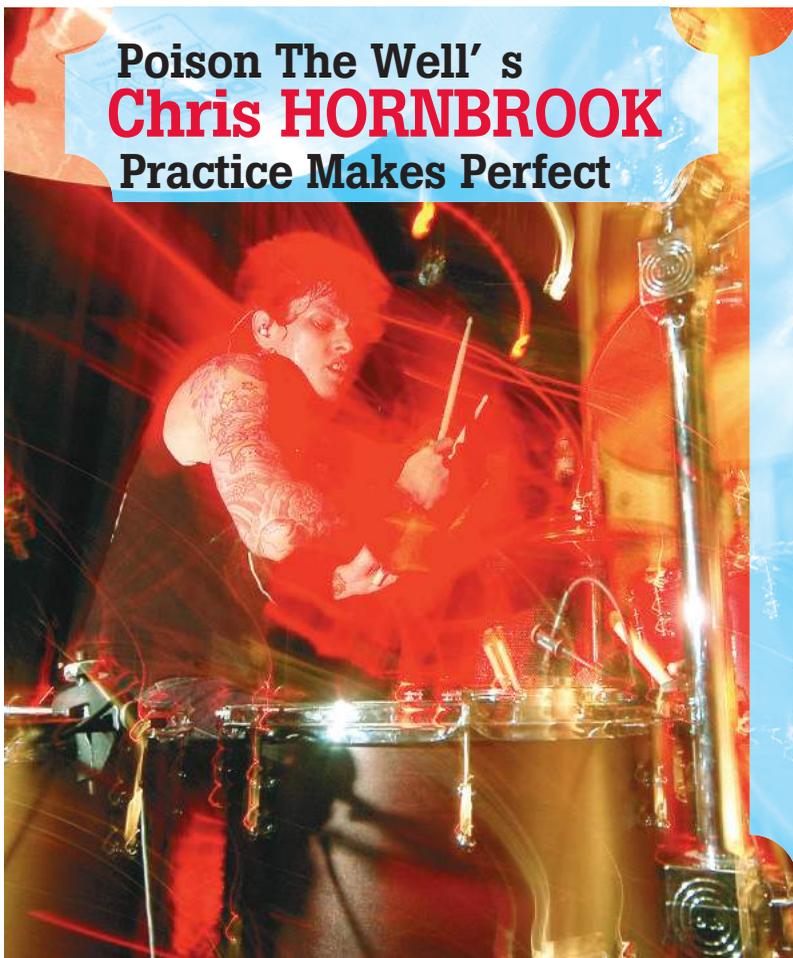
Regarding her hook-up with Prince, the drummer explains, "I was playing with keyboardist Frank McComb when Prince saw me play for the first time. I didn't know he was there until a break between sets, and we had a good conversation about gear and quality music and where the industry is going."

When asked how the Prince gig is different from others that Cora has done, she replies, "It's very high-energy. I play a lot more than I've ever played before. We do the main show, which is about two or two and a half hours, and then twenty minutes later we'll do an after-show, which is usually another two hours. And then, of course, we have soundcheck and rehearsals before all that. So it's a demanding gig energy-wise—but it's all good, because it keeps me on my toes."

For more on Cora, visit her Web site at www.coracolemandunham.com.

Billy Amendola

Poison The Well's Chris HORN BROOK Practice Makes Perfect



If practice makes perfect, then Poison The Well's Chris Hornbrook is on his way to mega-precision. That's because the drummer maintains a religious practice regimen, working out for two to four hours every day. "If I'm not working on actual ideas that I have, or certain rudiments or whatever, then I'm just playing to play," he explains. "I try to work on three or four concepts and really space things out."

Poison The Well's latest release, *Versions*, proves that Hornbrook's been putting his hours in, as it features a wide spectrum of drumming concepts applied to the act's progressive hardcore/metal/punk fusion. So how does he wrangle this wide range of forms into one song? "Usually I'll sit down and have a basic idea or groove," he says. "Then I'll try to build it from there and color it with whatever makes sense, like ghost notes, a certain feel, or certain accents."

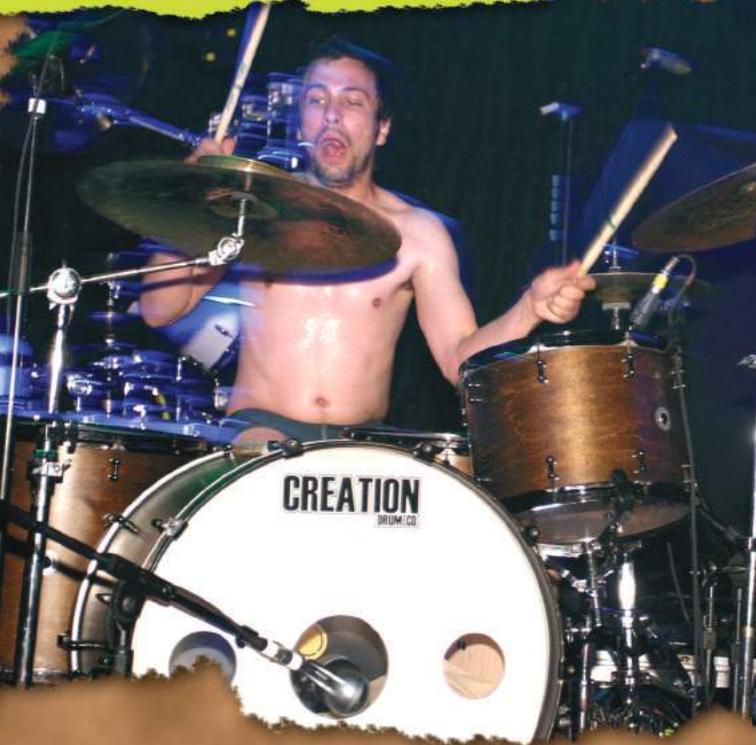
The Florida-based Hornbrook got his start behind the kit at age twelve, "just to release some aggression." After discovering the artistic end of drumming, he started listening to albums by The Mahavishnu Orchestra (with Billy Cobham, whom he claims as a "massive, massive influence") and Wayne Shorter, especially the sax titan's performances with jazz drumming great Elvin Jones. Hornbrook joined Poison The Well almost ten years ago, and has credits on several of the band's releases.

In order to record the band's latest album, Poison The Well trekked overseas to Sweden, working once again with Pelle Henricsson and Eskil Lövsström (who recorded Refused's seminal album *The Shape Of Punk To Come*). Hornbrook attributes the disc's stellar drum tones to the producer's know-how, mic selection, the array of drums he used on the album, and the room in which he recorded, which was an old, octagonal wooden lodge. "We set up the drums in this little cove," he explains. "So when we were playing, I was projecting into the octagonal room."

Hornbrook currently plays a five-piece Orange County kit with acrylic shells. Of the see-through shells, he says, "Bonzo played them, and I know that Jon Theodore, who was in The Mars Volta, played them. And Cobham played them at some point. So I was like, Why not? And it turned out to be pretty awesome."

Waleed Rashidi

The Fall Of Troy's Andrew FORSMAN Manipulating The Drums



The first thing you'll notice on The Fall Of Troy's *Manipulator* is that there's a lot of sound happening for a three-piece post-punk act. Carefully juggling the punishing rhythmic duties of this outfit is drummer Andrew Forsman.

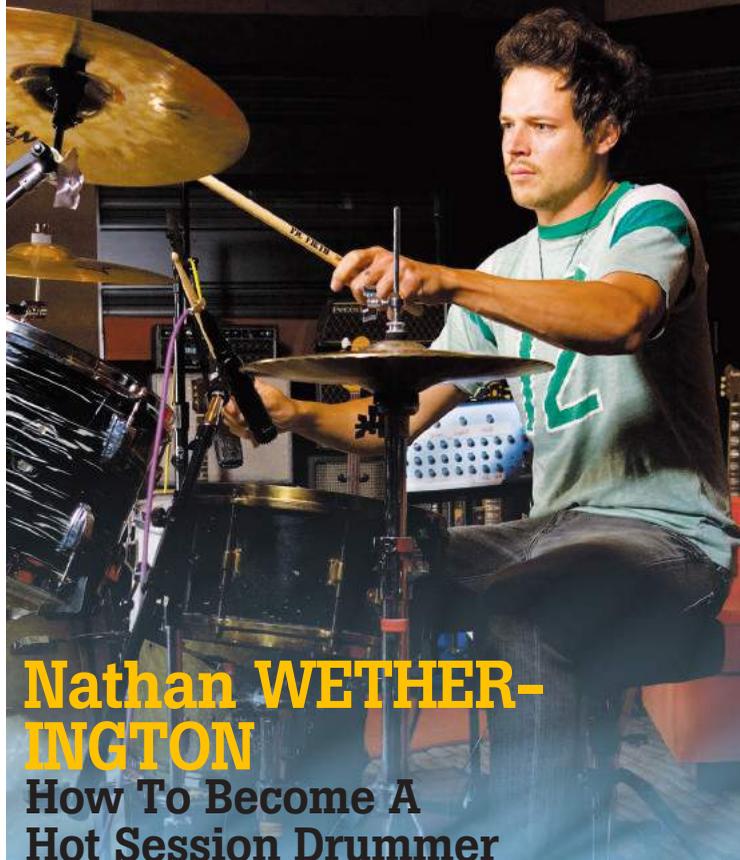
Forsman worked closely with producer Matt Bayles (Minus The Bear, Isis, Mastodon) on the *Manipulator* sessions to ensure things were locked down tight. "Bayles was really adamant about getting good takes all the way through," Forsman says, "as opposed to playing just one part and putting it together in the computer. He made me want to play everything as well as I possibly could, without putting too much pressure on me. He definitely keeps you working until it's exactly as it should be."

Though Forsman is used to recording with a Ludwig Vistalite kit, he says *Manipulator* is the first album that he's tracked with a maple kit, including a custom-made Keplinger snare. The drummer currently plays a burly Creation set, sporting a 14" rack, an

18" floor tom, and a 24" kick. "I just wanted to have big-ass drums that push a little more air," he says. "But the problem with that is that you have to hit them a little harder. It helps to use bigger sticks. When I switched kits, it took a little getting used to. But at this point, I'm really happy with the way it sounds."

Forsman, who started Fall Of Troy when he was sixteen years old, honed his skills via collaborations with guitarist Thomas Erak. "When I started playing with Thomas," Forsman recalls, "he was playing so much off-the-wall stuff that there was a really quick learning period during which I had to improve fast. I had never done anything like that. In the first three or four months of being in our band, I felt like I transitioned from being a pretty straight-ahead player to one who did more interesting stuff. Now I just want to play harder, steadier, and faster. Hopefully I'll improve on all fronts. Just being consistent is really important to me."

Waleed Rashidi



Nathan WETHERINGTON How To Become A Hot Session Drummer

Nathan Wetherington was a working actor in Hollywood when he accidentally became a professional drummer. Having played drums from ages ten to seventeen, Nathan left drumming for acting after he scored a two-year gig with The Blue Man Group. But he had an unexpected chance to sit behind the kit again when he befriended vocalist Sierra Swan, who not only hired him to play a string of shows in New York, but also brought him into the studio to record drum tracks for her 2006 release, *Ladyland*.

Through Swan, Nathan met in-demand producer Linda Perry, who changed the course of his career literally overnight. Perry was so impressed with the drummer's intuitive feel and unassuming approach to the drums that she phoned him the next day to record with The Dixie Chicks. That quickly, Nathan became the only drummer Perry was calling to work with such high-profile artists as Christina Aguilera, Courtney Love, Alicia Keys, and Ben Jelen. It was during the sessions for Jelen's record, in fact, that Nathan walked away from acting and fully embraced his new life as a drummer.

Linda Perry enthusiastically explains why Wetherington is her "go to" guy. "Nathan instantly grabbed my attention because he *wasn't* a drummer, so he was listening to music from a different perspective. He's tasteful about his fills and has a lot of dynamics—plus he's very versatile. If you listen to all the songs he's recorded, you won't even believe it's the same drummer. Nathan makes everything sound good because he's extremely sensitive to how he hits *everything*—from the snare and kick to the toms, cymbals, and hi-hat. Those qualities make him really special to me."

Now playing drums up to six days a week, Nathan plans to take his drumming career as far as he can. "The second I learn something new, I'm excited for about five minutes—until I realize there's *so much more*," he admits. "It's a fluke how I ended up in the scene, but I don't want anybody to think I'm not paying my dues. A lot of drummers will think I was just lucky, but I've worked harder on drumming than I've worked on anything in my entire life. I just came to the game a little late."

Gail Worley

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Jimmy Cobb (Miles Davis): 1/20/29
Ed Shaughnessy (*The Tonight Show*): 1/29/29
Grady Tate (soul/jazz great): 1/14/32
Nick Mason (Pink Floyd): 1/27/45
Aynsley Dunbar (rock giant): 1/10/46
Bob Moses (jazz great): 1/28/48
Corky Laing (Mountain): 1/28/48

George "Funky" Brown (Kool & The Gang): 1/15/49
Eddie Bayers (Nashville studio great): 1/28/49
Phil Collins (Genesis/solo): 1/31/51
Paul Wertico (ex-Pat Metheny): 1/5/53
Fred White (Earth Wind & Fire): 1/13/55
Dave Weckl (solo artist): 1/8/60
Jeff "Tain" Watts (jazz great): 1/20/60

Curt Bisquera (sessions): 1/3/64
Steven Adler (Guns N' Roses): 1/21/65
Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters): 1/14/69
Jason Bittner (Shadows Fall): 1/11/70
Jon Wysocki (Staind): 1/17/71

UPDATE NEWS



Chris Pennie is on the road with Coheed And Cambria in support of their new album, *No World For Tomorrow*.

Torry Castellano is on The Donnas' new release, *Bitchin'*.

Tommy Clufetos is on Ted Nugent's latest, *Love Grenade*.

Mike Baird, Matt Laug, and **Ed Eblen** are on Jere Mendelsohn's *Triple Double Take*.

John Reynolds is touring with Sinead O'Connor.

Dan Mintzer is on six tracks and **Petter Lindgard** is on the remainder of *Neptune City* by Nicole Atkins.

Mark Trojanowski is on Sister Hazel's holiday record, *Santa's Playlist*.

Perry Cavari is playing drums in the new Mel Brooks Broadway musical, *Young Frankenstein*.

Randall Stoll and **Ben Smith** are on Ann Wilson's solo CD, *Hope & Glory*.

Dave Weckl is on pianist T Lavitz's latest project, *School Of Arts*.

Live At The Apollo's house drummer, **Ralph Rolle**, recently performed at a jazz festival in South Africa with singer Freddie Jackson. Ralph is also touring with the legendary R&B band Chic while on break from the TV show.

One of *Rolling Stone* magazine's "10 Artists To Watch," Matt White, has a debut CD, *Best Days*, that features **Joey Waronker, Adrian Young, Abe Laboriel,** and **Brian McCloud**.

Charley Drayton and Pat Thrall are producing new tracks with the divinyls and will be performing in Australia for the first time in twelve years. An EP is being released shortly, with a full-length CD to follow in '08.

Seventeen drummers, including **Sheila E, Vinnie Colaiuta, John "JR" Robinson, Dennis Chambers, Doane Perry,** and **Alphonse Mouzon** are featured on the charity CD *Rhythm Of Life*. For more info visit www.myspace.com/rhythmoflifecd.

Congratulations to **Jeremy Hummel** and his wife, Yvette, on the birth of their daughter Violet Marie.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gene Krupa was born on 1/15/09; **Max Roach** was born on 1/08/24. **Cozy Cole** passed away on 1/29/81, **John Guerin** on 1/5/04, Jefferson Airplane's **Spencer Dryden** on 1/10/05, and Traffic's **Jim Capaldi** on 1/28/05.

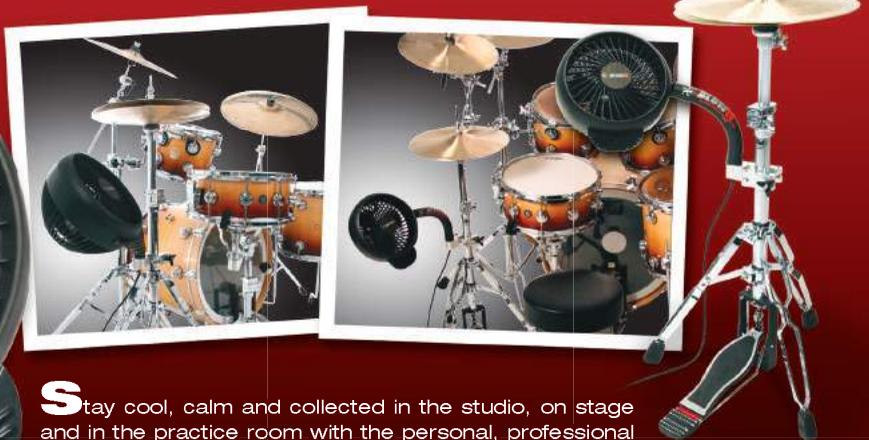
1/3/74: Bob Dylan and The Band (with **Levon Helm** on drums) start a thirty-nine-city tour at Chicago Stadium. On 1/30/74, they play NYC's Madison Square Garden. The shows are recorded for their live double record, *Before The Flood*.

1/19/80: Michael Jackson has the number-1 US single with "Rock With You," from his *Off The Wall* record. **John "JR" Robinson** is on drums.

1/31/85: ex-Credence Clearwater Revival leader John Fogerty (with **Prairie Prince** on drums) makes his first live appearance in years at A&M's Soundstage in Hollywood, California.

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Reggae References

I'm trying to learn reggae drumming. Can you recommend some key tracks with quality drumming...sort of a Top 10 of reggae drummers? Any help would be appreciated.

Rich Babiarz

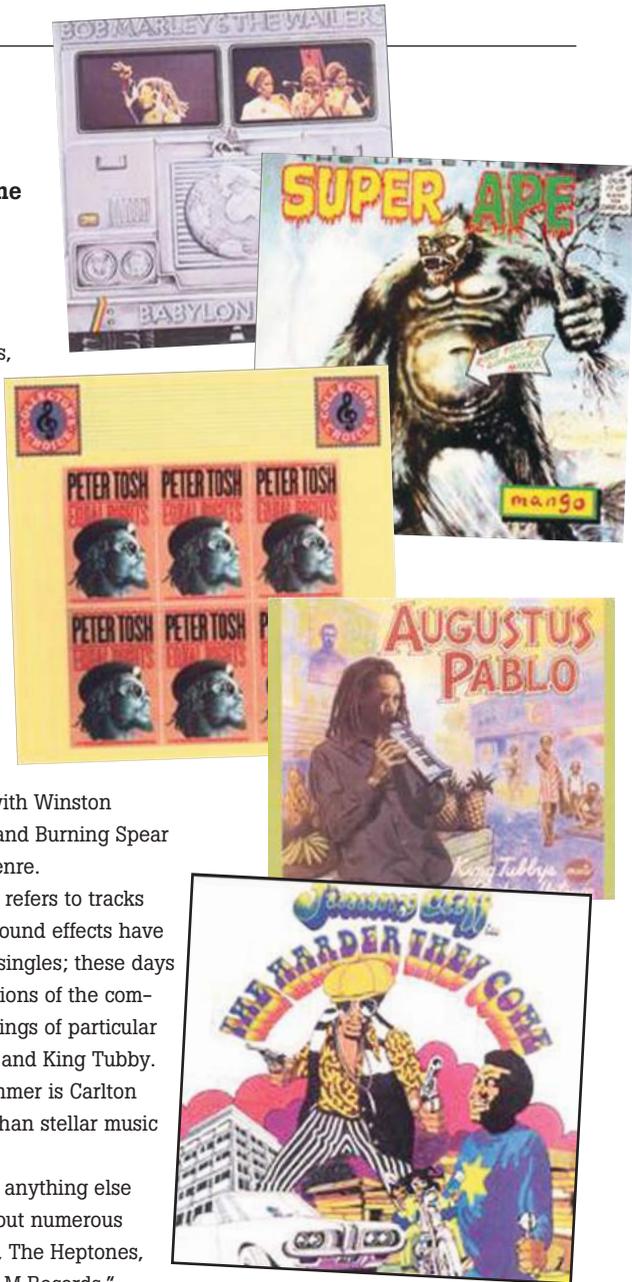
Managing editor Adam Budofsky is MD's resident reggae fanatic. He replies, "Suggesting specific reggae tracks to check out for the drumming is a bit tough. Reggae isn't like some genres of music, where the drums are a prominent instrument in the mix. Instead, reggae is all about the big picture, and the greatest reggae drumming often doesn't jump out at you. With that in mind, it makes more sense to me to track down music by reggae's most important singers and producers, and then listen carefully to the drumming on their tracks.

"You absolutely can't go wrong with Bob Marley & The Wailers, with Carlton Barrett on drums. Studio albums like Exodus and Catch A Fire are wonderful, though I really like the live stuff, especially Babylon By Bus. And don't miss the very early Marley stuff, which is available on many compilations. Stick to the Studio One and Trojan collections.

"Next, check out Peter Tosh (Legalize It, with Carlton Barrett, Equal Rights, with Sly Dunbar), Jimmy Cliff (The Harder They Come soundtrack, with Winston Grennan), Toots & The Maytals (Funky Kingston, Winston Grennan again), and Burning Spear (Marcus Garvey, Leroy Horsemouth Wallace). These are all classics of the genre.

"A lot of the best reggae is referred to as 'dub reggae,' which basically refers to tracks where the majority of the vocals have been mixed out and a lot of special sound effects have been added, especially delay. Often these would be released as B-sides to singles; these days it's also common to see 'normal' studio albums accompanied by dub versions of the complete album. The best way to delve into this world is to seek out the recordings of particular producers. The big guys are Lee Scratch Perry (Super Ape, Cloak & Dagger) and King Tubby. (Check out King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown by Augustus Pablo. The drummer is Carlton Barrett again. Unbelievable.) Be careful here, though, because a lot of less than stellar music has been re-issued over the years.

"Finally, in addition to the Marley stuff, you can also do pretty well with anything else originally released on the Studio One and Trojan labels, both of which put out numerous compilations. And don't ignore real old-school reggae, like The Ethiopians, The Heptones, The Melodians, and The Abyssinians, or newer stuff, especially material on M Records."



Riveted Ludwigs

I have a Ludwig kit with rivets in the seams. What years were these drums produced, and why did Ludwig use rivets?

Mark Hopkins

Ludwig sales coordinator Gary Devore replies, "Rivets were used for a short time in the very late 1970s and early '80s. There were no rivets in the drums shown in the 1978 catalog. Rivets are clearly visible in the 1981 catalog, but gone by the 1984 catalog. At the time, Ludwig was having problems with the wrap material—called Pyralin—shrinking and shifting on the drum. The rivets were put in the area where the material overlaps, to combat that shrinkage. This was not considered a successful solution, and it was only done for a short time. William F. Ludwig II talks about this in his autobiography, *The Making Of A Drum Company*, edited by Rob Cook and published by Rebeats Publications (www.Rebeats.com). Today we use wraps with a PVC base that's very stable. This eliminates the shrinking problem."



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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.

Drumming And Pregnancy

I'm a rock drummer and I'm about fourteen weeks pregnant with my first baby. I ceased gigging due to the smoky venues, but I am looking to do some recording during the pregnancy. However, I'm concerned about volume levels. Given how loud my kit is, and considering the cranked-up guitar amps I play next to, can the volume levels affect the hearing development of my baby? I've asked my obstetricians, but they don't really know, since they haven't seen many studies. What would you recommend?

Sara

This is a great question. All too often we focus on male issues when it comes to drums. I hope we receive more female-centric questions in the future.

As far as volume levels and fetal development go, here's what we know. A baby's entire ear structure—the outer, middle, and inner ear—is completely developed by twenty-four weeks in a normal pregnancy. Part of the inner ear is the cochlea, which is the apparatus that converts sonic vibrations into the nerve impulses perceived as sound by our brains. At twenty-seven weeks, the baby can actually begin to respond to the transmitted sounds reaching him or her.

In controlled, relatively quiet surroundings, the fluid-filled amniotic sac and the mother's body do a great job of muffling sounds

and preventing the baby's ears from amplifying sounds. But for rock drummers, as well as for workers surrounded by jackhammers, chainsaws, lawnmowers, and airplanes, normal daily environments are filled with hours of potentially damaging volume levels. This is especially true at higher frequencies. This auditory assault can increase the odds of a fetus suffering hearing loss. Additionally, mothers-to-be in their third trimester run the risk of premature delivery and low birth-weight babies as a consequence of repeated stress on the child from high volume levels.

Rock concert levels (80 to 130 decibels, depending on where you are) and band practices in small, closed environments are essentially no different. Expectant mothers should refrain from subjecting a developing baby to such risks. So I recommend enjoying outdoor rock concerts from the lawn seats, where the volume level is no more than a moderately loud stereo at home. To be safe, until the baby is delivered, hold off on indoor concerts, loud band practices, loud recording sessions near drums or amps, and loud stereos in enclosed cars.



Illustration by Jeff Harty

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 of experience, currently performing with Johnny Hi-Fi (www.johnnyhi-fi.com).

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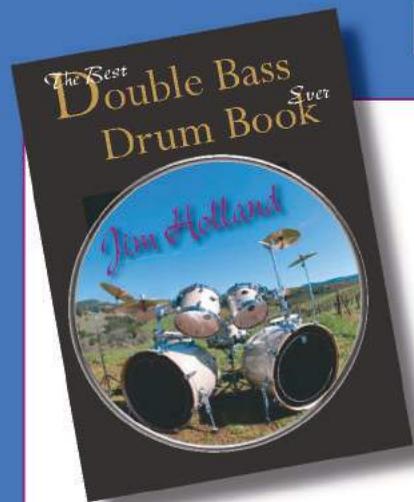
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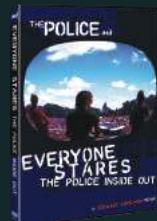
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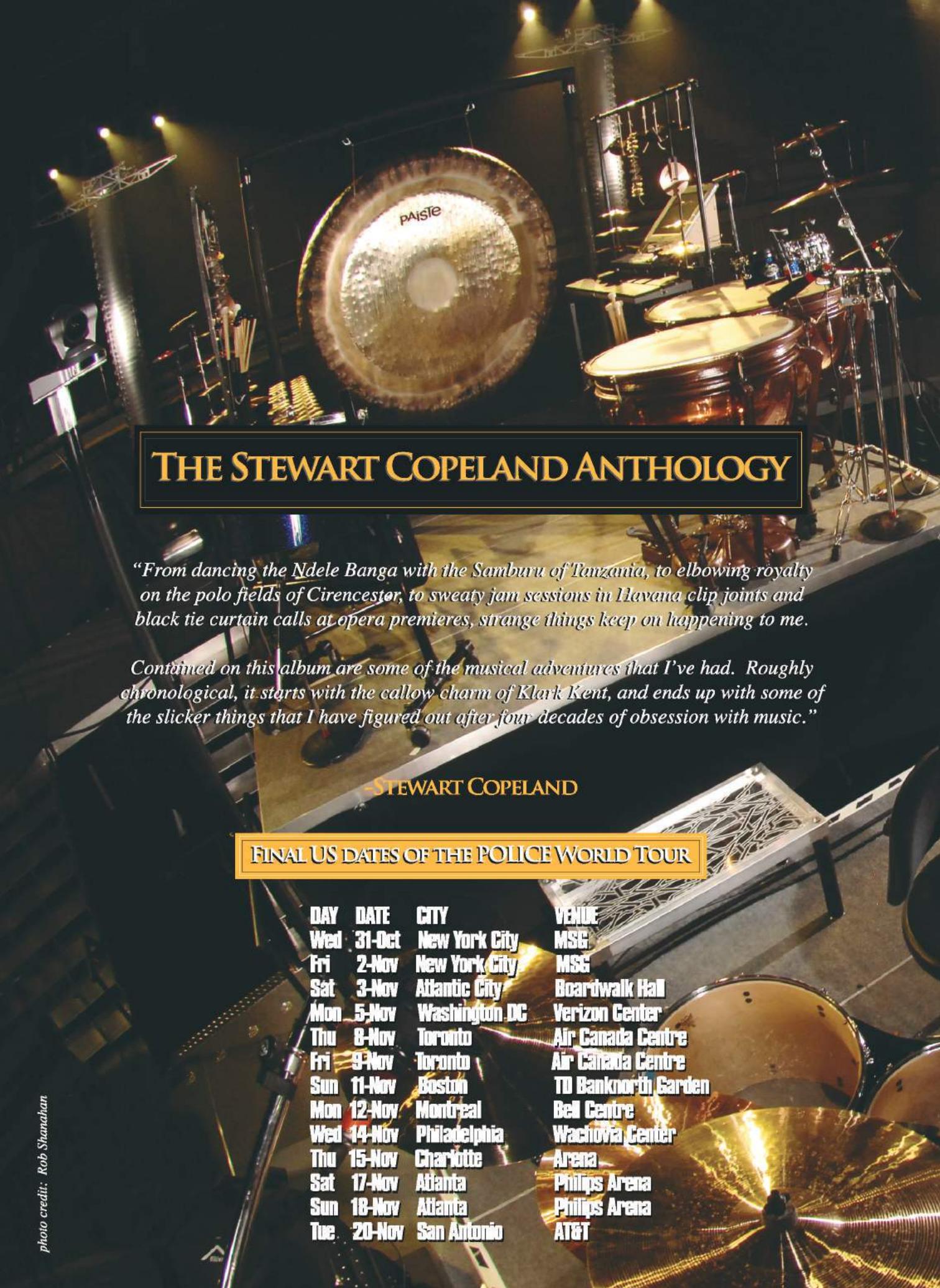
EVERYONE STARES is the first-person account through Stewart's eyes of The Police's ascent from obscurity to worldwide fame. Culled from over 50 hours of Super 8 movies he shot during the acclaimed trio's heyday, the film offers an insider's perspective on touring, his band members and the adoring fans that put the audience in the drummer's seat.



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THE STEWART COPELAND ANTHOLOGY

“From dancing the Ndele Banga with the Samburu of Tanzania, to elbowing royalty on the polo fields of Cirencester, to sweaty jam sessions in Havana clip joints and black tie curtain calls at opera premieres, strange things keep on happening to me.

Continued 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.”

-STEWART COPELAND

FINAL US DATES OF THE POLICE WORLD TOUR

DAY	DATE	CITY	VENUE
Wed	31-Oct	New York City	MSG
Fri	2-Nov	New York City	MSG
Sat	3-Nov	Atlantic City	Boardwalk Hall
Mon	5-Nov	Washington DC	Verizon Center
Thu	8-Nov	Toronto	Air Canada Centre
Fri	9-Nov	Toronto	Air Canada Centre
Sun	11-Nov	Boston	TD Banknorth Garden
Mon	12-Nov	Montreal	Bell Centre
Wed	14-Nov	Philadelphia	Wachovia Center
Thu	15-Nov	Charlotte	Arena
Sat	17-Nov	Atlanta	Philips Arena
Sun	18-Nov	Atlanta	Philips Arena
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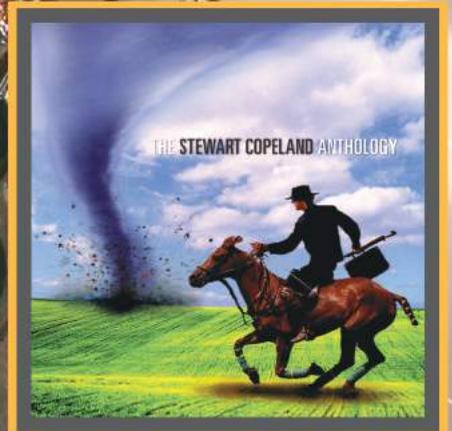
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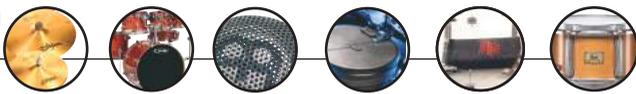
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Zildjian Armand Series Cymbals

>> Bringing Back The Sounds Of The ' 60s

by Rick Mattingly

KEY NOTES

- Cymbals are rich in overtones
- Rides are especially versatile
- Crashes have limited projection capability

In the 1970s and ' 80s, experienced drummers sometimes complained that new cymbals sounded brighter and more metallic than their old cymbals. In an attempt to quickly "mellow out" new cymbals, some drummers went to the bizarre extreme of burying the cymbals for a couple of weeks so they could "age."

Cymbals do tend to mellow a bit over time as a result of dirt muffling the overtones. But the main reason that cymbals of the ' 70s and ' 80s sounded brighter than their predecessors from the 1960s is simply that the new ones were heavier. What was considered a medium ride in the ' 60s was considered a medium-thin a decade later, so of course the newer cymbals were going to sound brighter and pingier.

Keep in mind that it took the music industry a while to react to rock ' n' roll. True, after The Beatles hit in 1964, a lot of drum and cymbal factories were running three shifts to keep up with the demand for instruments. But for the most part, the instruments they were turning out had been designed for jazz. Most ' 60s rock drummers were using four-piece kits, just like the boppers, and the cymbals were on the dark, thin side as compared to today' s "rock" models.

In terms of cymbals, A Zildjians were the dominant models. K Zildjians were still being made in Turkey, and they were only available in limited quantities. The American-made A models had been designed for jazz, because jazz drummers were still the biggest market for drums and cymbals. Plenty of drummers who today are remembered for their use of "old Ks," such as Mel Lewis, had As in their setups as well. Nobody talks much about "old As," but they should, because those models had a dark, mellow quality that not only worked for jazz, but also gave early rock a distinct sound. When you recall Ringo' s "swishy" sound with The Beatles, you' re talking "old As," and you can hear that sound on plenty of other 1960s rock classics.



They' re Back

In celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the "Summer Of Love," Zildjian recently released the Armand Zildjian series, which includes rides, crashes, and hi-hats designed to evoke the sound of 1960s A Zildjian cymbals. They' re all on the thinner side of the weight spectrum, so they have slightly lower pitches than you might normally associate with contemporary A Zildjians. They' re also very rich in overtones.

The Armand cymbals remind me of K Zildjians, in the sense that they' re going to fill out a band' s sound from within, rather than slice through it or stand out over it. On the other hand, the Armand cymbals don' t have the dry, "trashy" overtones associated with Ks. They' re still fairly bright-sounding, albeit at a lower pitch.

Rides

The Armand series includes 20" and 21" medium-thin rides that follow up on the previously introduced 19" Armand "Beautiful Baby" ride. The two new models aren' t fitted with rivets, which was a feature of the original Armand ride. They don' t need them. With their medium-thin weight, both cymbals have plenty of overtones that would provide a cushion for a band' s music. But while the sound might be described as "washy," there is still plenty of stick definition.

The 20" model will probably be the most popular, as its sound is mainstream enough for a wide variety of applications. It' s pitched a bit lower than the typical A Zildjian 20" medium ride, but still high enough to fit a lot of situations.

The 21" Armand ride reflects the fact that Armand series cymbals aren' t "reproduction" models in the spirit of, say, a Fender reissue 1960s Stratocaster guitar. The first 21" ride didn' t show up until the early ' 70s, and it was a thicker cymbal—called a "Rock 21"—designed to accommodate the louder volume and heavier playing style that ' 70s rock was demanding. As such, it was loud and pingy. The Armand 21" ride, by contrast, is quite low-pitched and full of overtones. Jazz drummers who want a dark sound—but not one as dry as Ks produce—might find this model to their liking.

Hi-Hats

Armand series hi-hats are available in 13" and 14" models. Both are based on the "New Beat" hi-hat formula of matching a thinner top cymbal with a heavier bottom—in this case, medium-thin tops with medium bottoms.

The 14" hats produce a very meaty sound, both when riding on them closed with sticks and when using the pedal for a "chick" sound. Open "barks" are especially full-sounding, as is the "sloshy" sound created when the cymbals are held together loosely. If you want that Ringo hi-hat sound, these will get it. What these hats

don' t do is cut. Instead, they' re all about blending.

The 13" Armand hats have a reasonable amount of body for their size, but the volume is greatly reduced. They' d be fine in a low-volume, acoustic situation (like a jazz trio), but they' d probably need to be miked otherwise.

Splash And Crashes

The Armand series includes a thin 10" splash. As with the 21" ride, this isn' t a model that' s particularly reminiscent of the 1960s.

Ginger Baker was the only prominent rock drummer I recall having a splash back then. But it fits well with the other cymbals in the series, and it adds some modern variety. It has a nice spread of overtones for such a small, thin cymbal, and it' s pitched high enough to cut through a reasonable amount of volume. It speaks quickly and dies fast, but you obviously wouldn' t want to bash this one too hard.

The 16" thin and medium-thin crashes are both quite effective. I originally had my doubts about the thin model, thinking it wouldn' t have any body at all. But the overtones are so fat that it creates a very nice, rich sound. It doesn' t have a tremendous amount of volume or sustain, but it would add a very musical color to a key moment in a song without simply drowning out whatever else was going on.

The 16" medium-thin crash provides a similar function, but with a bit more body and sustain. The pitch was not different enough between the two 16" models I tested to be significant, so I' d choose between the two of them based on volume requirements. The medium-thin was a bit louder and would stand up to heavier playing. But it was slightly less rich in overtones.

The 18" Armand crashes were very nice complements to the 16" models. Again, the pitches between the thin and medium-thin models were not significantly different. The thin version had thicker overtones, giving it a richer sound. But the medium-thin had a bit more volume and sustain.

Summary

Zildjian' s ads for the Armand cymbals draw heavily on the flashy, "psychedelic," "flower power" look of the ' 60s. One should not, however, take that to mean that there is something "extreme" about these cymbals. On the contrary, they' re subtler than many modern cymbals. In that respect, they truly do reflect the typical sound of ' 60s cymbals, which supported, reinforced, and filled out the music. With their fat overtones and slightly darker sounds, ' 60s cymbals sounded much more musical than the anvil-like disks that a lot of drummers subsequently went to in a desperate attempt to be heard over ever-enlarging guitar amps and P.A. systems.

When I was coming up in the ' 60s, cymbals were judged primarily by their musicality and richness of overtones. Forgive the pun, but in that respect, the Armand series gets an "A."

THE NUMBERS

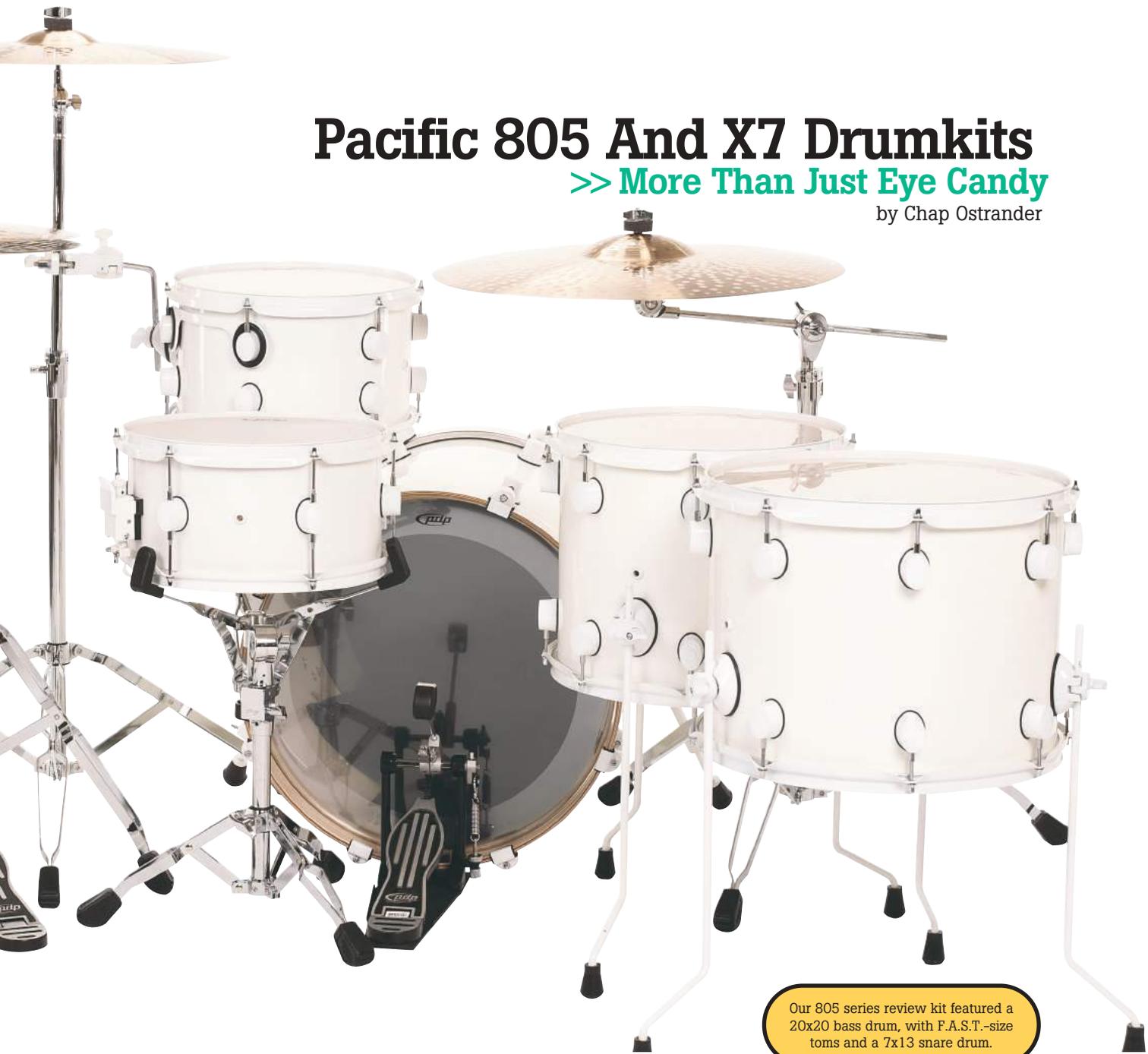
10" Splash	\$180
13" Hi-Hats (pair)	\$470
14" Hi-Hats (pair)	\$526
16" Crash (thin or medium-thin)	\$316
18" Crash (thin or medium-thin)	\$373
20" Ride	\$428
21" Ride	\$470

www.zildjian.com

Pacific 805 And X7 Drumkits

>> More Than Just Eye Candy

by Chap Ostrander



Our 805 series review kit featured a 20x20 bass drum, with F.A.S.T.-size toms and a 7x13 snare drum.

KEY NOTES

- Striking finish choices
- Sensible hardware packages
- Powder Coated 805 tom mount doesn't hold tightly enough

Two new drumkit series recently introduced by Pacific are designed to offer unique sonic and visual options. And they're designed to do it at prices that should fit well within most student or semi-pro budgets.

Mighty Kits From Little Snare Drums Grow

Pacific's 805 drumkits are an outgrowth of the 805 snare drum line. The drums feature $\frac{5}{16}$ "-thick all-birch shells, and our review kit was the smaller of two configurations offered. The drums included a 7x13 snare, an 8x12 rack tom (mounted on Pacific's STM suspension mount), 12x14 and 12x16 floor toms, and a 20x20 bass. (The larger configuration includes a 7x14 snare, a 13" rack tom, 16" and 18" floor toms, and a 24" bass drum.)

The first aspect of our review kit that struck me was its appearance: white...lots and lots of white. White lacquer shells, white lugs, and white rims. The bass drum spurs and floor tom legs were white as well, as were the leg and tom mounts on the drumshells. The smooth lacquer finish was carefully applied, and the coatings on the hardware seemed durable. But the overall look was unavoidably monochromatic—the kind of finish that you're likely to either love or hate. (I thought it was pretty cool; my wife didn't.) Pacific also offers 805 kits with black hardware on black shells, with red hard-

ware on black shells, and with orange hardware on blue shells. I'm surprised that none of the other hardware colors is offered as an option on the white shells. The contrast would be dramatic.

All 805 kits come fitted with clear Remo heads for the toms, a coated white batter for the snare, and self-muffling heads for the bass drum. All of the drums feature the True Pitch tuning system, which employs very fine threads on the tension rods. The bass drum and floor toms have eight lugs per head, while the snare drum and rack tom have six.

Additional features include a pillow with hook-and-loop fasteners for the bass drum, full-length rubber liners underneath the bass drum claws, and black rubber gaskets under all the lugs and leg mounts (which set off the white hardware nicely). I appreciated that PDP included a few extra tension rods, washers, and even threaded inserts.

White Noise

So, how did this cloud-like kit sound? To begin with, that 7x13 six-lug snare drum was very responsive. It played well over a full dynamic range, and it produced strong, crackling rimshots.

The rack tom had a clear voice, and it could be tuned high or low and still sound good. The floor toms sounded big and full, and they were easy to tune so that I could maintain a distinct space between their pitches. They also seemed to ring for days.

The bass drum (with the included pillow installed) was dynamite. I laid the pillow lengthwise, so that it lightly touched both heads. The drum's tone was punchy and full. When I tuned it up to try it in bebop range, it just sounded fuller.

Due to the properties of their birch shells, the 805 drums had tons of punch and bottom. Each drum sounded deep and warm, with a full spread of low frequencies. The highs contained a mix of overtones that helped the voices sing out when struck. The drums were also responsive and easy to tune. Bottom line: The 805 kit possesses a big sound with wide dynamic and tuning ranges.

Slip-Sliding Away

The nature of powder coating is that it's very smooth. This caused a problem with the powder-coated rack tom mount that was designed to attach to a cymbal stand. It slipped. Even when I tightened it as tightly as I deemed safe (I was afraid of crushing the stand tube), the tom could still be pushed off its axis. This could be easily fixed with the addition of a memory lock on the stand underneath the mount.

X7: A Secret Formula?

I have to admit that the name "X7" reminds me of commercials I saw in my youth: "Try new Slammo, with secret ingredient X7!" And that image might not be far off, since there is a special (if not

Additional 805 finish options include this red-on-black combination.





The X7 kit offers more drums for the money, as well as some pretty cool sparkle finishes.

really secret) ingredient in Pacific's X7 drums: poplar shells. Many vintage drums feature shells made of a combination of maple and poplar, or mahogany and poplar.

These drums were loud and clear, but not as tonally complex as the 805 drums. The sound created by the poplar shells was full, but without the subtle nuances of birch.

On the other hand, the fact that poplar is less expensive than birch lets Pacific offer the X7 kit in a seven-piece configuration that includes an 18x22 bass drum, 7x8, 8x10, and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and a 5x14 snare drum. The snare, bass drum, and floor toms each have eight lugs per head; the rack toms have six. Kits feature STM suspension tom mounts, the True Pitch tuning system, matching bass drum hoops, a bass drum pillow, and Remo heads. They're available in six lacquer finishes. Our review kit's Orange Sparkle finish was smoothly applied and very striking.

A Sound Performance

The F.A.S.T. tom sizes on the X7 kit worked very well together. There was clear spacing between the pitches of the drums. The smaller toms had high and clear voices. The floor toms were deep and full, and they rang forever. The bass drum had great presence; I could really feel it while playing. The snare sounded crisp and clean, with generous rimshots and plenty of effective tuning range.

Hardware

Both of our review kits were accompanied by Pacific's 8.155 hardware pack. All of the stands are double-braced and feature memory locks. The snare stand's tilter is at the base of the basket, so the stand goes rather low. This was especially good for the 7" snare on the 805 kit. The bass drum pedal is simple and serviceable, with a reversible beater, a solid footboard, and fully adjustable stroke. It was smooth and responsive.

All of the cymbal tilters have fine enough teeth to prevent any prob-

lems with positioning adjustments. The straight cymbal stand has just two sections—base and upper tube with tilter—but it offers an adequate height range for most applications. The "hideaway" boom stand can work as a straight or a boom model. The hi-hat has a straightforward design, with a solid clutch. The "throw" of the pull rod isn't very long, and the tripod base does not rotate.

The hi-hat and cymbal stands have an interesting design feature: The end of the upper tube that meets with the base section is tapered. This made the stands easy to assemble. Overall, the PDP hardware was effective and secure, without being overly heavy.

Wrapping Up

The 805 and X7 kits offer excellent performance (especially considering their price), capable hardware setups, and visually interesting finishes. The sound of the 805 birch drums was slightly more satisfying for my playing style, but the X7s sounded respectable, and you get more drums for the same money. I really had lots of fun playing both kits, and I imagine that any student drummer or weekend gigger would too.

THE NUMBERS

805 kit **\$1,583.99**

Includes a 20x20 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom, 12x14 and 12x16 floor toms, a 7x13 snare, and an 8.155 hardware pack. (Also available with a 24" bass drum, a 13" rack tom, 16" and 18" floor toms, and a 7x14 snare at the same price.)

X7 kit **\$1,583.99**

Includes an 18x22 bass drum, 7x8, 8x10, and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, a 5x14 snare drum, and an 8.155 hardware pack.

www.pacificdrums.com



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Meinl Shakers And Turbo Cabasa

>> **Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On**

by Norman Arnold

KEY NOTES

- Creative designs
- Unique sounds
- Inexpensive instruments

If you're a hand percussionist like me, and you've been playing for any length of time, it's likely that you've been egg-shaked to death, and you're in need of a new sound. Well, Meinl has recently introduced no fewer than six new shakers to meet that need, along with a nifty spin on the traditional cabasa. Let's check 'em out.

Adding A New Spark

Percussion artist Bill Saragosa has collaborated with Meinl on a line of metal percussion instruments dubbed "Spark Shakers." The basic models are flying saucer-shaped perforated steel casings filled with metallic beads. They produce a light and airy sound that's extremely versatile. Changing your hand pressure and squeezing the shaker varies the sound from tight and muted to open and ringy. And because the shakers are small enough to be cupped in your hand, it's very easy to get an open/closed "wah wah" effect when playing.

An interesting variation on the Spark Shaker theme is the Heated Spark Shaker. Its lower half is the steel casing, but the upper half is a stretched goatskin head. This cool design lets you get very creative, since the two sides produce disparate and opposing sounds that can be manipulated by hand pressure. The sloped sides of the metal portion allow for a rolling action that's perfect for creating a sustained rubato shake at the end of a song. Using the same action with the beads on the skin head turns the shaker into a mini wave drum. Literally dozens of sounds can be created from this one shaker.

Then there's the Spin Spark Shaker, which is equally creative—and, frankly, kind of hard to describe. It combines a Spark Shaker with an inverted metal cup, in a two-piece design that screws together. When the screw is tight, the pitch of the shaker is high. When the screw is loosened, the pitch of the shaker descends. A pitchable shaker...who'd have thought? I found it particularly interesting to play the Spin Spark Shaker with two hands, using one on each side and changing the pitch in rhythm for a fresh sound.

Spark Shakers are the perfect devices to have lying around in your studio, whether you're a drummer or a percussionist. Record a couple of passes with the Spark Shakers over your drum loops, and you'll really breathe some life into the tracks.

Other New Shakers

Meinl's U.F.O. shaker has the same basic shape as the Spark Shaker, and it fits comfortably in the palm of your hand. But instead of being made of steel, it's made from a plastic material similar to that used for most egg shakers. The beads used are small and light, so the shaker produces a smooth, mellow sound. The sloped and beveled edges are again great for producing a "rubato" shake.

Then there's the Loop shaker, which at first glance looks like our old friend the egg shaker. But the "shell" of the Loop shaker has a series of indentations that protrude into the interior. This breaks up the internal surface, making the sound brighter than that of the typical egg shaker. Its beads are also heavier than those in most egg shakers. So the Loop shaker actually has some...er...huevos, if you will. It really projects.

From top to bottom: Spark Shaker, Heated Spark Shaker, Spin Spark Shaker, U.F.O. Shaker



bottom of the resonating chamber.

These holes

allow for more projection of the bright, cutting sound, making the Turbo Cabasa an excellent choice for live playing. And because the cabasa's wooden handle has a soft padded grip, it's very comfortable to play.

From left: Wah-Wah Shaker, Loop Shaker, Turbo Cabasa

The Wah-Wah Shaker is a wooden tube with plastic chamber inside and a sound hole in one end. This shaker has heavy beads and a solid sound to it when played in the traditional fashion. But cool things happen when you cover and uncover the sound hole. As the name implies, you get a wah wah effect, similar to the opening and closing of cupped hands while playing.

Turbocharging

Meinl's Turbo Cabasa is an unusual variation on an established theme. The design features eight sound holes—four each in the top and

Summing Up

These new takes on shakes from Bill Saragosa and Meinl are super versatile, and they should prove useful in many areas of making music. They're almost poetic, really. Shakespeare would be proud. (Get it? Shake-speare...?) Okay, you can fire me now.

THE NUMBERS

Spark Shaker	\$31.00
Headed Spark Shaker	\$29.40
Spin Spark Shaker	\$31.00
U.F.O. Shaker	\$14.00
Wah-Wah Shaker	\$20.00
Loop Shaker	\$15.40
Turbo Cabasa	\$66.00

www.meinlpercussion.com

Quick Looks

REUNION BLUES LEATHER SNARE BAG

by Russ Barbone

Reunion Blues is a name that hasn't figured highly on the drum scene in recent years. But veteran drummers will likely remember it in relation to high-quality leather stick and cymbal bags that predate most contemporary bags. Those bags seemed to last forever, and many are still being used and cherished by their owners.

Well, Reunion Blues is back on the drum scene, and they've introduced an elegant all-leather snare drum bag. Each bag is made from full-grain leather that's tanned and cut to maintain the original texture and strength, resulting in a bag of "outstanding tactile quality" (which means it just feels great to handle). The bags are double-stitched with heavy thread and reinforced at major stress points. Industrial-strength zippers and high-grade, solid-metal luggage hardware are used throughout. There are also thick leather carrying handles and a good shoulder strap.

In order to protect the drum it carries, the bag has 1"-thick, dual-layer, closed-cell high-density foam between the outer covering and the inner lining. The inside of the bag features a cushiony thick bed of light crème fleece. In a nice aesthetic touch, the bag is accent-stitched with a light crème thread that matches the fleece. Each bag goes through a forty-eight point quality-control check before it leaves the factory.

A Reunion Blues snare bag will comfortably accommodate a 6½x14 snare drum. I tried a vintage Rogers Dynasonic, which features a large metal snare bridge on the bottom, as well as a Ludwig Maple Classic with a P-87 strainer, which has individual adjustable snare wires that stick out on both ends. These two drums might have problems fitting into



other bags, but the Reunion Blues bag has plenty of "give" from side to side, so the drums fit easily.

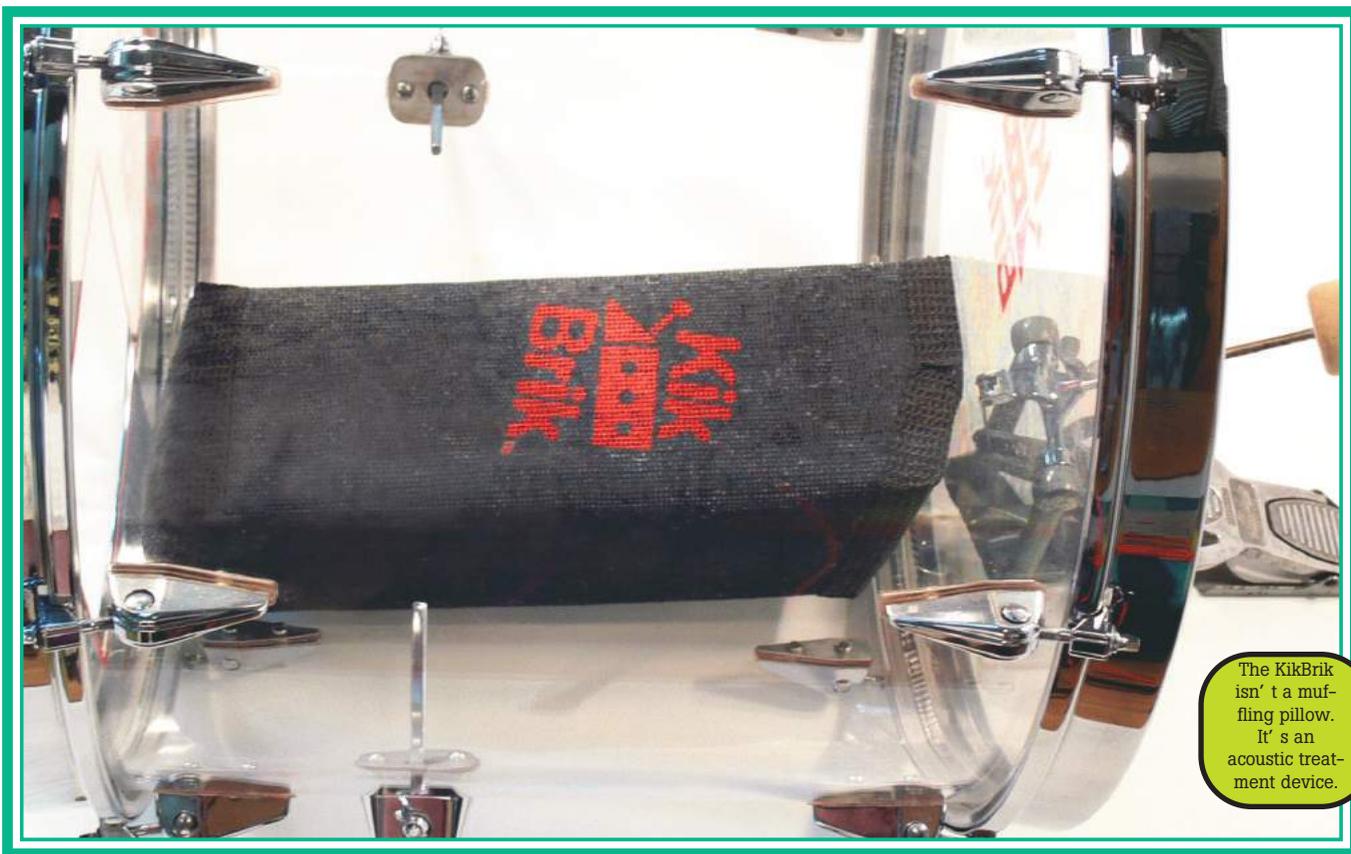
A list price of \$298 might seem a little steep for a drum bag, considering that it can't provide the impact protection that a hard-shell case would. (No bag can.) However, if you're into the vintage look and feel of leather, or if you'd like to have a bag that you could proudly pass down to future generations, this might be the snare bag for you. It's available in natural black and chestnut brown, and it carries a limited lifetime warranty.

www.aceproducts.com

KikBrik Bass Drum Acoustic Damper

>>A New Approach To Sonic Control

by Mark Parsons



The KikBrik isn't a muffling pillow. It's an acoustic treatment device.

KEY NOTES

- Effective at reducing unwanted overtones
- Design provides varied placement options

Does the world need yet another kick drum muffler? I mean, with all the rings, strips, pads, and pillows available, is there anything left to try? John Calder, of Generator LLC, thought so. Enter the KikBrik.

The KikBrik is a roughly rectangular "brick" of compressed recycled cotton fibers, wrapped in a poly mesh fabric that holds the whole thing together. I say "roughly" rectangular, because although the size (for a 16" deep bass drum) is 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high by 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep, the ends of the KikBrik are angular and irregular. This design allows you to vary the location and size of the contact area between the KikBrik and the drumhead, as well as the pressure at the contact point. You can have contact near the edge of the head for a subtle reduction of overtones, or you can flip the brick over and move the contact area nearer the center of the head for a more dramatic effect. You can have contact on both heads, on the batter head only, on the resonant head only, or on neither head.

The composition of the KikBrik also gives it beneficial acoustic properties within the drum. Its absorption is strongest between 400 Hz and 1 kHz, right where those ugly lower-midrange overtones tend to reside. Its highest sound absorption coefficient is right at 500 Hz, which is spot-on: If you're looking for the dreaded "suck" knob on a kick drum (a la the famous Far Side cartoon), just crank up 500 Hz on the EQ and you'll hear it in all its obnoxious glory. The KikBrik helps kill that.

In Use

We tested the KikBrik in two very different circumstances. I was running sound for a young band on an outdoor gig, and the drummer's kick was a budget 16x22 model with a mediocre tone. In this situation, the addition of the KikBrik, resting lightly against the bottom of the batter head, did quite a bit to tighten up the sound and get rid of the "bong-y" character, without sucking all the life out of the drum. Starting with this as the source, it was easy to get a good solid kick sound out front through the PA.

We also used the KikBrik in the studio, where we could experiment a little more and get a handle on its

unique properties. In this case the kick was a quality maple drum, set up with an Evans EMAD-2 batter (with the smaller foam ring installed) and an Evans EQ3 Resonant front head. I really liked the sound of this drum in the studio as it was, so I had doubts that it could be noticeably improved with additional damping. I was wrong.

Resting the KikBrik against the batter head added punch while raising the fundamental pitch a bit, resulting in a very pleasing sound. Moving the KikBrik so it rested against the front head shortened the decay while cutting some overtones. I wasn't able to damp both heads simultaneously (the drum was 17" deep and the KikBriks I had were for 14"- and 16"-deep drums), but it's clear that the results would be more of the same, if that were desired.

I also tried the KikBrik resting sideways in the middle of the drum—without touching either head—thus restricting its effect on the drum to its acoustic properties only. Here, too, there was a noticeable (and positive) result. The KikBrik effectively reduced the lower mids by a few dB, yielding a smooth, tight sound that would need little or no EQ to result in a contemporary kick sound. Well done.

Conclusion

So, is the KikBrik perfect? No. If you use an un-ported head, you'll be doing a lot of removing and re-installing of the front head as you try different placement options. Even if you use a ported head, you'll still need to remove/replace/retune the head to install the KikBrik initially (unless you have a larger-than-usual port). And finally, the included 3/4"-wide peel-and-stick hook & loop fasteners didn't adhere to the KikBrik very well. (John Calder has informed me that new units will have 2"-wide fasteners with better adhesion in order to correct this problem.)

But these are minor convenience issues. When it comes to its dampening attributes—physical and acoustic—the KikBrik is both innovative and effective, giving you a wide variety of options with which to improve your kick sound.

THE NUMBERS

KikBrik \$49
 Available for 14", 16", and 18"-deep drums.
www.kikbrik.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

by Michael Dawson

PEARL

6x10 MAPLE POPCORN

HOW'S IT SOUND?

Pearl's 6x10 maple Popcorn snare is meant to be used as an auxiliary sound source. It's loud enough to cut through the rest of your kit, and its naturally high-pitched tone opens up a lot of possibilities for "melodic" patterns between it and your primary snare. And because it's only ten inches in diameter, you can squeeze this little guy just about anywhere in your setup. Just be aware that you're going to need to use a snare stand with a basket that can accommodate drums this size. None of mine would come in far enough to grab a hold of the rim, which prevented me from positioning the drum at extreme angles. Another option is to use a RIMs mount or similar device, and hang it off a cymbal or tom stand.

When I placed the Popcorn snare to the left of my hi-hat, I found it very inspiring to move ghost notes, accents, and fills between it and my workhorse 5 1/2x14 drum. With just a few turns of its six lugs, this drum quickly shifts from sounding like a tightly tuned conventional snare (think modern fusion masters Terreon Gully and Chris Dave) to sounding like an electronic sample that's been pitch-shifted well beyond anything you could achieve on a larger drum. This extreme tuning would be perfect for hip-hop and drum 'n' bass.

You can also get a fairly convincing sloppy rock sound if you tune the Popcorn snare lower and loosen up the snare wires. It's not going to work for your Zeppelin tribute band, but it could come in handy if you do a lot of low-volume gigs on a hybrid percussion/drumset setup. Just be sure to have some gaffer's tape nearby, because lower tunings give off a ton of overtones.



Masters lugs allow for high tunings while also minimizing shell contact.

The drum's small size might require a special snare stand.

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

WHAT'S IT COST? \$399

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- Sabian Hand Hammered Vintage Dark Cymbals
- Evans Heads, Magnetic Head Key, Wing Nut Keys, Min-EMAD dampers, EQ Bass Muffling Pad, and HQ RealFeel 9" Snare Cartridge Pad
- TKL Black Belt Drum Bags
- Vater Sticks (12 Pairs), Safe N' Sound Ear Protection, Double-Sided Chop Builder Practice Pad, Multi-Stick Holder, SplashSticks, Retractable Brushes, and Stick Bag
- Modern Drummer 25 + 1 Year Digital Archive



of "That Great Gretsch Sound"

First Prize

- **Gretsch** Catalina Club Jazz four-piece kit in Satin Natural finish
- **Gibraltar** Intruder Pedal and 7700 Series Hardware
- **Sabian** HHX Modern Dark Cymbals
- **Evans** Heads, Magnetic Drum Key, Wing Nut Keys, Min-EMAD dampers, EQ Bass Muffling Pad, HQ RealFeel 9" Snare Cartridge Pad
- **Vater** Sticks (12 Pairs), 12" Soft Chop Builder Single-Side Practice Pad, Single Pair Stick Holder
- **Modern Drummer** 25 Year Digital Archive



Second Prize

- **Gretsch** G-4000 Solid Aluminum 5x14 Snare Drum
- **Gibraltar** Ultra Adjust Snare Stand
- **Modern Drummer** 2002 Digital Archive



enter online at:

www.moderndrummer.com



Consumer Disclosure

To enter online, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Gretsch 125th Anniversary Contest button (one entry per email address) or send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, email address, and telephone number to: MD/Gretsch 125th Anniversary Giveaway, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish via postcard, but each entry must be mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 12/1/07 AND ENDS 1/31/08. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 1/31/08 AND RECEIVED BY 2/5/08. 5. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on 2/14/08. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about February 19, 2008. 6. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Gretsch, Sabian, Gibraltar, Evans, TKL, Vater, Kaman Music, and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to residents of the US and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada, Florida, and where prohibited by law. 9. One prize awarded per household per contest. 10. **Grand Prize:** one (1) 4-piece Gretsch USA 100% Walnut kit with rail mount, Gibraltar Intruder strap-drive single pedal and a full set of 8600 series hardware, Sabian Hand Hammered Vintage Dark cymbals: 14" dark hi-hats, 16" Thin crash, 18" Dark crash, and 21" Vintage ride. Evans drumheads and accessories including: two (2) EQ1 bass drum heads, five (5) J1 Etched tom and snare heads, one (1) Hazy 300 snare side head, Magnetic Head Key, a Wing Nut Key 3-pack, a Min-EMAD tom/snare damper 6-pack, EQ Bass Muffling Pad, and HQ RealFeel 9" Snare Cartridge pad. A 4-piece set of TKL Black Belt drum bags. Vater drumsticks and accessories including: one (1) 12 pair brick of Vater drumsticks, winner's choice of stick size, one (1) pair of Vater Safe N' Sound ear protection, a double sided Vater Chop Builder practice pad, Multi-Stick Stick Holder, SplashSticks, Retractable brushes, and a stick bag. One (1) Modern Drummer 25 Year + Year 26 Digital Archive. Approximate retail value of Grand Prize: \$10,295. **First Prize:** One (1) 4-piece Gretsch Catalina Club Jazz kit in Satin Walnut finish with Gibraltar Intruder strap-drive single pedal and a full set of 7700 series Elliptical Leg hardware. Sabian HHX Modern Dark cymbals: 14" Groove hi-hats, 16" Studio crash, 17" Xtreme crash, and 21" Groove ride. Evans drumheads and accessories including: two (2) EQ1 bass drumheads, five (5) J1 Etched tom and snare heads, one (1) Hazy 300 snare side head, on Magnetic Head Key, a Wing Nut Key 3-pack, a Min-EMAD tom/snare damper 6-pack, EQ Bass Muffling Pad, and HQ RealFeel 9" Snare Cartridge Pad. Vater drumsticks and accessories including: one (1) 12-pair brick of Vater drumsticks, 12" Soft Chop Builder single sided practice pad, single pair stick holder. One (1) Modern Drummer 25 Year Digital Archive. Approximate retail value of First Prize: \$4,234. **Second Prize:** One (1) Gretsch USA Custom snare drum with Gibraltar Ultra Adjust snare stand, and one (1) Modern Drummer 2002 Digital Archive. Approximate retail value of Second Prize: \$1,542. Approximate retail value of contest: \$15,923. 11. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 12. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Gretsch 125th Anniversary/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

>>UFIP EXTATIC SERIES CYMBALS

"Ecstatic" might just describe drummers' reactions to UFIP's new Extatic line—the lowest-priced and most versatile professional cymbals now made by the Italian manufacturer. Designed to be a link between UFIP's jazz and rock line, Extatic models are said to produce the dark and dry sound of a non-turned cymbal in combination with the bright attack and better-defined sustain of rock cymbals. Rides and crashes are available in light and medium weights; hi-hat weights can be individually selected according to the buyers' musical needs. The line also features a swish China instead of a traditional Chinese model.

www.ufip.com

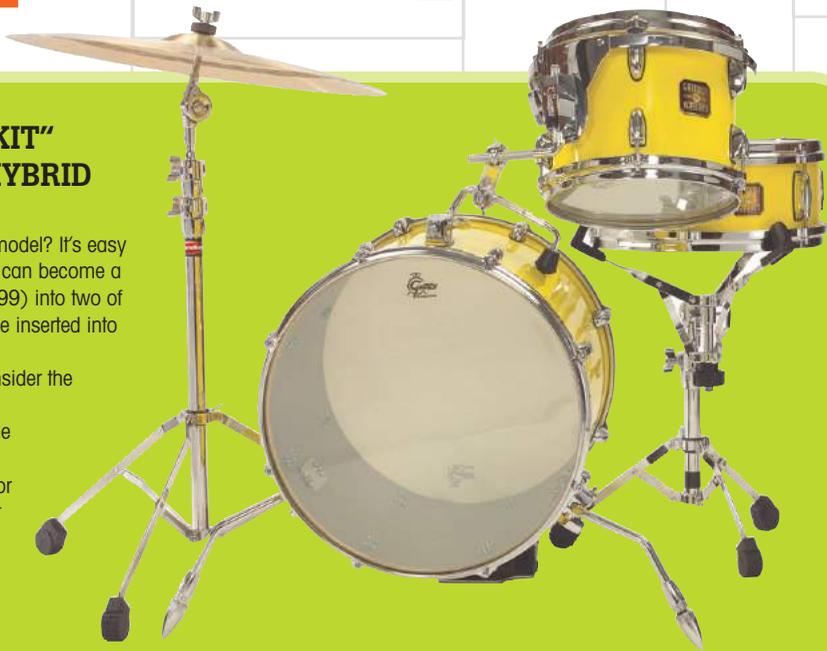


>>GIBRALTAR R-CLASS "CLUB KIT" CONVERSION HARDWARE AND HYBRID SNARE DRUM HOOP

Want to turn part of your "big" kit into a compact "club" model? It's easy with Gibraltar's Dunnett R-Class accessories. A floor tom can become a bass drum by mounting a pair of Gull Wing spurs (\$99.99) into two of the floor tom's leg mounts. A Rail Mount (\$39.99) can be inserted into the third leg mount to accommodate a rack tom.

And if you're looking to upgrade your snare drum, consider the R-Class Hybrid hoop. It combines wood with metal to enhance the tonal palette of the drum while increasing the hoop's durability. Models are available for 8-lug and 10-lug 14" drums, at \$139.99.

www.gibraltarhardware.com



>>REMO VINTAGE A AND BLACK SUEDE TOM HEADS

Remo's Vintage A tom heads are a reissue of the original Remo Ambassador drumhead from the late 1950s. They're said to feature Ambassador durability with a unique soft feel reminiscent of calf heads with accentuated snare response for back beats, ghost notes, brushes and press rolls.

Black Suede heads are created by applying Remo's suede texturing process to Ebony series heads in Ambassador and Emperor weights. The heads are said to provide focused warmth and enhanced mid-range for snare drums and toms, without muting their percussive attack.

www.remo.com



>>AUDIX M1250 AND M1280 MICRO SERIES MICROPHONES

If you want your drums to be heard without your mics being seen, check out Audix's M1250 and M1280 Micros. They feature newly designed circuitry with immunity from RF interference caused by cell phones and GSM devices. The 2"-long by 1/2"-diameter M1250 has a frequency range of 80 Hz – 20 kHz. The 3 1/2"-long by 1/2"-diameter M1280 has a frequency range of 40 Hz – 20 kHz for extended bass response. The Micros' SPL rating of 150 dB, as well as a variety of available mounting clips, make them ideal for use on drums and percussion. www.audixusa.com



>>JOYFUL NOISE STUDIO LINE SNARE DRUMS

Joyful Noise Drum Company Studio Line drums feature a special patina said to give each drum an extremely open and vibrant tone. Brass and bronze seamless shells are hand-selected for tonal balance and pitch, processed for the application of a pure silver patina, and then sealed in carnauba wax. Studio Line hardware consists of 2.5-mm solid-brass nickel-plated triple-flanged hoops, ten Corder solid-brass nickel-plated tube lugs, and the One Touch Classic snare strainer system. Hoop engraving is available as an option. Drums are offered in 4x14, 5x14, and 6 1/2x14 sizes. List prices start at \$1,240.

www.joyfulnoisedrumcompany.com

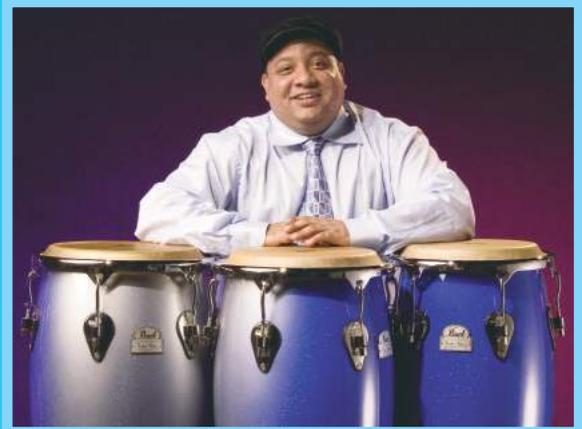
>>PEARL RICHIE FLORES CONGAS, JESUS DIAZ CAJONS, AND CONGA KICK STAND

Richie Flores Signature Oak congas (top right) feature a "vertical" fade Lunar Eclipse finish that transitions from dazzling Silver to rich Midnight Blue dusted in stellar sparks. The drums are made with Thai oak shells, Contour Crown rims, natural buffalo skins, chrome-plated hardware, and Pearl's Self-Aligning Washer System for effortless tuning. List prices range from \$499 for the 11" quinto to \$669 for the 12 1/2" tumba.

Jesus Diaz Signature cajons (bottom right) feature the classic Cuban wedge shape for deep bass tones and cutting slaps. The 18"-tall all-wood cajons are available in 10", 11", and 12" sizes pitched in thirds. Cushioned leg supports make the drums more comfortable to play while sitting. Stands are available for stand-up playing. List prices range from \$159 to \$189.

The PC-2000 Conga Kick Stand is a one-size-fits-all unit designed to accommodate the standing percussionist. It features extendable legs and a frame that can unite two, three, or four stands together. It's finished in flat black to keep the visual focus on the congas. List price is \$165; a carrying case is available for \$79.

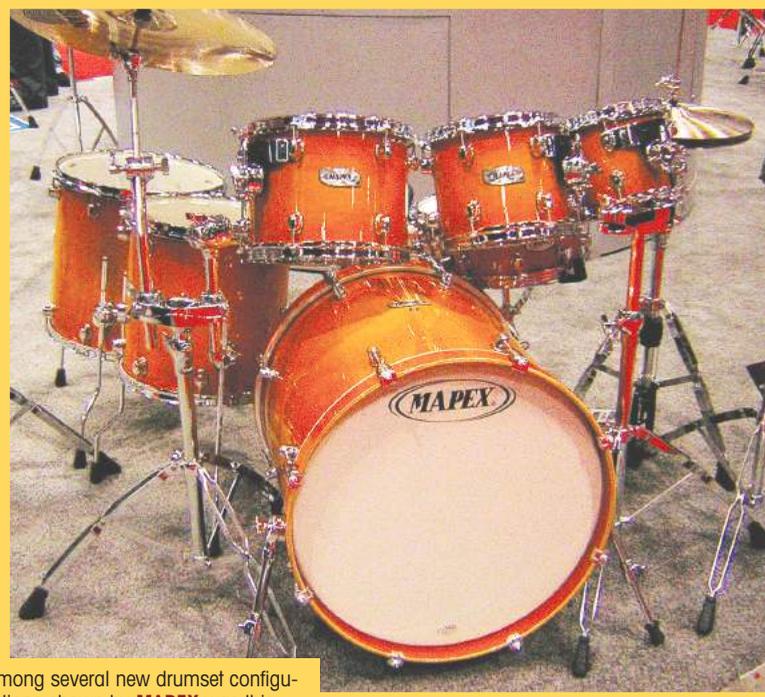
www.pearldrums.com



New At Summer NAMM 2007

Text and photos by Lauren Vogel Weiss

The summer edition of the National Association Of Music Merchants (NAMM) trade show is an opportunity for manufacturers to display their mid-year new-product introductions. It often features interesting items from smaller manufacturers that tend to get lost in the larger winter show. Here's a look at some nifty items from this year's show.



Among several new drumset configurations shown by **MAPEX** was this Pro-M seven-piece shell pack. Only fifty will be sold, in a Honey Maple Burst finish. List price is \$2,049.99. www.mapexdrums.com



PRO-MARK introduced a plastic brush-like implement called Smax, which will be available in three different hardnesses. Its sound is described as "more aggressive than brushes and less aggressive than rods." Also new is a stick bag with a practice pad built in. www.promark.com



CRUZTOOLS debuted its TechNote T-Handle Drum Key (\$16.95). The sliding "T" handle allows quick changing of drumheads without power tools. The handle slides from one end to the other for extra leverage, making it especially useful for high-tension drum corps tuning. www.cruztools.com



BASIX showcased their Neon series drumset, made with birch shells inside and out covering six plies of poplar. The set features a new Tobacco finish and 600 series hardware, at a list price of \$695. Also new is the V6 single pedal. www.basixdrums.com

GATOR CASES introduced several models in a digital (pixelated) camouflage finish, including the GP-007-A-DCAMO stick bag. The bag holds sticks and mallets and has a bright orange interior. www.gatorcases.com





TAMA's 2007 Imperialstar kit includes Meinl HCS cymbals and a special "go value" offer to include a free 10" splash cymbal, a clamp, and a boom arm. List price is \$1,059.99.

Among several new snare drums in Tama's booth were 4x13 all-maple models with black or white Shag (fuzzy) finishes, at \$332.99 list. Tama also showed Shag-style thrones, two Biker-style thrones (complete with pleather fringe), and several new drum and hardware bags with Shag lining. www.tama.com



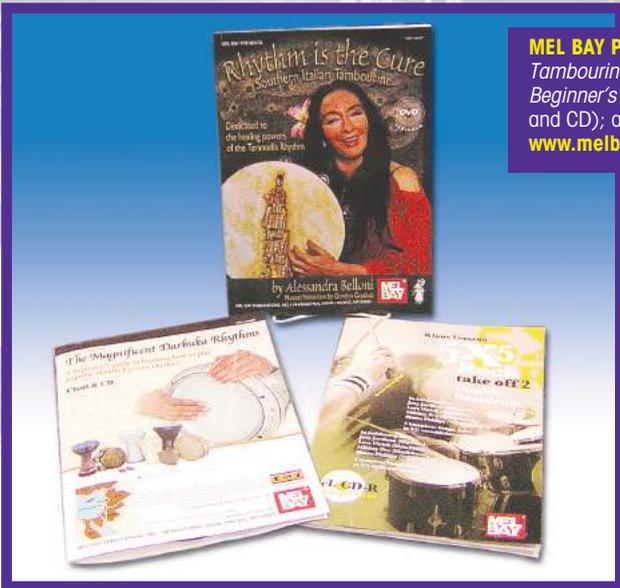
SABIAN's new Diamondback (above right) is a 20" Chinese cymbal in the Paragon line, with a hand-hammered bell, four jingles, and four rivets. It was designed by Neil Peart, who used the cymbal on Rush's latest album. Sabian also showed a limited-edition (only 200 available) Carmine Apiece ride cymbal.

www.sabian.com



PEACE DRUMS showed their Demolition Dark series featuring black shells with yellow or red hardware and white shells with red, green, or blue hardware.

www.peacedrum.com



MEL BAY PUBLICATIONS displayed three new books: *Rhythm Is The Cure: Southern Italian Tambourine* by Alessandra Belloni (with DVD), *The Magnificent Darbuka Rhythms: A Beginner's Guide To Learning How To Play Popular Middle Eastern Rhythms* (with chart and CD); and *5x5 Rock—Take Off 2, Double Bass Drum* by Klaus Usmann (with CD).
www.melbay.com



The HCZ-5000 Pro Series hydraulic drum throne from **PIERCE SEATING COMPANY** comes in fourteen different fabric patterns—including multi-colored zebra, leopard, and pony designs—and retails for \$219. The 15"-diameter seat top sits on a four-leg heavy-duty double-braced stand with an easy-adjust pneumatic cylinder that provides a height range from 20" to 26".
www.pierceseat.com



WEDGIE (Morgan Hill Music) introduced PowerBand premium hickory drumsticks (\$14.95/pair, wood or nylon). The line includes 2B, 5A, 5B, 7A, JZ, 1A, 3B, and RK color-coded models. A VCS band on the butt end of each stick is said to reduce the vibrations that cause power loss, fatigue, and tendinitis.
www.morganhillmusic.com



New cases from **SKB** include 8x12 and 9x13 tom cases, as well as a mid-sized hardware case and a new Roto-X 24" Cymbal Vault.
www.skbcases.com



ROLAND's HD-1 V-Drums Lite is described as "an all-in-one drumkit for the masses." The design of the stands makes the kit usable by children and adults. It is MIDI-compatible and can be plugged into an iPod or MP3 player. The small footprint and beaterless kick pedals make the HD-1 great for use in apartments or dorm rooms. Accessories include the PM-01 Personal Drum Monitor, DAP-1 Accessory Package (including a throne, sticks, cable, and earphones), and a TDM-1 V-Drums Mat. The package price (including everything except the Drum Mat) is \$1,259.
www.rolandus.com



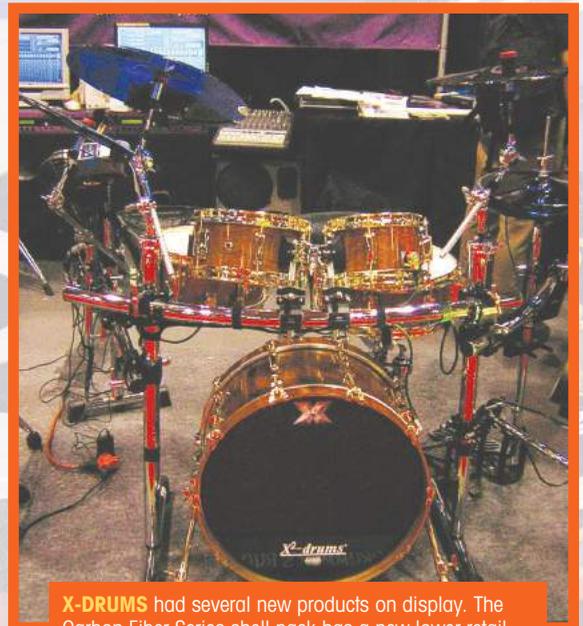
STAGG displayed a traditional cajon (\$139) that's available with a carrying case (\$99).
www.staggmusic.com

UNIGRIP introduced two new Bamboo Brushes (in regular and heavy) as well as a Bamboo Flip Stick.
www.unigrip.net



PINTECH promoted its new 8" and 10" Concert Cast Timbales (\$110 and \$135). With the help of an Alesis iO, the timbales can pair with the EZV2 and upgrade to dual-zone capabilities.
www.pintechworld.com

TAYE DRUMS introduced a double version of their innovative XP1 pedal. The XP1.02 has flexibility, adjustability, and modularity, and it retails for \$769.
www.tayedrums.com



X-DRUMS had several new products on display. The Carbon Fiber Series shell pack has a new lower retail price, at \$2,117.42. The Exotic Series has 6-ply shells with an exotic vertical grain veneer. The drums are powered by the BFD Turbo Receptor (from The-Freddy.com), which allows a drummer to go from shell pack to full-blown VST (virtual studio technology).
www.x-drums.com

THE REFERENCE SHELF



JAZZ ICONS DVD SERIES

(Reelin' In The Years Productions and Naxos)

This set of Jazz Icons DVDs features concerts by seven of the most influential jazz artists of the 20th century, accompanied by legendary sidemen of the day. Three John Coltrane concerts (filmed in 1960, 1961, and 1965) feature jazz stars Oscar Peterson, Stan Getz, McCoy Tyner, Eric Dolphy, and drummer **Elvin Jones**. Dave Brubeck concerts from 1964 and 1966 feature the classic quartet, including drummer **Joe Morello**. A Duke Ellington big band concert from 1958 features drummer **Sam Woodyard**. Three never-before-seen Sarah Vaughan shows (1958 and 1964) feature drummers **Art Morgan** and **George Hughes**. Three Wes Montgomery concerts from 1965 feature drummers **Han Bennink**, **Jimmy Lovelace**, and **Jackie Dougan**. Three Dexter Gordon concerts (1963 and 1964) feature drummers **Art Taylor** and **Daniel Humair**. Three 1964 concerts by Charles Mingus include Eric Dolphy on alto sax, flute, and bass clarinet, and feature **Danny Richmond** on drums.

Each DVD also includes a 24-page booklet with informative essays by noted jazz historians, as well as previously unseen photos and memorabilia. Titles are sold (and priced) separately, or in a box set at \$119.99.

www.jazzicons.com

AFRO-CUBAN DRUMMING FOR THE DRUMSET (DVD)

by Phil Maturano (Hudson Limited)

This DVD is said to be the first instructional drum method to fully explain and demonstrate the techniques for adapting authentic Latin rhythms to the modern drumset. Maturano first shows how fundamental Latin styles are played by the traditional Afro-Cuban rhythm section, isolating each element of the ensemble. Then he illustrates the proper way to adapt each percus-

sion instrument's sound and rhythm to the drumset, while showing how one player's hands, feet, drums, and cymbals are used to recreate the layered groove that was originally played by multiple players.

The DVD includes close-up camera angles, split-screen views, studio-quality audio, detailed explanations, and over 100 printable exercises, as well as examples of how these essential drumset patterns are played with and without other percussionists, in a rhythm section, and with a band. A final section on left foot clave technique is included. List price is \$29.95.

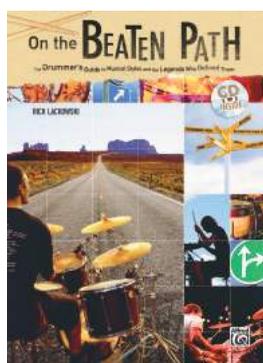
www.hudsonmusic.com



ON THE BEATEN PATH

by Rich Lackowski (Alfred)

This book provides insight into the history and development of a wide selection of genres, including funk, alternative/punk rock, metal, progressive rock, classic rock, jam band, fusion, jazz, and reggae, and explores the legendary drummers that impacted each style. The book leads readers through the styles, licks, and grooves that made each artist famous, with insight into his approaches, the gear he used, the bands he played in, and the drummers who influenced him. All the beats and solos that are presented in the book are performed on the accompanying CD. The lessons delve into authentic transcriptions of eighty-five beats and solos from songs by Led Zeppelin, The Who, Rush, Metallica, Shadows Fall, The Police, Dream Theater, and others. Dozens of photos, as well as a listing of essential recordings, are included. List price is \$29.95.



www.alfred.com

AND WHAT'S MORE



The **Percussion Plus** PP3800 five-piece drumset is designed to offer high-quality construction, incredible sound, and great looks, all at an affordable price. The 9-ply cross-laminated wood drums include a 16x22 bass drum, a 14x16 floor tom, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, and a matching 5 1/2x14 wood snare. The kit comes with a complete hardware package including a throne, and is

available in Blue Pearl, Red Pearl, and White Pearl finishes. List price is \$569.95.

www.musiccorp.com

Ddrum's Stick/Pack combines a backpack with a stick bag for easy transport. The backpack is made of heavy camo/black Cordura, with padded straps, reinforced bindings, and an oversized main compartment that's ideal for mic, cable, and sound module storage. It'll even hold a couple of day's worth of clothes for quick tours. The second compartment has an

inner padded pocket that's ideal for laptop storage.

The detachable padded stick bag zips off from the backpack for on-stage use. It holds twelve pairs of sticks, attaches to a floor tom with spring-operated hooks, and has a large accessory pouch and a smaller outer pocket for additional storage. List price is \$69.99.

www.ddrum.com



Groove Juice Stick Grip is a spray-on gripping aid for drummers that have difficulty holding on to their sticks while playing. Spraying Stick Grip on the gripping area of the stick creates a "tackiness" that Groove Juice says will not come off on the player's hands. List price is \$12.99 per can.

groove@myexcel.com



"I have always been searching for THE drum kit. You know, a kit that sounds as good on stage as it does in the studio, and still take all the punishment that the road dishes out! My needs are simple: toms that don't detune between every song, kick drums that have plenty of snap but enough low to knock heads off, and snare tone that eats guitars alive! I always thought I had to get a custom drum kit made to get what I wanted...

Then I found Dominion Ash by Ddrum.

**DOMINION
ASH**

DAVE McCLAIN of
MACHINE HEAD

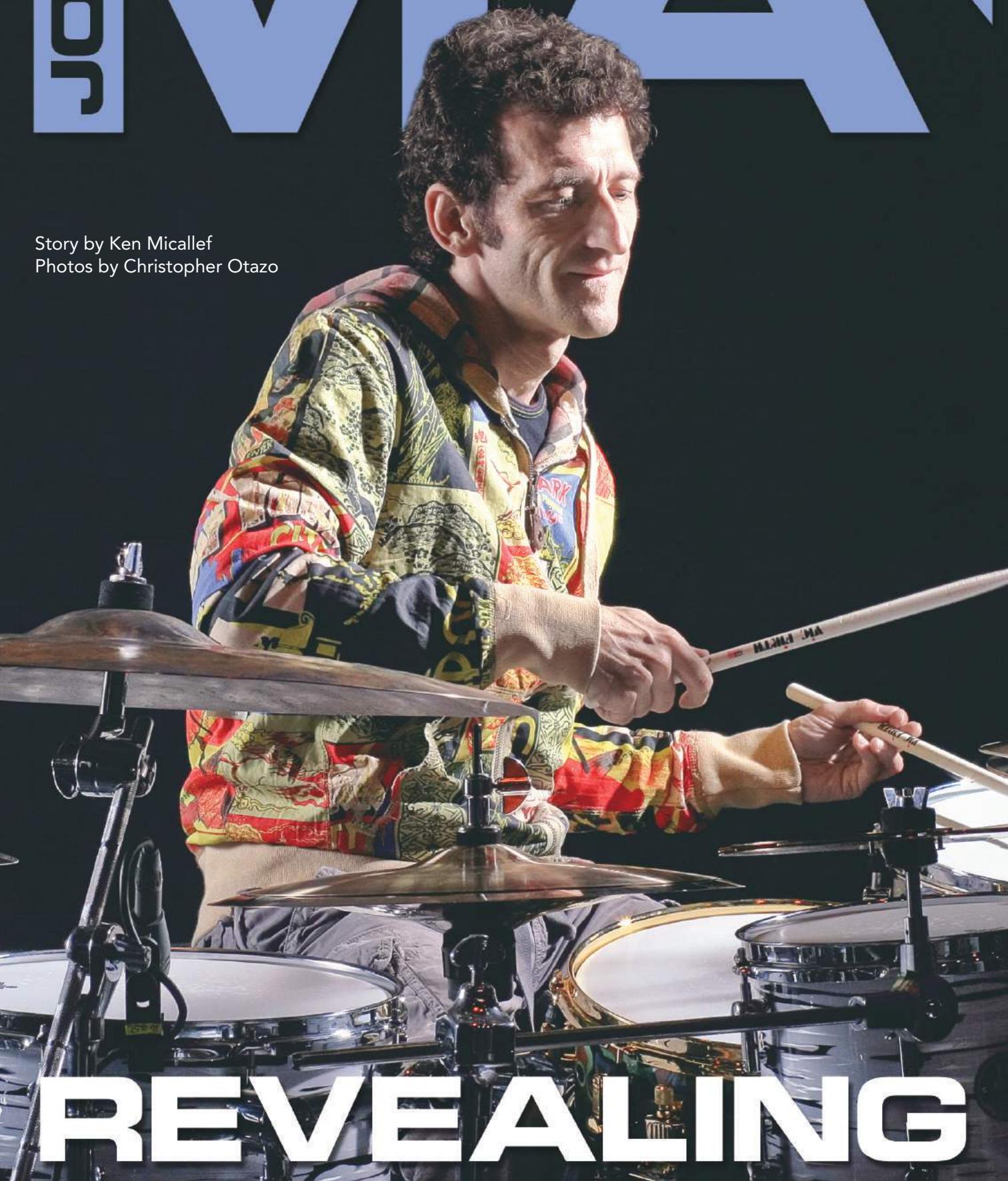
"THESE DRUMS ARE MONSTERS!"



ACETIC & ELECTRONIC DRUM PRODUCTS SINCE 1987
ddrum

JOJO MAN

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Christopher Otazo



REVEALING

YEER

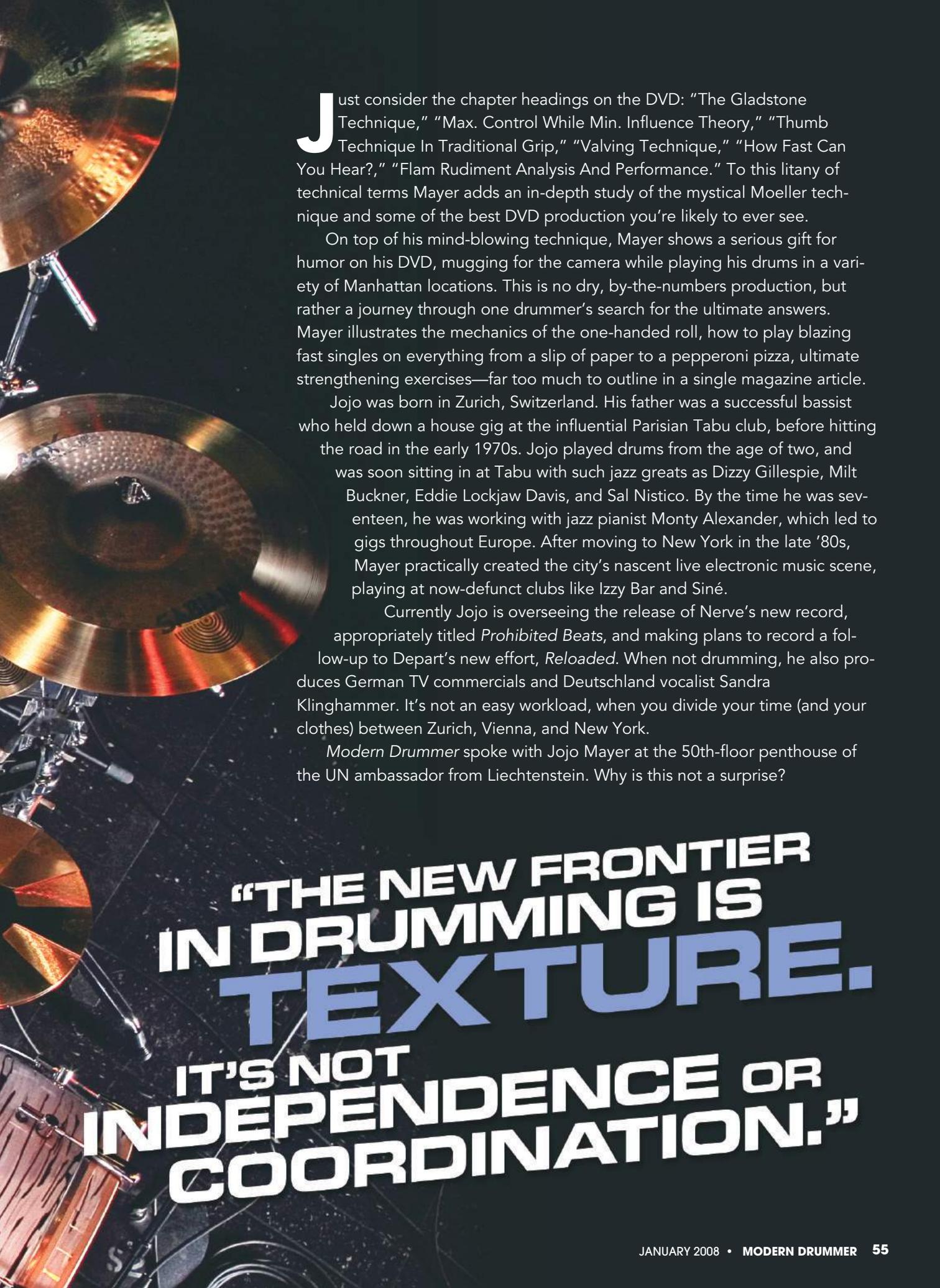


For years, Jojo Mayer has been regarded as a drumming shaman, a man of mystery, a technical guru existing on the outer reaches of traditional drumming logic. Perhaps best known for his work with Screaming Headless Torsos and as a member of the Prohibited Beatz clique, which existed in New York between 1994 and 2001, Mayer is a drum 'n' bass pioneer who seemingly performs beyond ordinary drumming boundaries. He perfected a one-handed roll. He altered the sonic landscape of the drumset by adapting it for the tones and textures of electronic music. He helped develop Sabian's Fierce series of cymbals. He played man-machine drums like some whirling dervish on a magic carpet ride.

Mayer has remained busy since his Prohibited Beatz heyday, regularly gigging with his band, Nerve, and with European jazz trio Depart, and producing various rock and pop projects including his own group, Strange Balls Of Fire. He is a highly regarded Sabian clinician as well. But his reputation will forever be aligned with a new, groundbreaking instructional DVD, *Secret Weapons For The Modern Drummer* (Hudson). Subtitled *A Guide To Hand Technique*, Mayer's debut DVD may be seen by future drumming generations as the Rosetta Stone of drum knowledge. An amateur magician as well as a technical and textural drumming wiz, Mayer imbues *Secret Weapons* with ancient techniques and personal innovations that result in viewer revelations.

THE SECRET





Just consider the chapter headings on the DVD: "The Gladstone Technique," "Max. Control While Min. Influence Theory," "Thumb Technique In Traditional Grip," "Valving Technique," "How Fast Can You Hear?," "Flam Rudiment Analysis And Performance." To this litany of technical terms Mayer adds an in-depth study of the mystical Moeller technique and some of the best DVD production you're likely to ever see.

On top of his mind-blowing technique, Mayer shows a serious gift for humor on his DVD, mugging for the camera while playing his drums in a variety of Manhattan locations. This is no dry, by-the-numbers production, but rather a journey through one drummer's search for the ultimate answers. Mayer illustrates the mechanics of the one-handed roll, how to play blazing fast singles on everything from a slip of paper to a pepperoni pizza, ultimate strengthening exercises—far too much to outline in a single magazine article.

Jojo was born in Zurich, Switzerland. His father was a successful bassist who held down a house gig at the influential Parisian Tabu club, before hitting the road in the early 1970s. Jojo played drums from the age of two, and was soon sitting in at Tabu with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Milt Buckner, Eddie Lockjaw Davis, and Sal Nistico. By the time he was seventeen, he was working with jazz pianist Monty Alexander, which led to gigs throughout Europe. After moving to New York in the late '80s, Mayer practically created the city's nascent live electronic music scene, playing at now-defunct clubs like Izzy Bar and Siné.

Currently Jojo is overseeing the release of Nerve's new record, appropriately titled *Prohibited Beats*, and making plans to record a follow-up to Depart's new effort, *Reloaded*. When not drumming, he also produces German TV commercials and Deutschland vocalist Sandra Klinghammer. It's not an easy workload, when you divide your time (and your clothes) between Zurich, Vienna, and New York.

Modern Drummer spoke with Jojo Mayer at the 50th-floor penthouse of the UN ambassador from Liechtenstein. Why is this not a surprise?

**"THE NEW FRONTIER
IN DRUMMING IS
TEXTURE.**

**IT'S NOT
INDEPENDENCE OR
COORDINATION."**

DJ-ing And Drumming

MD: You're an experienced DJ and programmer. How has that made you a better drummer?

Jojo: I don't know if it made me better, but it made me a different drummer. I shifted my paradigm. Electronic music programming has made me realize that over the past twenty years it's not drummers who are the engineers of modern beat culture. It's the producers and engineers. Timbaland and guys like that are building the skeleton for popular music, not the drummers. It's not like Ringo or Cobham or Gadd or Bonham, who played a certain way and people followed that. It's programming.

How can I be close to the lions of jazz, close to those guys who inspired me to love this music, whether it's Zutty Singleton or Max Roach or Buddy or Tony Williams? Certainly not by trying to augment what they did. It's over. To take Vinnie Colaiuta, for example, and what he does, or did, and try to make it even more complex, is retarded.

MD: Isn't Vinnie the culmination or the end of a certain cycle of drumming?

Jojo: There is never an end. But to say, "I can make this even more complicated than Vinnie so not even drummers can understand it..." Vinnie has a purpose and it touches you.

So what is necessary today? With all the machine-generated stuff, what better way to confront people artistically than to play something usually played by a machine? Proving to the world that I can play drums really well is not a priority. I'm trying to create art that touches normal people. When you hit a drum you connect to thirty thousand years of human history. That's not eradicated by digital technology. [DJ-ing] let me hear the drums more as a musical and textural instrument, rather than a statistical instrument.

Drums are statistical, but also very archaic. Of course, you can play odd meters on each limb—you just have to practice. But can that change the world, and someone's life? Can you make them understand something? That's the job of the artist. [DJ-ing] made me understand that rudiments are helpful, but I don't think that you need to know the rudiments. Drumming is not a religion, it's not the bible. It's freedom, thinking and finding your own solutions.

Programming made me a more authentic drummer and less of a peer of the guy who I admired. I owe Tony Williams very much, but right now I can do something that passes on the legacy. Mahler said, "Don't pray to the ashes, pass on the fire."





Nervous Energy

MD: What is your goal with Nerve?

Jojo: To pry open a similar pocket to what Charlie Parker or Jimi Hendrix did—something different that comes out of the cultural subculture. My role as a drummer was subordinated at Prohibited Beatz; I just used what I knew. I didn't care if the audience came for the drumming. It was a vibe. Electronic music took fifteen years to go through its entire process, where jazz needed a hundred years. It went through innovation, revolution, expansion, hype, and then it collapsed. Drum 'n' bass DJs could spin anything, but that's not the case anymore. Some splinters of creativity went off into dubstep and grime, but you can't follow the mainstream anymore. This is a good time to ignite some sparks. The industry doesn't dictate to you anymore.

MD: Is there any programmed drumming on the new Nerve album?

Jojo: It's all live, with very little editing. This record was made like Bitches Brew, with big chunks edited and moved. There were one or two places that we fixed in Pro Tools, but we didn't use Beat Detective, we kept those obvious things out.

MD: What's the basic pattern in the song "Retox"?

Jojo: It sounds a little like "Get On The Good Foot," by James Brown. [Sings funk pattern slow, then fast.]

MD: "Syncopath" sounds very Clyde Stubblefield to me.

Jojo: "Syncopath" is a question: I've been trying to get to the source of the linear stuff, that '70s Bay Area style.

MD: Like David Garibaldi?

Jojo: Yes, and Harvey Mason, and Mike Clark with Headhunters. That was very influential. Thrust was an incredible record. I came more from the idea of Headhunters with "Syncopath." But credit to anyone who played that thing in the early '70s, like Andy Newmark. I wanted something like that but more in a jazz context.

MD: Then in "7even," it's like a New Orleans second-line feel.

Jojo: For "7even" we had this conversation: What's the most popular jazz recording of all time? "Take Five" by Dave Brubeck. You can put "Take Five" at the end of a drum 'n' bass event, and they all think "jazz." It's the most popular jazz track, it's in five, and it has a drum solo. And it has a very angular melody—it had all the odds against its being a commercial record. Yet, it prevailed. So "7even" is a trib-

ute to "Take Five" in a way. It has a similar sonic texture, but we have a little bit of that Larry Young/Lifetime vibe as well.

MD: In "Tribute" you can't hear what the hands are playing, only the bass drum upstroke.

Jojo: "Tribute" is a tribute to Weather Report's "Nubian Sundance" from Mysterious Traveler.

MD: The drum beat has the same sonic texture as the "Amen" loop.

Jojo: Everything in drum 'n' bass is based on the "Amen" loop in some way. "Jabon" is the closest sound-wise to the "Amen" loop. But you can chop the "Amen" loop any way to sound like this. I could make the "Tribute" beat out of the "Amen" beat. Just give me editing tools.

MD: What's the bass drum playing in "Tribute"?

Jojo: It's on the "&" of 4—two strikes. You could hear it upside-down. My left hand remains on the snare drum within the 16th-note pattern.

MD: In general, it's one thing to be able to play this stuff, but how do you make it groove?

Jojo: Dancing is the key. Grooving is a body sensation. It's not a mental sensation or a conceptual idea, it's an emotional idea. Drumming and dancing have been together for thousands of years.

People dance differently throughout the world. In Japan they dance very fast to the drum 'n' bass beat. In the Jamaican suburbs of London they dance with more of a half-time feel to the same music.

MD: How do Americans dance to drum 'n' bass?

Jojo: I can't say. America is so diverse. Here in New York, there are no Americans, only New Yorkers. It's very Euro-style. The bottom line is that the quicker you want to play, the more you have to have a foundation in the basics.

Nerv-ological Application

MD: If you were just getting into playing this style, would you first try to replicate Aphex or Squarepusher loops on the drumkit?

Jojo: I'd go to a club and check out the vibe and express it. You have to listen to the music. Almost everyone has computer access, so get some cheap editing software and fumble around with programming beats. Every style has its key that grants you access.

MD: A drummer should learn to program drum 'n' bass before he or she can play it?

Jojo: I think more as a programmer when I

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- E. 7 x 8 tom
- F. 17 x 20 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

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Sticks: Vic Firth Jojo Mayer signature model, wire brushes

play those things. If I play a house beat, I see the computer grid.

MD: And who are some of the artists they should listen to?

Jojo: For me, the most influential artists were the mid-'90s old-school jungle guys, like Photek. Form And Function is a great record. Also check out Squarepusher, Lemon D, Aphex Twin, and Plug.

MD: And in playing this music, is the sound as important as what you play?

Jojo: The sound is the most important thing; it doesn't matter what you play. The sound and

the texture are paramount. What you play is just technique that you apply to do that. You're a drummer, you know how to play. Of course, I have a few tricks to get a sound with a side-stick or this thing from a cymbal. I have those idiosyncrasies. But use your ears.

Electronic music made me rediscover the acoustic kit. It made me realize that an acoustic hi-hat can make all the sounds of a programmed hi-hat. It's more than just a hi-hat, and it's the same with the entire kit. The new frontier in drumming is texture. It's not independence or coordination. When you talk to people who are

making this music, they're not impressed with the execution of snare drum exercises. They just program with beats or sound replacement.

MD: Yes, it's about the music, but to a young drummer in middle America, it's also about the technique.

Jojo: You want the exact diagram or explanation, but that won't get you anywhere. What gets you there is listening, then using your imagination to imitate that sound.

MD: But this is very complex music for the average drummer.

Jojo: Then start with something not so com-

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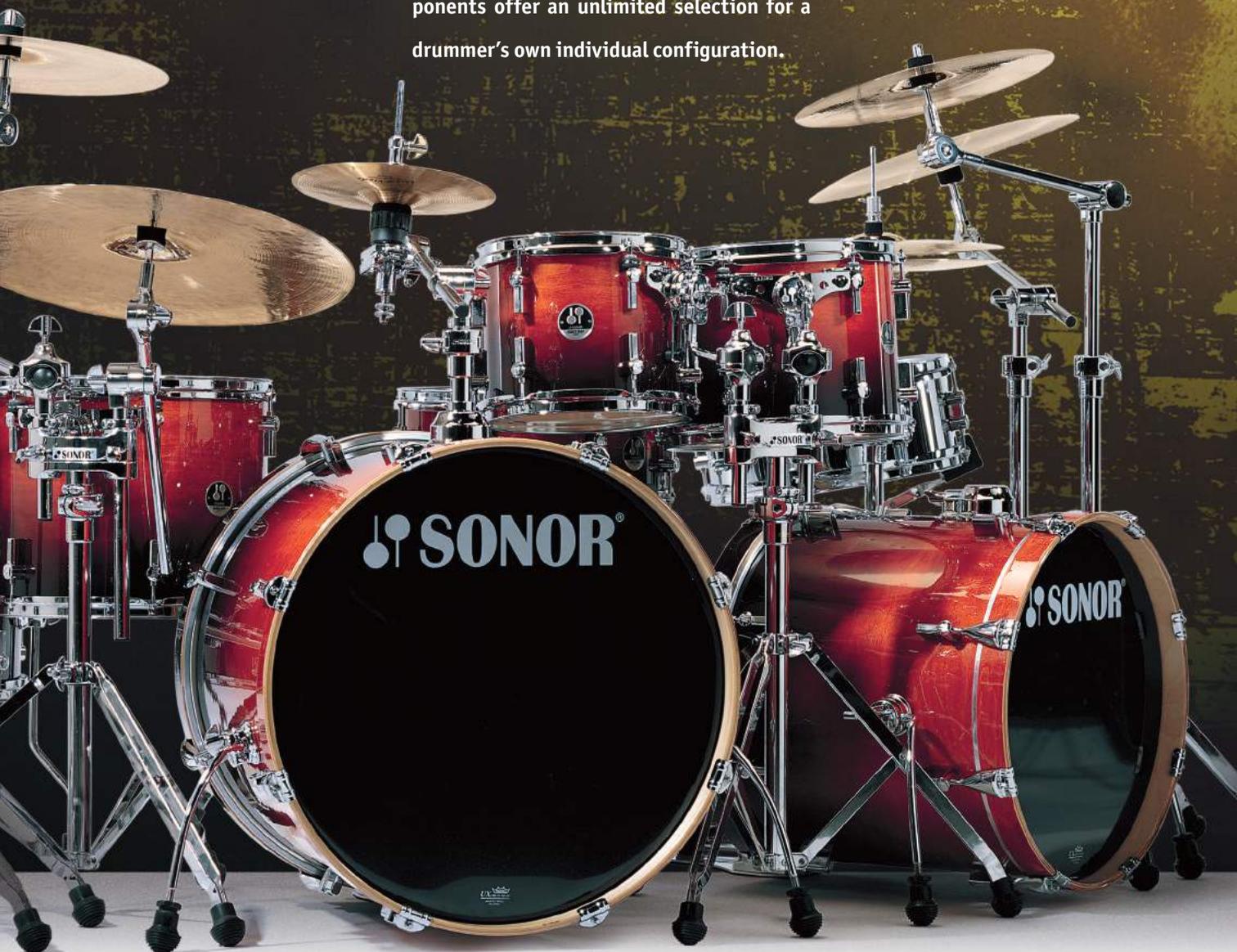


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plex—start with the house beat. It's great that we have books and videos and music schools, but it doesn't take the responsibility away from you to go your own way.

Back in the day, I transcribed those solos. There were no magazines left and right. People ask me those questions: “Are there books about drum 'n' bass?” The fun of it is that there are no books! When there are books I'm out of here. I always want to be in music that when people hear it they think, “What is this?” When Dizzy Gillespie, who I played

with, said, “This is bebop,” the name was already on the tombstone. I want to be in the hotspot of ignition, when the parts are really fast and hot. When people catch up, though, that supernova doesn't exist anymore, the particles aren't as hot anymore.

MD: You have phenomenal technique; you can't just put that aside and tell kids to play for the music.

Jojo: I just released a DVD that I put a lot of work into. I wanted to help people to be able to develop a way of thinking about how those

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Depart
Rebekka Bakken
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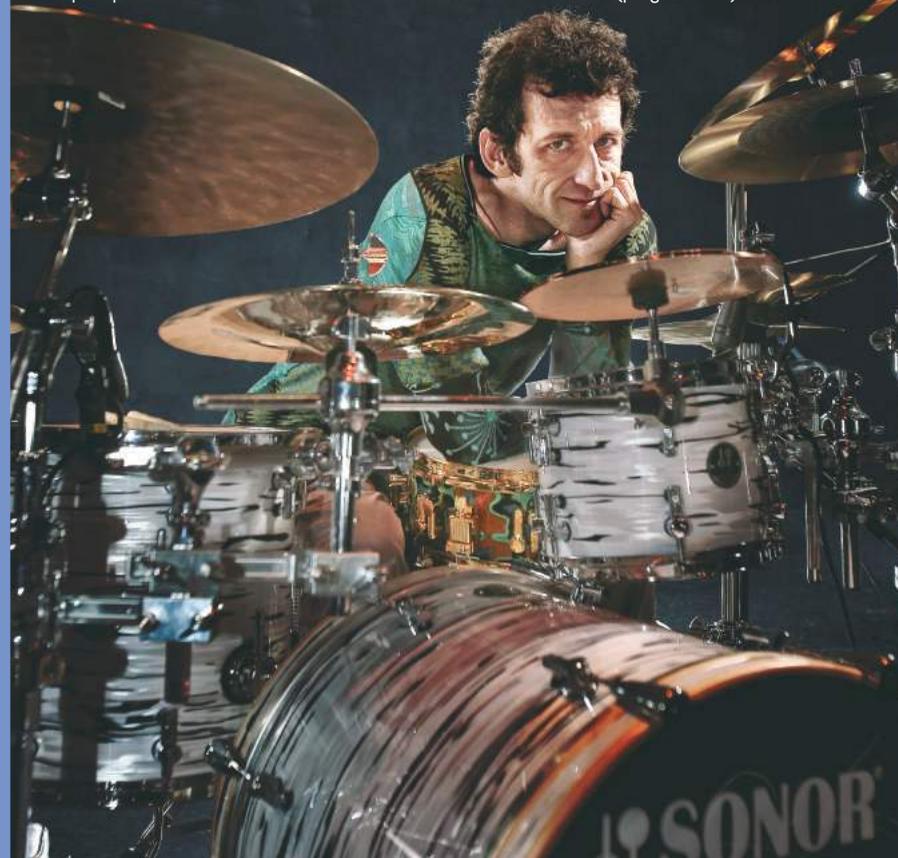
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Jabo Starks,
Clyde Stubblefield,
others
(programmed)
(programmed)

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things work. Actually, I wanted to create the opposite of a technique bible. I wanted to create a scientific pamphlet.

MD: I've never seen technique explained with the kind of detail and precision as on your DVD.

Jojo: One of my secrets is to look in different places. I had one lesson with Ed Thigpen, and I asked for the basic brush stroke. He said, "Close your eyes and just listen." So I closed my eyes and played, and he told me to lighten up. Let the brush play. Then he gave me other hints. He challenged me to use my creativity to find the solution. That's what a good teacher does. He's not dogmatic.

MD: But Thigpen gave you direction. Often accomplished drummers seem to say, "I have all this technique. Now you figure it out."

Jojo: That's fair. I had to figure it out, too. [laughs]

MD: Drummers need a way to get from A to B, and your DVD is a perfect example of that. The technique exercises in the DVD are dumbfounding, but it also features you playing and improvising on the drumset, which sounds very natural.

Jojo: I really made the DVD out of frustration. When I came to America in the late '80s, I was twenty-five and really didn't know the twenty-six rudiments. Violin and trumpets have schools that are a hundred years old. Rudiments show you all those things that drummers at some point knew. Billy Gladstone knew about everything I teach in the DVD. He just didn't have the means or he wasn't interested in documenting it. You want to make sure that these techniques are available. I thought it was a good idea to give people what every trumpet player knows. Drums are so archaic, you can pick up sticks and play right away. When you play trumpet you have to learn embouchure before you can do anything. I want to bring drummers up to that level of awareness. If the DVD does any good, it will remove the mystery from technical accomplishments.

Firing Secret Weapons

MD: How did you collect and put into practice all the incredible information in your DVD?

Jojo: For me, it's natural. As a self-taught drummer, I fell on my face many times. I didn't have a teacher to show me what to do. I learned by trial & error and by hurting myself. I had to overcome back pain, tendinitis, all those things. I was always a natural player, and my attitude was through the wall.

MD: Your music is very much of the street. But it seems as if you've studied with many people to assemble all the information we see on your DVD. Your bio says you only studied with Jim Chapin and Freddie Gruber.

Jojo: I had two informal lessons with Jim Chapin about the Moeller technique. Jim just hurls this stuff at you. That was enough for me to understand that I could do it. With Freddie, I had one lesson about balance, projecting my sound, and centering myself. Freddie told me about a way of thinking. He demands a lot. Freddie doesn't give you answers. He customizes a program for you. He gave me ques-

tions, the right questions, and if you figure those out, you figure out your problem. It's more philosophical.

MD: Did Chapin explain Moeller technique?

Jojo: He outlined the basic, around-the-barrel, formal Moeller thing. What I do on the video is a modernized version of the Moeller. Nobody plays around the barrel anymore.

If you want to get geeky with grips, there's the German, French, and American grips. But for me the American doesn't exist. Formally speaking, between the French and the German you have what is referred to as the American grip. To me, all you have to know is you can

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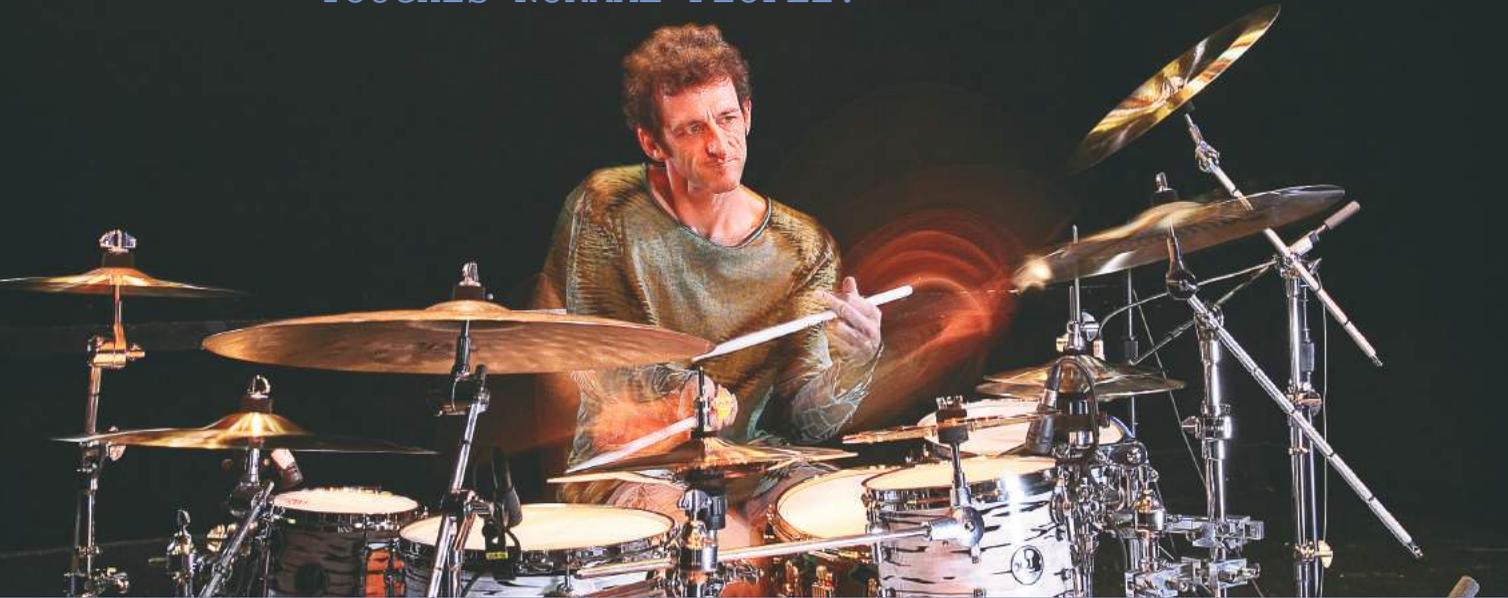
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use anything between the two. I began to understand that there's no such thing as one technique.

MD: Has being a magician influenced your drumming?

Jojo: No, but it is a branch to try to express the same thing. With drumming, I want to create magic. I want to give people this feeling of being suspended from reality. The video was inspired in a similar way that I would use a

magic trick.

MD: The DVD at times seems like magic, but you're demystifying technique. You're revealing the nuts and bolts of drum technique. Watching it gives you the impression of some-

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one who has gathered this info from a life's journey.

Jojo: Yes, it has been a quest. A lot of it is just common sense. Everything is inside the Moeller somehow. Did you ever watch a cat chase a fly? That's the perfect Moeller stroke. It's everywhere, it's a whip. At some point you have to leave the drums and look for the answers somewhere else. The greatest teachers I've had were not drummers. You can learn as much observing [pianist] Glenn Gould. **MD:** After watching you explain Moeller, the technique seems very obvious in the hands of Buddy Rich and Sonny Greer. Was Moeller better known at some point?

Jojo: I don't really know. People have mystified it. I had Moeller inside me already; I just brought it out. But I made other mistakes, like holding onto the drumsticks too tightly. I didn't let the sticks do the work. Why could Buddy still do it in his late sixties with a heart condition? He must have been doing something right. He proved that it's possible. I practice Moeller just watching TV.

MD: In one section of the DVD you play groups of six, eight, and nine strokes, alternating hands. How long did it take you to develop that level of strength?

Jojo: That took six months, but it depends on

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your amount of talent. I still practice it. I enjoy it. It's a good feeling.

MD: You're an entertainer as well. That comes across in the video, like with the handclap exercise, where you keep the lower palms together and clap your fingertips to a count of a hundred.

Jojo: That really helps you out. I don't believe in hours of Stick Control. You get the machine working somehow. The technical accomplishment is a magical feat—people always value that more than a conceptual or an emotional accomplishment. Drummers and other types of people are suckers for physical accomplishments. How many months did it take to do that? It's hard work: no pain, no gain. The big compliment is when people say they improved just by watching the DVD. I like Steve Jordan's video. He makes you enjoy the drums for what they're supposed to do. He did that for the groove. I wanted to do that for technique.

MD: What's the essence of the one-handed roll?

Jojo: The essence of a one-handed roll is that I can play a one-handed roll and play something else at the same time. I do it with the brushes too. I don't do it often, but if I do I'll play it and go to the cymbal with the other hand. Otherwise, why do it? A two-handed roll

always sounds better.

MD: Would you consider your "valving" technique, where you alternate between the index and middle finger to control the stick's rebound, the ultimate technique for speed?

Jojo: That's the technique I use most of the time. Using the two fingers like that is one of the easiest ways to obtain speed, yet I haven't seen anyone do it. If one thing on the DVD is original, it's that. It's my own version of the valving technique.

MD: In the "Chops Factory" segment of the DVD, you say that "to play fast you must play slow."

Jojo: What hinders most drummers from passing the threshold of speed is not the inability of their muscles or tendons, but that their motions have imperfections. It's like a watch with sand in the gears. The sand slows it down so it can't operate smoothly. In martial arts, they use that slow technique all the time.

Make a motion really slowly so you get the awareness of it. Then if you need to you can do it fast. I also researched typing methods. It's like an automated response. Typists do it slow, and then they can do it fast.

MD: Does typing correlate to playing rudiments with your fingertips, another exercise you recommend in the DVD?

Jojo: Playing the rudiments with fingertips

relates to "playing out" every note, as opposed to using bounce and letting the stick do the work. To play something out is to play every note with distinction. You're not going to be able to "play out" every note of the rudiments with your fingertips if your hand isn't able to do it.

This is a different approach from practicing with pillows, where you don't use rebound. I don't think it's good to practice on pillows, because you acquire a method to play through the drumhead. That's not the best method to get the drums to sound like a musical instrument. Buddy Rich didn't play through the drums. If he did, he wouldn't have been able to play into his sixties.

MD: So playing with the fingertips is executing each stroke.

Jojo: It's playing every note with the wrists. If you can play out with the fingertips, then you can play it on a piece of paper, on anything, on any surface.

MD: Can you explain the hand clapping exercise?

Jojo: Every drummer knows that burn sensation. If you move your fingers, you can see those cables, like a Terminator robot motion in your forearm. So I was trying to boil it down to the active motion that will cause that burn.

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If I keep my palms together near the wrist and then clap my fingertips together very quickly, and count in groups of ten as one repetition, that would be easy. [Jojo quickly plays ten reps, counting off each set until he reaches one hundred.] When you feel the tension go up, you acquire a reflex to not do what you usually do, holding your breath and straining. You need more oxygen, so just slow down the tempo, breathe, and experience the proper breathing, which melts the pain away. This is a good exercise to understand how long you can enter the red zone. If you push too hard in general, you get a style of playing that is full of tension. I execute anything as fast as I want but stay relaxed.

MD: So this is a great warm-up.

Jojo: As long as you don't force yourself to play quicker than your muscles allow.

Tuning For An Electronic Sound

MD: What are your general tuning guidelines?

Jojo: I use a lot of muffling on my snare. I don't like the ring anymore. I like the '70s Harvey Mason sound: crisp, with a little thud, but not deep..medium pitch..that sparkling sound. I use Moongels on the snare. If I don't have them, I use duct tape. For the bass drum, I tune it higher than most, with nothing inside. I play with both heads closed; with Nerve sometimes I have to accommodate the sonic environment, so I need to cut a little hole in the bass drum. But in the studio it's wide open.

MD: Do you go for the hard, fast jungle snare sound?

Jojo: Yeah, a pitched-up sound. That's why I have a 27-ply snare drum. I can tune it really high and the shell doesn't buckle. It's usually hard to tune a snare really high because it will choke. But even in electronic music those high snare drum sounds have come down in pitch.

I'm less concerned now with specific tuning. Strange Balls Of Fire and Nerve are almost opposite drum sounds—big and rumbling versus tight and crisp.

MD: Your Vic Firth signature sticks are shorter than average. Why?

Jojo: Most people think a 7A is an average stick. If you look at average hand sizes, I have relatively small hands. My idea was to customize the length of a stick to the size of your hand. It feels comfortable and plays well. It's maybe half an inch shorter than a standard stick.

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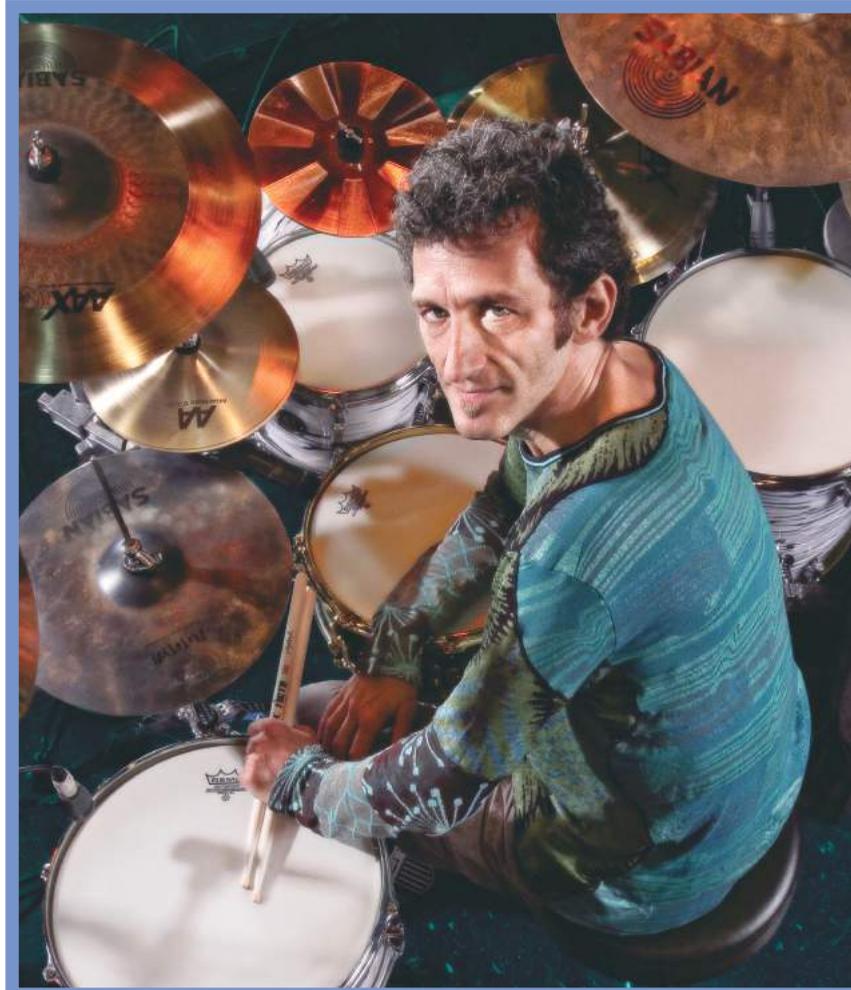
MD: And you really maintain the fulcrum near the stick's midpoint. A lot of drummers position their hand closer to the butt of the stick.

Jojo: I do that too. It can sound different. But you should really play this way [standard fulcrum placement on stick]. A shorter stick also brings out more low-end frequen-

me a lifetime to acquire, and it's meant to last for a while. I wanted it to be thorough and timeless.

MD: So how do you proceed from here? Do you have a goal?

Jojo: My final goal as a drummer is to be the best musician I can be, and as an artist, to serve a function in society. If I can expose



cies in the cymbals. My stick has the same weight as a 5A, but it's a little thicker, a little beefier.

MD: You play all the different Sonor series—SQ2, S-Classic, and Sonor Lite.

Jojo: I travel so often that Sonor just sends the sizes I need in different series. My Nerve kit varies, and I have kits all over the place. But I always use the same thin birch shell. I used the old Scandinavian birch kit on the Strange Balls Of Fire recording. A great kit. It's twenty years old.

Get Complicated!

MD: How should drummers practice the information on your DVD?

Jojo: They should practice it with curiosity, and have fun with it. This information took

the beauty of the drums to as many normal people as possible, that would be great.

Normal people think a drummer isn't too smart. In India and Africa, the percussionist has a standing like a surgeon or a scientist. But here we have a problem. Some people think drumming is like a big noise—make a big noise at the end of the show to announce that it's finished.

Millions of people don't know the difference between live and canned playback music. So there's a job for people like us, which is more important than showing fellow drummers how fast we can play. The closer I can be to that ideal as a drummer, the closer I'll be to achieving my goal.





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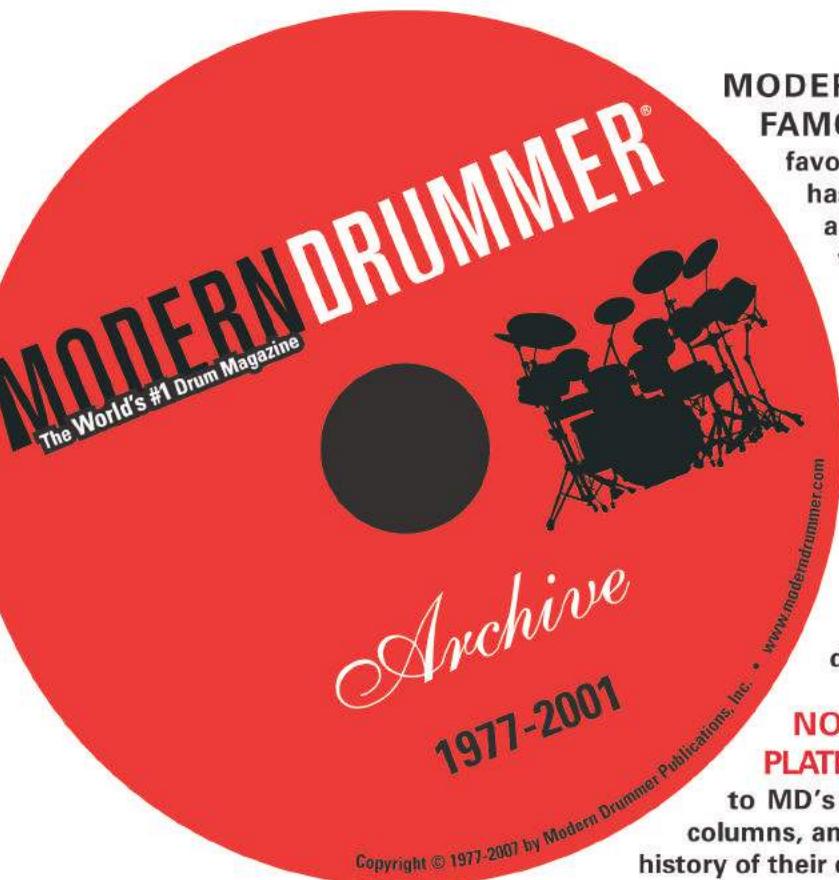


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The world-traveling tabla maestro offers insight into the history and technique behind his instrument and talks about his hypnotic new album with Mickey Hart.



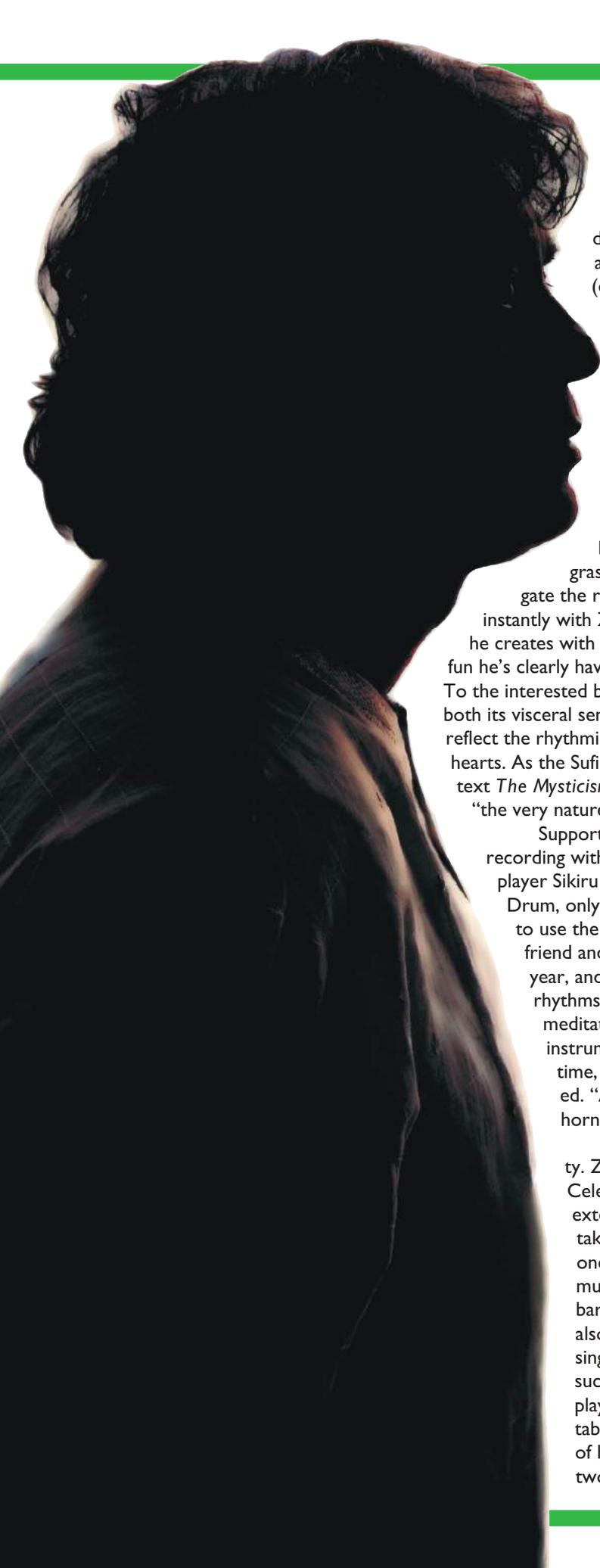
ZAKIR HUSSAIN

GLOBAL DRUMMER

Somehow I expected Zakir Hussain's hands to be...not normal.

As I prepared to meet him, one of the most masterful drummers of our time—of any time—I thought about what he's put those hands through. After all, stories of his monastic dedication to practicing during his training days are legendary, and the guy continues to gig constantly. The gestures used to coax music from a pair of tabla are not ostentatious, but Zakir spends great chunks of his time digging in and sliding the heel of his left hand along the goatskin head of the larger drum—called the *bayan* or bass—while, among many other strokes, pounding the buffalo-hide-wrapped wooden rim of the smaller drum—the *dayan* or simply the tabla—with his right index finger (among many other fingers). I assumed there would be some calluses, maybe a rough patch here or there.

Nope. His hands—hands that have felt five hundred years of Indian rhythms—were absolutely smooth. He probably had calluses at some point, but he doesn't need them anymore. At age fifty-six, after learning from his father, the great Alla Rakha (Ravi Shankar's longtime tabla player), and performing with a United Nations–type roster of musicians in a multitude of styles, Zakir Hussain has reached a state of grace.



“I’ve been very lucky,” he says.

The musicians I’m playing with now are the musicians I started playing with thirty years ago.” This list includes Westerners like guitarist John McLaughlin, in the group Shakti, and Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart, along with Indian classical artists such as flutist Hariprasad Chaurasia and santoor (dulcimer) player Shivkumar Sharma. Like his ecstatic drumming, Zakir’s ability and desire to share his art—his own and his native country’s—is unmatched, even in an age when geographic boundaries mean less than ever. He’s a swashbuckling rhythmic explorer who’s carrying the torch passed by Ravi Shankar as the world ambassador for Indian music.

The song of the tabla—the softly guttural, bending low tones of the bayan, the wooden crack and ringing open notes of the dayan—is familiar by now, but the nuances of Indian classical music are difficult to grasp. We drumset players might not yet be able to navigate the rules of a *tala*, or rhythm cycle, but we can connect instantly with Zakir’s craft—the lushness of his sound, the mischief he creates with his dizzying syncopation, the thrill of his virtuosity, the fun he’s clearly having despite employing dauntingly intricate technique. To the interested but untrained Westerner, Indian classical music, in both its visceral sense of drama and its deep, exotic sense of mystery, can reflect the rhythmic makeup of everything from rolling tides to beating hearts. As the Sufi mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan puts it in his illuminating text *The Mysticism Of Sound And Music*, and as Zakir himself radiates, “the very nature of life is rhythm.”

Supporting this concept is *Global Drum Project*, Zakir’s new recording with Hart, congero Giovanni Hidalgo, and talking drum player Sikiru Adepoku. The group is essentially a reunion of Planet Drum, only under a new name due to legal hassles. “We wanted to use the name, more as a tribute to Olatunji,” Zakir says of his friend and Planet Drum alum. “Baba passed away in its fifteenth year, and we wanted to pay tribute. But the main thing is the rhythms it represents.” The current CD is a collection of meditative grooves that highlight a worldly mix of percussion instruments, with a twist: The sounds were processed in real time, by the players and an engineer, as they were recorded. “A simple tabla can then become a chorus of tabla or a horn section or piano,” Zakir says.

For our interview, though, a “simple” tabla was plenty. Zakir, just back from playing at Kodo’s annual Earth Celebration in Japan, used his clear-voiced drums like an extension of his hands, to illustrate musical concepts, to take quick (jaw-dropping) breaks, and to crack jokes. At one point, I began to ask a question about “classical music.” He interrupted: “You mean...?” and played a few bars of the *William Tell* overture on his bass drum. He also demonstrated the wonderfully mellifluous syllabic singing that all Indian musicians learn; he’d recite a phrase such as *ta ti, da ge na ti, ge na da ge na ti*, and then he’d play the corresponding strokes for those syllables on the tabla. But mostly he talked. Though he has a sharp sense of humor, he wasn’t kidding when he said, “I might give two or three answers to every question.”

MD: Could you start by explaining the general role of each drum?

Zakir: Since you're a kit player, imagine the bayan to be the bass drum holding the tempo down, and imagine the tabla to be doing the snare thing, à la Buddy Rich, and a little bit of the tom-tom or cymbal stuff. You can keep the bass going—even like a double bass [plays steady 16th-note-type pattern with two fingers]—and do all kinds of stuff over it.

But, there's a repertoire that has been developed for the tabla, which is somewhere between four and five hundred years old. That's the language of the instrument. It comes from five schools, and each school has its specialty.

We don't separate the instruments like you would—the bass drum here and the cymbal there, and you can think about them individually. There is no pattern or phrase in tabla

which is just for the right hand or just for the left hand. It has to be both hands together.

[Zakir sings a syllabic pattern, then plays it on the tabla.] I'm not just improvising—I'm actually reciting a composition that's about 180 years old. As I say it, I play it, doing what's his face? The guitar player who sings his solos...

MD: George Benson?

Zakir: George Benson. [laughs] The repertoire was developed not unlike the Western system, where you were commissioned to write. When the maharajas went to the forest to go hunting, they brought musicians along to entertain them at night. They see a deer skipping about, and the maharaja says to his court tabla player, "Maestro, you should compose a rhythm that's something like this!"

Some of the repertoire deals with the poetry of the instrument. A theme is allotted, and you

are given certain do's and don'ts—rules—to improvise on.

MD: Because you blend composition and improvisation, it's hard for outsiders to understand what's allowed and what isn't. What would be a "don't"?

Zakir: Don't use a syllable not allotted in the composition. Ours is not a loose-fit thing. Most of it is very disciplined, worked into a compositional form.

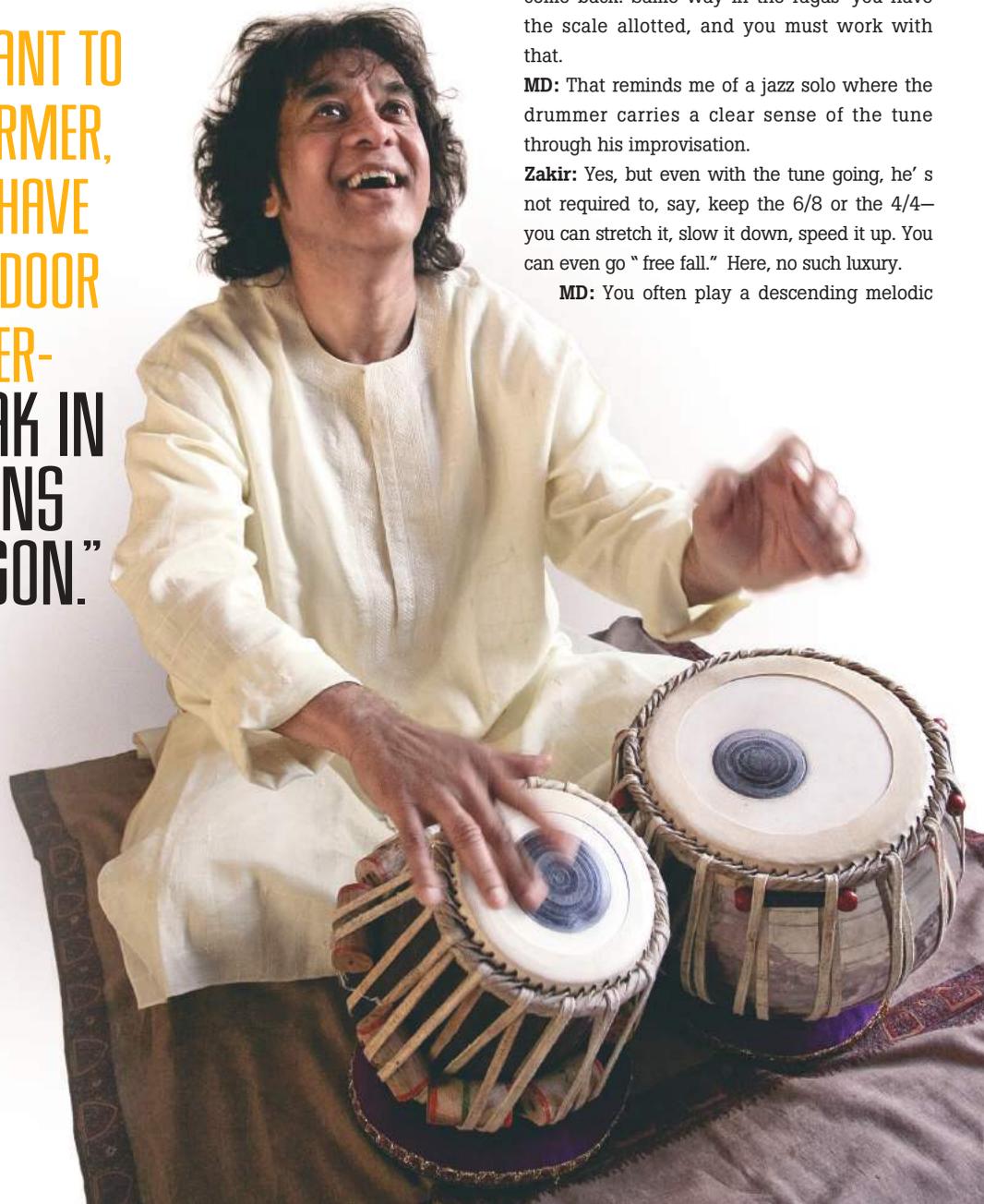
You must make sure that the way the phrasing is remains that way, even though you're creating things. You can change it slightly, but within the norms: maintaining the composition and using the syllable that's the important part of the phrase—like tete, for example. There are challenges in being able to improvise. Once you start a rhythm cycle, you see it through to the end before you change to another cycle. You don't just change and come back. Same way in the ragas—you have the scale allotted, and you must work with that.

MD: That reminds me of a jazz solo where the drummer carries a clear sense of the tune through his improvisation.

Zakir: Yes, but even with the tune going, he's not required to, say, keep the 6/8 or the 4/4—you can stretch it, slow it down, speed it up. You can even go "free fall." Here, no such luxury.

MD: You often play a descending melodic

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pattern on the bass drum along with quick strokes on the tabla. Is that traditional, or have you developed it?

Zakir: A melodic aspect of tabla is still in its infancy. I can, without being modest, say I did explore that aspect. Up until recently we did not move away from the idea of just playing the repertoire. We never stopped to think: What else can the instrument do?

This is a Western concept in my mind, because when you see a drummer playing, he's exploring the tonal possibilities, à la Terry Bozzio. He's actually playing a song, as you said, exploring a melodic element.

So when I arrived in the West and I ran smack into the world of drumming in the Mission District of San Francisco, and I was watching Armando Perazza and the Escovedos

TIHAI FOR TWO

ZAKIR EXPLAINS A KEY CONCEPT

In Indian classical music, a *tihai*, according to *Raga Mala*, Ravi Shankar's terrific autobiography, is "a musical phrase sung, played by an instrument, or danced, which is repeated three times. It may start on any beat, but the final note or sound of the third repetition must fall on the first beat of the cycle." Some of the most exhilarating passages in classical duets occur when the musicians connect on these phrases, which can come across as an exchange of secret code that leaves the audience cheering and gasping, "How did they *do* that!" We'll let Zakir explain further.

"Tihais are fun things that masters have composed, and there are all kinds," he says. "There are tihais which have no spaces between them. Then there are tihais that have a one-beat or two-beat space between them." Zakir claps a quarter-note pulse and sings a wicked syncopated phrase that skirts the downbeat twice as it repeats but lands, quite dramatically, on the one after three cycles. "These compositions play with the rhythm like hide-and-seek."

The most easily distinguishable examples appear at the fiery end of an improvisation, but, Zakir says, "Tihais come through the concert. In fact, these are the cues." After a raga and rhythm cycle are chosen by the musicians, the music starts, slowly. "They play the head," Zakir explains, "play the bridge, go back to the head—as in jazz. Then the main artist takes the first solo and finishes it with a little tihai. So the tabla player knows, 'Ah, the tihai.' And then it's his turn [to solo], and he throws a little tihai back at the guy. This goes back and forth for a while.

"Somewhere along the line when the tempo starts to heat up, they look at each other, nod, and then the melody player might take a long, *extended* tihai. But the tabla player has seen the tihai the first time around, and the second time he kind of knows what it is, so he'll hit it the third time—boom—and they end together. Trick of the trade. It'll give the impression that it came out of nowhere, for a guy that doesn't know the song."

We could put it another way: The ultra-tight hookups seem like magic. "It *is* in a way magic," Zakir says, "because sometimes a tabla player anticipates it. There is no nod, and even though it's not an extended tihai, the tabla player knows where this guy's gonna go, having played with him before, and he just parks right in there with him." Got it?



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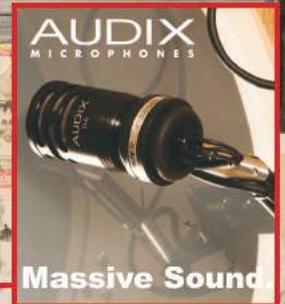
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and everybody, I was wondering, How is he able to get this thing going between the tumba and the conga while he's soloing on the tabla? That drove me to find the same element on tabla. And it was possible, because here's an instrument you tune. I have the scale available to me, so why can't I do the same thing?

MD: It's a remarkable instrument.

Zakir: Keith Jarrett, I think, when he was asked what he would play if he weren't playing piano, he said tabla. He said it feels like a very complete instrument.

I can just keep time for a sitar player or a sarod player, or I can embellish the dominant and subdominant notes and support them as a bass guitar would, which I do sometimes when I'm playing with, say, Hariprasad Chaurasia. He needs a little breathing time, and I can support him with the third or fifth or tonic notes. And when I play a duet with, say, John Handy or Charles Lloyd or the late Joe Henderson, it's interesting to use tabla not just as the rhythmic pulse but also as a bass thing.

And then we build stories. This is not something that existed in tabla up till recent times. I've gotten a little crazy with the storytelling aspect. Tabla is used as an expressive instrument when it's accompanying dance, so when

a dancer is showing a story of, say, Lord Krishna fighting the demon snake, you need to show that. Drumming is the principal instrument at that point, so when Krishna approaches the sleeping demon snake, and then he kicks him and wakes him, the tabla becomes the voice of visual expression.

MD: Have the advent of microphones and the development of recording technology aided the evolution of the tabla?

Zakir: Eventually, yes, but in the old times, the advent of a particular style of music, which was not as vigorous and strong and required a subtle accompanying instrument, helped to develop tabla technique. This particular style—known as khyal, which means imagination—appeared in the fifteenth century. It has since become the principal classical vocal style of North India.

Later on—in the last eighty years or so—microphones started coming in and people found that instead of playing hard they could just turn up the volume and still maintain a nice touch. You can actually have a tone, so you can go [plays a delicate bending note on the bayan], which you couldn't do in the olden days because the tone did not project that much.

MD: Do you think the fondness for bending notes in Indian music helped to develop the bent notes on the bayan?

Zakir: In Indian music you go from one note to the next, hopefully without breaking the connection—that is an important element that sits well with tabla.

MD: I wanted to ask about the guru-disciple relationship, which is a strong one in Indian classical music.

Zakir: Oh, yes. Absolutely. If you really want to be a great performer, you're going to have to knock at the door of some great performer and soak in all that happens with this person to really understand the spices that go into it.

In India, the relationship grew into a very intimate one because when you were accepted by a teacher, all your other family ties were severed. You became the son or the daughter of the guru, and you were treated like all the other children in the house. You were clothed, you were fed, you were educated. That guru was your father, your teacher, your mentor, your guide, your advisor—everything.

And it was not done frivolously—once you took a student on, you focused on that person. This person is going out into the world known as your student, so he'd better be good

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Charles Lloyd

Album

Tabla Duet
Selects
Rag Regeshri
The Best Of Shakti
Remember Shakti
Making Music
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HIS FAVORITES

According to Zakir, "Listening to my father, Ustad Alla Rakha, is a given. And I constantly listen to all of the musicians I work with. And I'm also a big fan of Indian folk music. That said, the following list contains eight artists I listen to for inspiration."

- 1) Kishore Amonkar, vocalist in the khyal tradition (North Indian classical vocal music)
- 2) Maestro Ali Akbar Khan, sarode
- 3) the late Ustad Amir Khan, khyal
- 4) the late Ustad Thirakwa Khan, tabla
- 5) John McLaughlin
- 6) Billie Holiday
- 7) Pandit Balamurali Krishna, South Indian vocalist
- 8) the late Smt. Shobha Gurtu, semi-classical North Indian vocalist



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enough to represent you. When you arrived at a place to play, the first thing you were asked was, "Who's your guru?" You were expected to perform accordingly, and if you failed, God help you. [laughs]

In today's world, the idea of the student living with the guru has kind of gone away, but in India students still travel with their teachers as part of their entourage when they play concerts. Those students are there sitting behind them and giving them water or making sure everything is okay, but in the meantime learning from them.

MD: I would think that with Alla Rakha being both your father and your guru, it was a remarkable relationship.

Zakir: Well, I didn't have to pay him. [laughs] It was amazing. It was amazing because every minute of being awake was filled with music, with rhythms. Somebody was practicing at any given time of the day in some corner of the home, so information kept coming to me.

But my father used reverse psychology. Knowing how rigorous the training would be, he just shied away from teaching me. And me, stupid as I was, I fell into the trap. He was my hero, and I knew that to get his attention I must

do something with this thing. So I went wholehog into it and started to learn from his students. They'd give me a little tip here and there until I got to a point where I could play. And then he heard me play, and he saw that I was well and truly hooked. That's when my training began.

And the training began, meaning how? I'm asleep. Suddenly I'm woken up. It's 2:00 in the morning. My father would teach me when the whole world slept. Between 2:00 and 6:00, he would talk to me about rhythm, about tradition, about history. He would sing rhythms to me, and I would sing them back to him. We wouldn't play the drums. And this would go on until my mother would say, "Enough." I had to have breakfast and go to school. In the afternoon, I would put into practice on the instrument what I had learned between 2:00 and 6:00 A.M., and I would eagerly await going to bed, knowing that I would be woken up again.

I was lucky that he was there for me and I was able to learn. But not for very long—for about five years I got strong training daily like this. After that they just became too famous, Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha. They were all over the world, and sometimes they'd be gone

for five, six months. Once I came to drop my father at the airport—I raised up and gave him a hug, and when he came back I was taller than him.

MD: Do you continue to practice regularly?

Zakir: I do. If I can get in an hour or so a day, I do. But practice is not just sitting down and playing. Practice is also up here [points to his temple]. You try to find new ways to set the patterns, and you sing the rhythms in different ways to yourself. That goes on through the day, and then I try to put onto the instrument what has been in the mind.

In the old days when the teachers used to say, "This master used to play twelve hours a day for twenty years," he didn't actually play the instrument for that long. In his mind he sang and thought about the rhythms, and the actual playing might have been four hours. We have heard stories of students' dedication, but in a more mythological world. I mean, there's my father's story...

Nobody in his family learned tabla, nobody played music. And this kid, six years old, is seeing this person in his dreams with a voice saying, "You have to go to this guy." It drives him so much that he runs away from home by the

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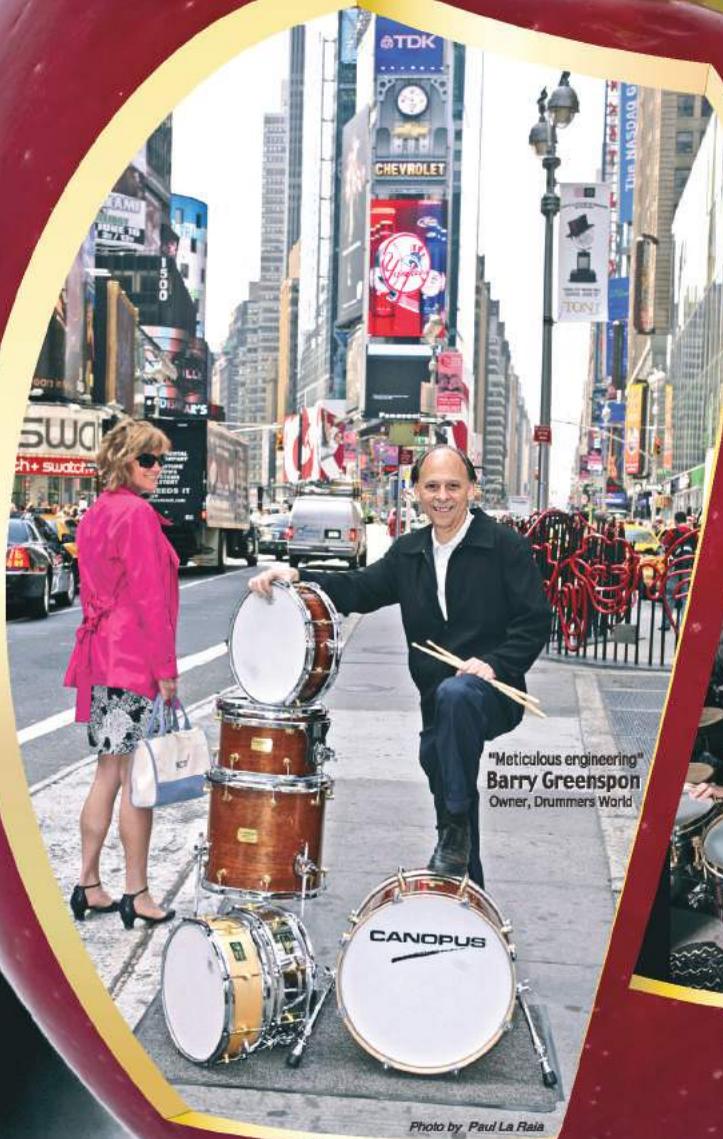
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time he's seven. He joins the circus, and he arrives eventually to a main city. And in the circus they know he wants to play music. Somebody says, "There's a tabla teacher in this town. You should go see him." So he finds his way to the teacher. He's, by now, eight years old or so. He arrives at the house, and lo and behold it's the face that he's been seeing in his dreams.

My father said that when he sat down and put his hand on the tabla, and the teacher also had a tabla and he put his hand on the tabla, the positions were exactly the same. The approach was exactly the same. The teacher stopped him and said, "Who is your teacher?" My father said, "You." The teacher said, "But I haven't seen you." And my father said, "But I have seen you."

And that's the story. It came true for me. One day I came upon a photograph of my father and me playing a concert. And the positions were exactly the same. No two bodies are alike, but the shoulder was just so, and the look was just so, and I said, "Wow, I guess it might be true." [laughs]

MD: Do you need to warm up before perform-

ing?

Zakir: Well, there are so many performances. But there are certain exercises that we do, with the wrists, with the arms. I meditate for about ten minutes in the dressing room before I go on. I iron my shirt. It's just preparation, focusing on the task ahead.

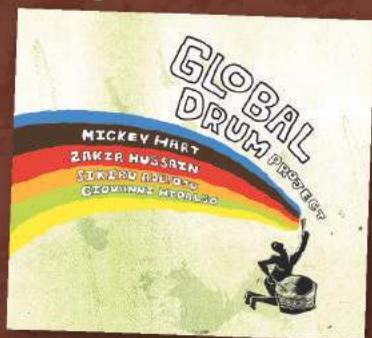
If I'm playing with another musician, I listen to him through the day. It's all going to be improvised, so there's no material to be learned, no charts to be brought. Just his sound, his idea of tone, his musicality—it's reorienting.

MD: Is teaching an important part of what you do?

Zakir: I love it. It's a learning experience as well, and I remember things I'd forgotten. When I first arrived here in '69, early '70, I was offered a job teaching tabla at the University of Washington in Seattle, and I really did not have much knowledge about teaching. I'd say to the students, "Try to do this." And the first thing was: "What is this? Where does it come from? Why is it called this?"

I had to find answers. And I had to dissect and analyze and present it in a most logical manner so there wouldn't be shades of gray.

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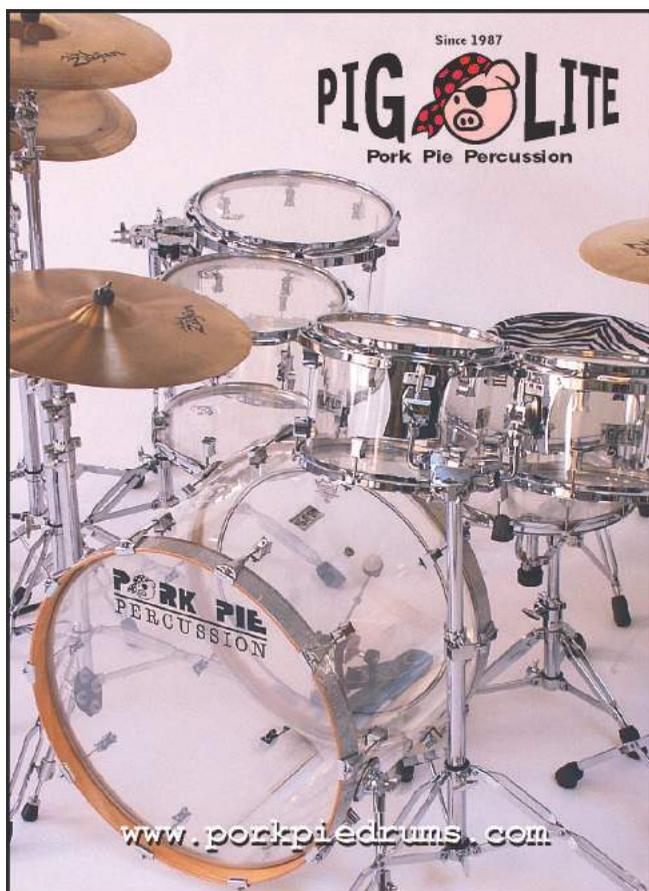
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ZAKIR HUSSAIN

When I was learning and I asked my father, "Why is this a tihai, and why is that a gat, and why..." "Tsk, tsk—just practice." That's what teachers did in India. They said, "Just practice, and it will reveal itself to you."

When I'm teaching a student, the first thing I say is: Forget that this represents a five-thousand-year history. Forget that this is an instrument that has a very intricate repertoire, a very refined technique. In the old words of Ralph Kramden and his friend—"Address the ball: Hellooooo, ball"—address the tabla. Just fool around with it. Play it like a bongo drum. Just become friends, and the technique will emerge. But don't get all bent out of shape: "[Gasp] It's tabla!" No.

MD: Let's talk about Global Drum Project.

Zakir: We've hit upon something that allows us to process the tones that are emerging from the drums in real time so they become more an orchestra than timekeeping devices. We set up tempos in MIDI, and if we suddenly want to change tempos, we can. We can take the digital domain onto the stage and play it as an instrument that we can actually improvise on, as opposed to just setting a click and playing a set idea.

MD: So you all played together and did the processing there and then?

Zakir: Yes. It all printed as it was.

MD: The music is very hypnotic.

Zakir: Mickey wanted to do a trancelike album. He didn't want to get into heavy virtuosic playing but wanted to create a sound zone. When we get on stage, we stretch out. Drummers will be drummers. [laughs]

MD: Did you write the music out of jams?

Zakir: Some ideas emerged from loops that we created from sessions we'd played some time back, when Baba or Airta was around. We used those loops as a jumping-off point.

"Dances With Wood" is basically trees. I was sitting in the studio, and in walks Mickey with three people behind him carrying this tree. And he said, [imitating Mickey's growl] "I found this in the forest. I hit it with a stick, and it has a nice hollow tone. We should play this!" So the next two days were spent polishing and cleaning it, because it was too rough to play with my hands. We placed microphones, introduced some processing, and then I started playing to the delays, the arpeggios, the reverb. I played it with my hands, and Mickey played it with mallets and sticks. And sometimes with brooms.

MD: Could you talk a bit about your relationship with Mickey?

Zakir: Without actually sitting down and teach-

ing me, Mickey introduced me to many wonderful things in this world of rhythm. When I talked about the Mission District, it was my contact with Mickey that brought me there. A lot of people give credit to George Harrison and Peter Gabriel for making world music possible. People don't realize that in the world of rhythm, Mickey's contribution is unparalleled because of what he's brought forth, without really himself being the master drummer up in front. It gave us a stage to work with. And thirty-five years after Rolling Thunder, we're still making albums. And learning. It's priceless to have that kind of friendship.

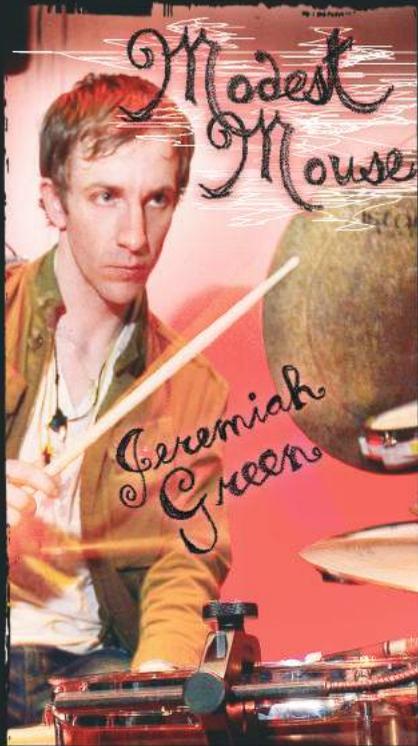
Mickey's a restless soul who always wants to find something out there. He takes you along, so you find it with him. Part of my growth, as a tabla player who looks at tabla globally, is quite a bit his influence, and Airta's, and Giovanni's, and Olatunji's, and so on.

John McLaughlin is such an influence: I learned how to project the tabla as an instrument that interprets jazz. My association with John for these thirty-five-odd years has helped me to do that. We're still doing it, and it's amazing that I'm still learning a lot. And [sarod player] Ali Akbar Khan, Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Shivkumar Sharma are three Indian musicians who helped me develop my stagecraft for Indian music. Playing with them helped me to experiment with how I should play the classical repertoire of tabla on stage.

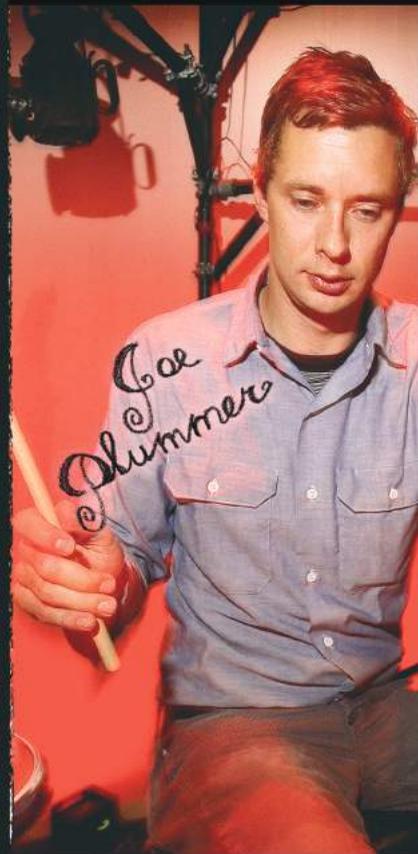
MD: Is Shakti Indian music?

Zakir: Shakti is us just taking off. There's nothing written by John for [violinist L.] Shankar to play, or by Shankar for John to play. In the best of the tradition of jazz—which is improvising—and Indian music—which is improvising—Shakti was the first of its kind in those days. It was heavily Indian based, but the execution of it was in the world of jazz. We had the raga idea and the rhythm cycle idea, but we went with it in the way the jazz world would. We were young punks, and so we could step anywhere we wanted to. So we just went with it.

Somebody asked me, "Who would you like to play with, now that you've played with all these guys?" I said, "I'd love to play with these guys again." Now I know them better, now I understand their music, now it's finally revealed itself. I get it.



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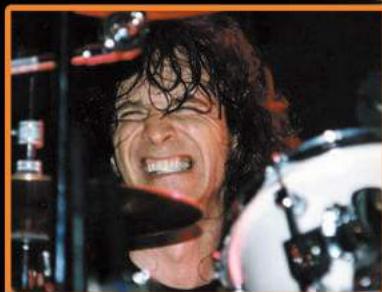


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DAVE DiCENSO's *Juggling Act*

Harnessing Blinding Chops For Balance's Sake

Story by T. Bruce Wittet • Photos by Paul La Raia

It was a momentous display of the human spirit that flickered brightly one brisk, dark night in September, 2003, the night when the Avedis Zildjian Company threw a star-studded tribute to Steve Gadd in Boston. The pinnacle of the show, at least to the drummers *MD* chatted with afterwards, was the sixteen-bar coda of "Country Road"—a drum and vocal duet featuring Steve Gadd and James Taylor. JT elicited goose bumps with vocals frighteningly in phase with Steve's increasingly complex fills. At the top of the last eight measures, James was exclaiming, *Everything's fine and I'm okay; I don't know how it happens this way...* Winding into the final four bars, Steve shadowed James' vocals with convoluted fills that invoked every drum and cymbal, all the while never faltering in his bewilderingly solid groove until the duo reached their feverish peak.

Sixteen bars of greatness, the kind you're lucky to witness once every twenty years, had not gone unnoticed. Out in the audience, one figure, then another, rocketed out of the soft seats, spurring on a deafening encore. The first to be airborne was Dave DiCenso, totally in his element. Sure, he's gained recognition for brute power, extravagant chops, and a lightning-quick response meter in gigs with jazz/fusion/rock outfits including Hiromi, John Petrucci, Steve Morse, and Two Ton Shoe (DD's former band), for example. But the real DiCenso, we discover today, has a simpler agenda. He's bent on digging a groove so deep you get lost in the trench. He's generating the sort of embracing feel that moves a singer-songwriter to deliver the performance

of a lifetime and prompts a guitarist to solo gloriously unfettered.

Over the course of Dave DiCenso's life, he's had his share of the chaotic rock life, and he's yielded to the urge to gratuitously unload flashy gladiator-type fills with only a nod to the musical context. What's more, he's played hard until he bled. In those days, for Dave, this passed as "passion." But his body began sending him messages of increasing urgency, mercilessly pummeling him with aches and pains. And his mind was constantly admonishing him to unclutter and seek solace in *tacet* open spaces, not jungles of notes.

Eventually, the consensus of flesh and spirit won and Dave regained control of his life—on many levels, of which the rhythmic is but one. As his spectacular performance at the 2006 Modern Drummer Festival demonstrated, Dave DiCenso has no problem summoning control. He's got that area locked down and secured. And his time feel has matured to...well, let's just say that the comparison to Steve Gadd is not farfetched.

Prior to this interview, at our request, Dave sent *MD* a compilation CD of some of his performances, including beautifully simple singer-songwriter odes, fusion, prog, pop, punk, and hardcore. Although he was absolutely stunning from top to bottom, the real surprise was the comfort zone he'd created for singer-songwriters, stark and devoid of the sort of crazed fills that gain fans with other drummers. We started with a question about the night in 2003 when DiCenso sat in rapture as Gadd did what Gadd does so well.

MD: At the Zildjian tribute, you were the first out of your seat. What was it about Gadd's performance that resonated with you?

Dave: That question takes me back to 1989 and seeing the Buddy Rich memorial performance. Of all the players that night—and mind you, I was twenty-one years old and in a different head space—Gadd was a major factor in pushing me a long way into the headspace I'm occupying now. Of all the drummers on the memorial, Gadd plays the fewest notes, but beyond that there was this intangible feeling, interpretation, and sound that made me so excited.

Now, fourteen years later, Steve is playing with a pop icon [James Taylor], the tempo's slow, and he's creating a subtle crescendo. It

was like he had mastered the space and was painting a picture. It was orgasmic the way he created so much anticipation and then grabbed you. I know he grabbed me, and I know he grabbed you—and whoever else got it that night.

MD: I think some people were stirred but didn't realize what had happened.

Dave: That guy had everything balanced, like a waiter carrying a five-course meal with two hands and delivering it with such grace and style. Musicians have to be incredible multi-taskers.

MD: There are loads of drummers who play well on the surface, but Gadd had burrowed into the drywall. Can someone learn to play with such depth?

Dave: I think the answer is yes—to a degree. The speed with which you learn it is what comes into question. I mean, do you know it by the time you're fifteen years old? Or by the time you're sixty-five? But it's learnable.

More specifically, talking about feel, I ask a student, "What do you feel when listening to this music, and can you evoke that feeling on your drums?" Everybody has a feel. The question is whether one can convey a feeling that is complementary to the musical conversation taking place.

A good way to work on your feel might be to go searching for what soul means to you. I believe we can learn to live more in harmony with what our purpose is in life. If we can learn to live more soulfully, then can't we



“A good way to work on your feel might be to go searching for what *soul* means to you.

If we can learn to live more soulfully, then can't we learn to play more soulfully?”

learn to play more soulfully? I think the answer is yes.

What needs to be learned and practiced by the student is allowing oneself to be free. No fear of mistakes, judgments, consequences—this is the key. And I think some people possess this skill more naturally than others,

whether they're on a soul-searching expedition or not.

MD: I know that you've been on such a soul-searching expedition. I've noticed a huge difference in your groove.

Dave: Absolutely. I think that a big difference for me in the last ten years is continuing the inner evolution simultaneously with the exterior evolution, the inner evolution being your self-vision and your life philosophies and how

they pertain to your music and your life. These are thoughts and feelings that become practices, like mantras—waking up every day and finding control of your inner life by saying Thank you, even if it's the ugliest gray day in late fall.

For me it's a continuous evolution. It's an inner resolution and it started when I was twenty-five, fourteen years ago, and having all these pitfalls—falling off the wagon, as it were,

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According to Dave, “My drum and cymbal setup can vary depending on the music I'm playing. But here's my basic setup.”

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Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side, coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Emperors underneath, Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter with Fiberskyn 3FA on front

Sticks: Vater 5B (hickory with wood tip)



then jumping back on and feeling more enlightened for having fallen off.

MD: You could have cruised along, what with your amazing chops, but instead you're at a deeper place where your groove has become undeniable.

Dave: Now you're striking a chord with me. I've never been more blown away than that night watching Gadd. I want to convey my utopia in my drumming—and I have a hard time doing that having to play loud and dense all the time. I want space in my life, in my music, and in my groove. There's got to be space. Hearing a compliment like that from you means a whole lot more to me than getting an email from a fan who's touched by what I'm doing but who's focused on the fireworks that I'm able to display when needed.

MD: How did you develop your internalized sense of time? It seemed so effortless and apparent during the MD Festival; you were rocking back and forth, working the vibe in the room.

Dave: I took maybe two weeks off from everything prior to the MD Festival to sort of "re-group," meaning get on a regimen of waking up, meditating for thirty minutes, doing yoga for forty-five minutes, riding my bike for an hour... I ate very well. I kept an inner dialog going all day: of gratitude, of acceptance, of non-resistance.

In my practice, I spent a lot of time playing around one idea. You could call it a "musical meditation." I put the 2/3 son clave in my mind. As in meditation, you can do that in your practice using a musical phrase. That's



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helped me to go up on stage and play by myself and entertain people, simultaneously entertaining myself. Truth be told, playing solo is not my favorite thing to do. I'd rather play with musicians.

MD: Can you expand on what you focused on in the weeks before the Festival?

Dave: Just figures, pretty much. For example, the first couple of minutes of my solo was based on 2/3 son clave. I had no intention for

the crowd to begin to clap; I was just counting them in and providing them with a sense of grounding. They clapped along and it threw me a little, but nevertheless I stayed with 2/3 son clave.

I went through a few different ideas, such as the Afro 6/8 clave, and modulated from [sings original phrase] to [sings quicker phrase]. It's like a painter improvising for ten minutes on the color brown, then deciding

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that for the next ten minutes he's going to paint using the color orange.

MD: You've kindly sent a burned CD encompassing what you call traditional R&B, fusion, and so on—John Petrucci, Steve Morse, and Hiromi, for example. It gets increasingly busy. Do you discover simplicity in the busier music?

Dave: I have to find the simplicity in the busy stuff for me to feel comfortable. It's like finding the eye of the storm. For example, on "XYZ" with Hiromi, there's a vamp in nine. Hiromi and the bass player are playing this syncopated run in 16th notes. I took all the 16th notes out and played the main pulses. There wasn't a lot of prep work for that session. I stripped down the vamp, figured out the spacing, and figured out what I could say within that spacing. But first I had to understand intellectually what was going on. I'm hesitant to use the word math, but it is mathematics; it is logic.

If there's something you can't immediately get your musical vocabulary wrapped around and kick the shit out of it, caress it, or whatever, then put it through the brain. I have to understand the space and mathematics so that I can take it out of the brain and it becomes visceral again.

MD: Because you're putting something through a brain, or intellectual process, do you have a hard time making it visceral again?

Dave: It's just part of the process, and I don't think it's harder to make something visceral; in fact, it's probably the only way of getting it visceral and not sound like I'm out of my element. When you're confronting a difficult piece of music, don't keep taking blind stabs at it, hoping you'll get your bearings. Get off the drums and get your bearings on a piece of paper! Use your eyes, your ears, and your voice.

MD: What did John Petrucci ask you to do?

Dave: He knew how I played, and he would let me run with the ball. Sometimes he would offer suggestions, such as, "Neil Peart here; more like Stewart Copeland there." Where I'm coming from as a session drummer, you've got to please who you're working for and at the same time put your own identity out there. There were times when John might say something and inside I was thinking, Oh boy, I don't know whether I want to go there, but let's see if we can find a middle ground.

MD: How did you meet Jess Tardy from Nashville?

Dave: I met Jess Tardy through my friend Aaron Katz, who was with a band called Percy Hill on the jam-band circuit. He co-produced Jess's recording and hired me to play on her songs.

MD: The reason I ask is, first, the material is so

different from your prog, fusion, and hardcore stuff, and second, you seem so at home with her songs.

Dave: Now we're getting to it. I love old-sounding keyboards like Rhodes and Wurlitzers, and I love lap steel guitar and simple song forms and grooves, with a lot of space. There's lots of warmth in the Jess Tardy recording. Bob Glaub [bass] was a beautiful part of that experience. We would learn in the studio, go for takes, and the bass, drums, and guitars went down together. That music is very close to my taste in music and what I really love to play and listen to.

MD: And it sounds like it. I began noticing unobtrusive little things you played on that record. You'd do a little triplet or inject a kinky figure on the bass drum—a little off the beaten path. Anything you can say about your bass drum technique or influences?

Dave: Nothing I'm cognizant of in the context of Jess Tardy's music. That question slides me back a good fifteen or twenty years when I was very aware of incorporating my foot into the way I would embellish something or do a fill. It reminds me of what's happening today with a lot of the young black American drummers.

To me, the Aaron Spears, Teddy Campbells, and Gerald Heywards are doing some cool, innovative things on bass drum. Guys like Vinnie, Gadd, and Weckl were doing that a lot, too. Those are the guys who got me into the idea of doing more with the bass drum. And the Gospel guys are doing a lot with bass drum—and they're putting a little spin on it, which is really cool.

MD: I looked at the gear page of your Web site [www.davedicenso.com]. Can you tell us what you're using now and for what purposes?

Dave: One of the things that I have fun with now, which I did for my last round of clinics, is changing my cymbal setup. I'd put a 20" K Constantinople ride on my left, and I'm using it as a ride and a crash. Also, I got rid of the splashes. Nothing wrong with them; I'm just not hearing splashes anymore. And instead of a medium-heavy ride, for example, I've been using a crash-ride. I'm digging the K Custom Dry Complex ride a whole lot, and I've put an Armand ride on my left.

This week I've got two gigs, and I'll be using a different kit for each gig. One gig is R&B and the other is more of a fusion band. The kit I'm using for R&B/rock has a 16x22 bass drum with a small hole in the front head, whereas for fusion it's a 16x20 with no hole in the front head—I can get that longer tone happening and it's still got a trashy sound, which I'm enjoying.



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There are differences in the shells, too. A couple of years ago, Pearl made me custom bearing edges, rounding them so there's more wood touching the head, back to the vintage thing. It's a different sound and feel, and I'm way into that. On the fusion kit, which has the rounded bearing edges, I'm using Remo Ambassador heads. To me, when you put Ambassadors on the rounded bearing edges and have more wood touching the head, it's cool that you use thinner heads. The wood is going to dampen the sound in a good way.

I'm going to invest in some old drums soon. A friend of mine plays down the street every Wednesday night, and he's got an old set of Ludwigs that sound incredible. I wonder why every major drum company doesn't offer old-style bearing edges as an alternative.

MD: I've talked to your dad, Dick, who is a well-known Boston-area drum teacher. What affect did he have on you?

Dave: I'm grateful to have a father who was such a caring, sharing, talented teacher. He's got a passion for it and he's still doing it, and he's sixty-six years old. I know, being a teacher myself, it can be hard to find a good first teacher—someone who's going to care and be patient. Teaching, especially young kids, is hard work. People who do that, and in particular my dad, are special people.

MD: Are there certain critical techniques a young student must learn before advancing?

Dave: They have to learn about music, about form. We're talking about good, healthy technique, too. Those were the things my dad impressed upon me, but at the time I didn't really listen completely. I was young and I was

morphing into a full-fledged rock drummer.

For example, I developed tendinitis at a fairly early age. I had pain everywhere, even into my back between my shoulder blades. I was playing a lot and I was touring, gigging, teaching, and doing sessions.

You know that inner revolution I described? One half of that revolution was caused by serious physical ailments and serious physical limitations on the drums. It was painful physically and it became mentally painful. It was as if a cage was being built around me. The cage is the metaphor for my body. My muscles were tense and losing the fine motor coordination, and the brain was unable to fire its signals through the masses of muscles that were starting to knot up. There was the more philosophical aspect of what was I doing with my life. I was busy every night playing and touring, and I wasn't happy. So what I thought I should be doing with my life must not have been it, because it wasn't bringing me happiness.

So I had to fix up my body and fix up my life philosophy: figure out what the hell it was I was supposed to be getting from life—and giving to life and to the world. I think I was more of a taker at that point.

MD: Where did you start?

Dave: Somebody turned me onto the Moeller technique, the idea being able to rely on momentum instead of muscle. My dad was turning me on to that as a young kid, but at the time, I just didn't have the capacity to absorb it.

MD: Do you teach Moeller to your students at Berklee?

Dave: That's one of the techniques I teach

them. It's all the stuff other people teach, but I have names for them. I call one the "dribble technique," as in dribbling a basketball. That, again, is relying on momentum rather than force. It requires strength in the hands.

When I was younger I was using much larger muscle groups—up through the shoulders and into my back—to play drums. It wasn't working for me, and I turned my consciousness to the area from the elbow to the fingertips. I did specific things that got my muscles looser and stronger—I call it "longer and stronger." And I got the right muscles to be stronger. You don't need to be jacked up in the shoulders to be a good drummer, but it might help to have the strength in the forearm, wrists, hands, and fingers. I teach techniques to develop strength, which I discuss on one of the Festival DVDs.

MD: If you could balance your life, even more than you've achieved thus far, what would you do?

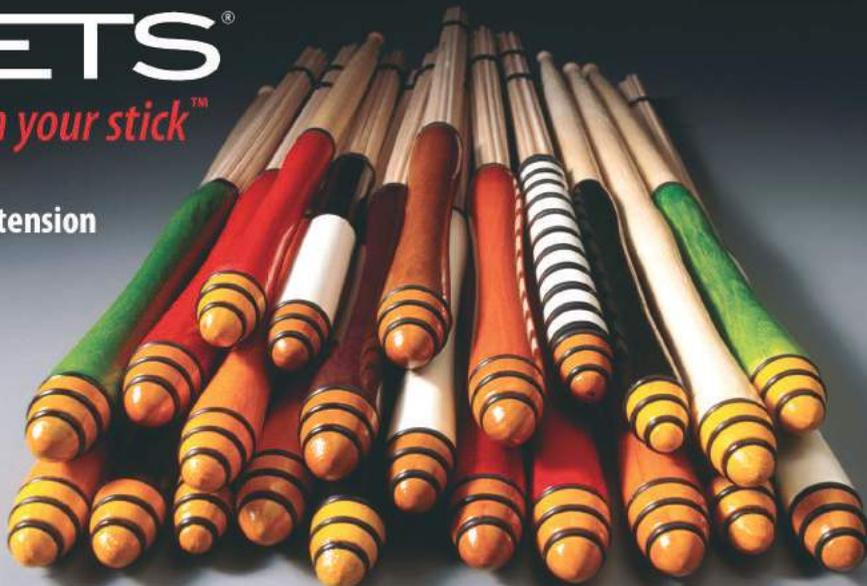
Dave: Good question—and I've got an answer. For the past three years I've been writing a book, and in the process I wrote two books. It's part of me, wanting to play less and do less juggling: keeping three balls up in the air, being on the road with three different acts, teaching, doing session work, being married, and having a home life. And I've been stoking the fires of passion for songwriting. So basically I want to divide my time between playing music, writing and recording my own music, and teaching music. Once these books are published, and maybe a DVD, that's how I want to balance my professional life.



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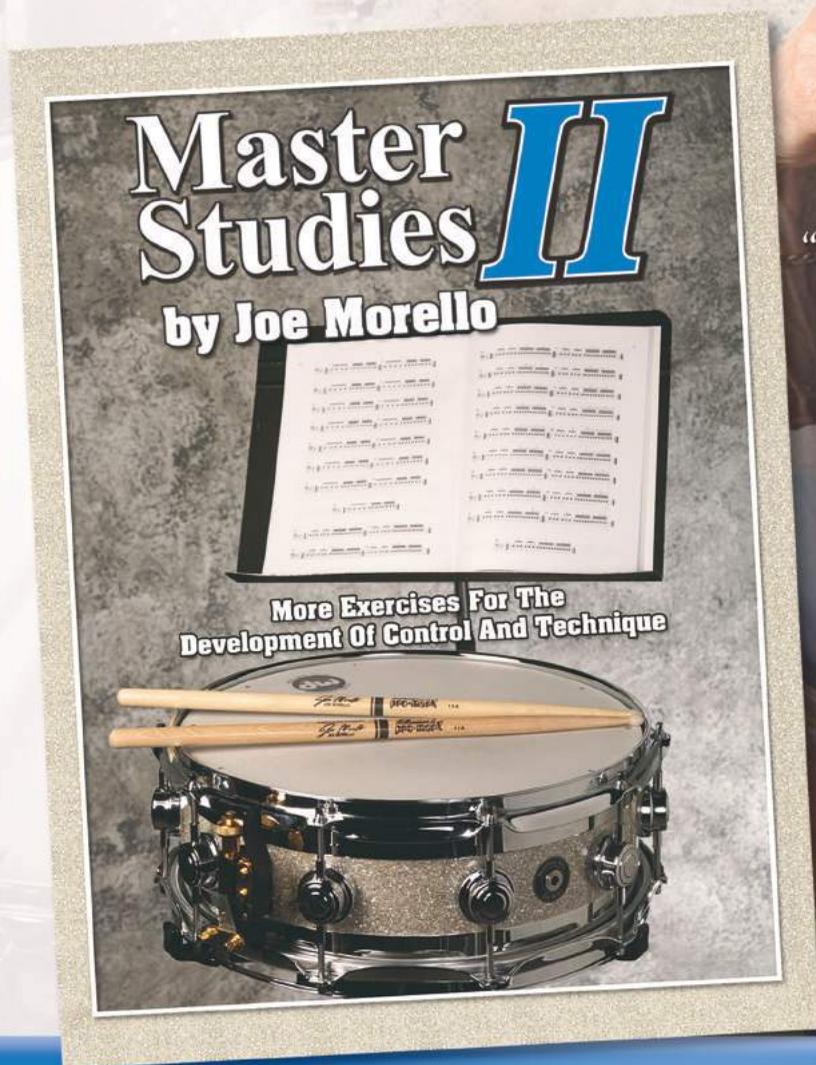
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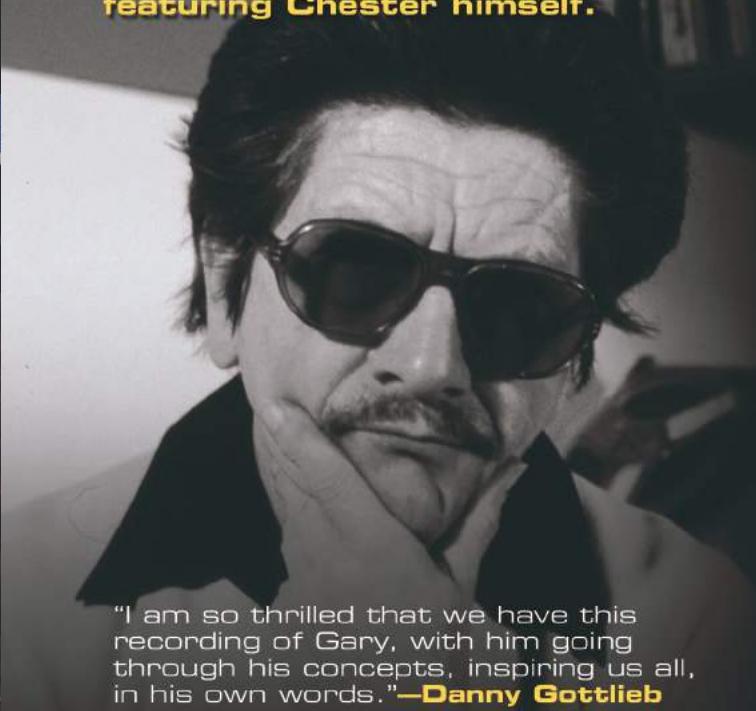
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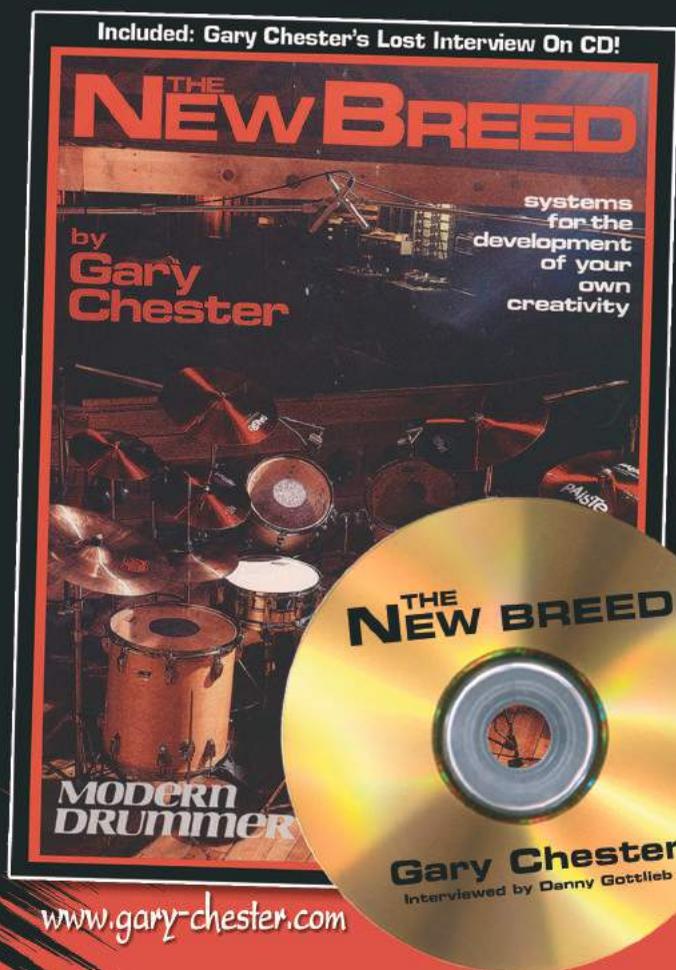


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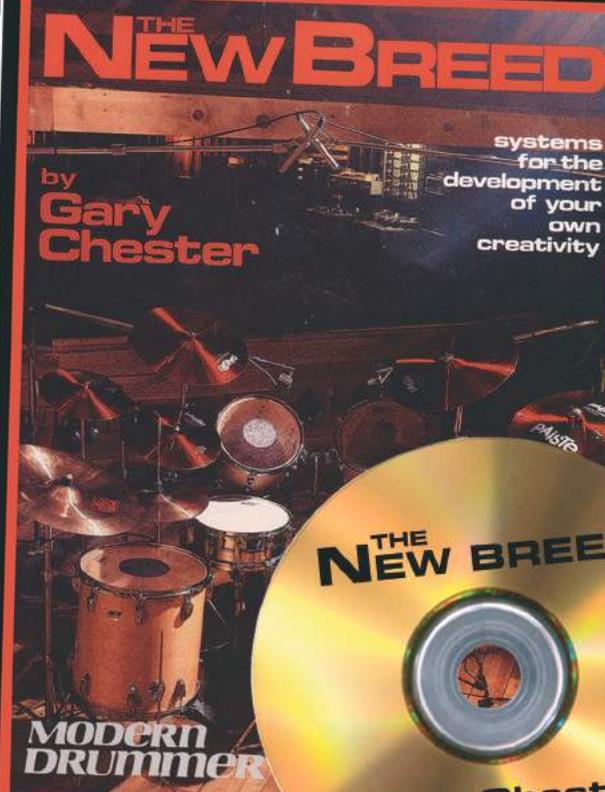
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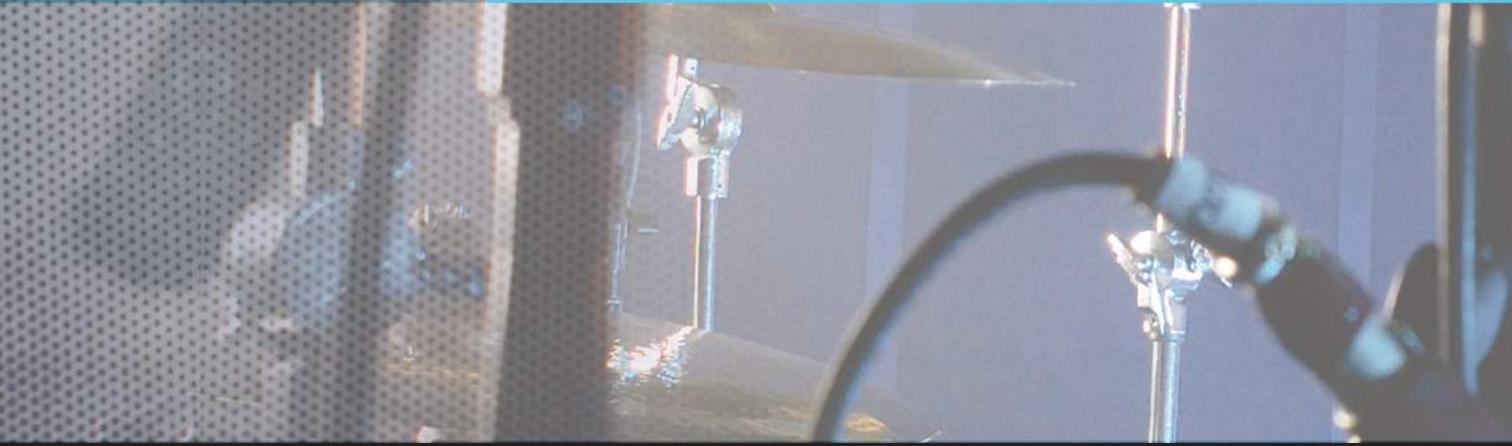
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Rewind back six years. I, like every other pop-head hearing Maroon 5 on the radio for the first time became an instant fan. But one night about a year later, as the group was climbing the ladder to fame and fortune, I was viewing a live concert DVD of the band and noticed that the drums had a different sound and feel to them. As I watched, wondering why all of a sudden I was taking notice of the drumming more than I had before, I realized it was a different drummer in the band. With all due respect to co-founder and original drummer Ryan Dusick—who played on the band's debut, *Songs About Jane*—Matt Flynn's playing seemed to take their music to another level. This increased sophistication is even more evident five years



FLYNN

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Story by Billy Amendola
Photos by Alex Solca



To many, it seems like Matt Flynn came out of nowhere. Not true. Flynn was born in California thirty-seven years ago, and he's been paying his dues for years on both the West and East Coast gigging scenes, playing with anyone and everyone he could sit in with. Thousands of one-night stands eventually led to his becoming a weekend drum tech for David Bowie's Sterling Campbell, and eventually resulted in his getting with The B-52's.

Matt finished his duties with The B-52's and soon after began touring with Gavin DeGraw, who was the opening act on a Maroon 5 tour. One night, Matt was asked to sit in for Ryan Dusick, who began experiencing debilitating recurring shoulder pain. Matt casually mentioned to the band that he would be there for them whenever they needed a fill-in for the ailing drummer, and after a few other replacements didn't work out, he found himself sitting in more and more, as Ryan's shoulder problem unfortunately got worse and worse. While Matt, who still thought it was just a temporary gig, began playing more often with the band, the group's debut CD was climbing up the charts with hit ("This Love"), after hit ("Harder To Breathe"), after hit ("She Will Be Loved"). Eventually

Songs About Jane sold over ten million units worldwide, earning the band two Grammys—one for Best New Artist and one for Best Pop Performance by a duo or group. Singer/songwriter Adam Levin—who by the way is a pretty good timekeeper himself—says "It was a difficult thing getting over Ryan having to leave the band, just emotionally. Luckily Matt really fit in, and he definitely changed the sound of the band with his style of drumming, which is a bit more upbeat and energetic."

MD caught up with Matt a few days after he and his wife had their second child and the group's latest CD hit number one on the *Billboard* charts. We met in NYC's Bowery Ballroom—deep in the famous lower East Side neighborhood where Matt had played so many times before—where the band was playing some intimate warm-up dates for their fan-club members.

As we go to press, *It Won't Be Soon Before Long* has already generated two hits—"Wake Up Call" and "Makes Me Wonder"—and landed the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Now the band—bassist Mickey Madden, keyboardist Jesse Carmichael, and guitarist James Valentine, along with Adam and Matt—is headlining a world tour.

MD: Tell us how the Maroon 5 gig came together.

Matt: When I was opening for them with Gavin DeGraw and Ryan [Dusick] got hurt, they had flown different drummers out to do a show here and there. And I remember saying to James and Adam—we were out in a bowling alley in St. Louis—“Well, if that happens again, just let me know.” It was kind of in passing. I had played with a lot of different bands, and I wouldn’t have minded sitting in with them. Then I was out on the road with Gavin, and we went our separate ways. Eventually the Gavin gig wasn’t panning out for me anymore, so I put in my notice that I was leaving. The very next day, Maroon 5 called and said, “Hey...” And I was like, “Alright!”

MD: In everyone’s minds, was it still temporary?

Matt: At first it was, yes. Then it was like, “Come out for a couple weeks.” I had about three or four days of shows to finish with Gavin, and they let me out early. During the day I told the tour manager, “I need you to find me a space where I can play drums.” Maroon 5 sent me a live copy of their show, and I would play to it—write it out, figure it out, and just memorize it, every day for a few hours. Then I’d do the show with Gavin. Then I flew out, and the first gig we did was at the

Avalon in LA. I literally walked on stage with them and was like, “Hey, how’s it going?” And then it was like, “Okay, we’re going to need you for a few weeks.”

MD: Was it a nerve injury that Ryan had?

Matt: Yeah. I think his technique was hurting him to begin with, and when you’re playing every night.... He was also a baseball pitcher, so he had previous shoulder problems. His arm just kind of went dead. It’s a nightmare scenario that was unfortunate for him and fortunate for me.

MD: When you play material from the first record, do you stay pretty much with what Ryan played?

Matt: I simplify it a little bit. There are things that are definitely his style. He has more of a loose, jazzy feel.



“THESE DAYS WHEN YOU MAKE A RECORD
—AND THIS REALLY PISSES ME OFF—

YOU CAN’T TELL HOW GOOD OR BAD SOMEBODY IS,
BECAUSE IT’S ALL BEAT DETECTIVE
AND PRO TOOLED TO DEATH.”

MD: Do you have favorite songs that you enjoy playing live?

Matt: I like playing a lot of the new songs, just because they’re very straight and I’m into that. To me it’s the most satisfying thing to see people’s heads bobbing. It’s the AC/DC thing. And that was my thought when I joined the band. I was like, “Wow, I can actually play rock in this band that’s known for being kind of light. I can give it an AC/DC bottom where it just has this groove and not a lot of fills or flash, but it feels good.”

MD: Let’s talk a bit about the new record.

Matt: These days when you make a record—and this really pisses me off—you can’t tell how good or bad somebody is, because it’s all Beat Detective and Pro Tooled to death. It’s like, C’mon people, let it breathe. I would do a

take and it was like, “It sounds great,” but they would still be like, “Well, we want to do this to it.” I would argue with the producers.

MD: That’s the accepted way of making a pop record nowadays.

Matt: Yes, it is. And I think people are just scared of doing it any differently.

MD: Let’s face it, some people can’t.

Matt: That’s right, but I think the best part of records are the little mistakes. A very slight rush in the groove. An organic groove sounds better to me than something that’s completely fixed. Of course, you have to have good time, and I understand that some people need that help. I’m not tooting my own horn, but I don’t really need that.

MD: Growing up, did you practice playing to a click?

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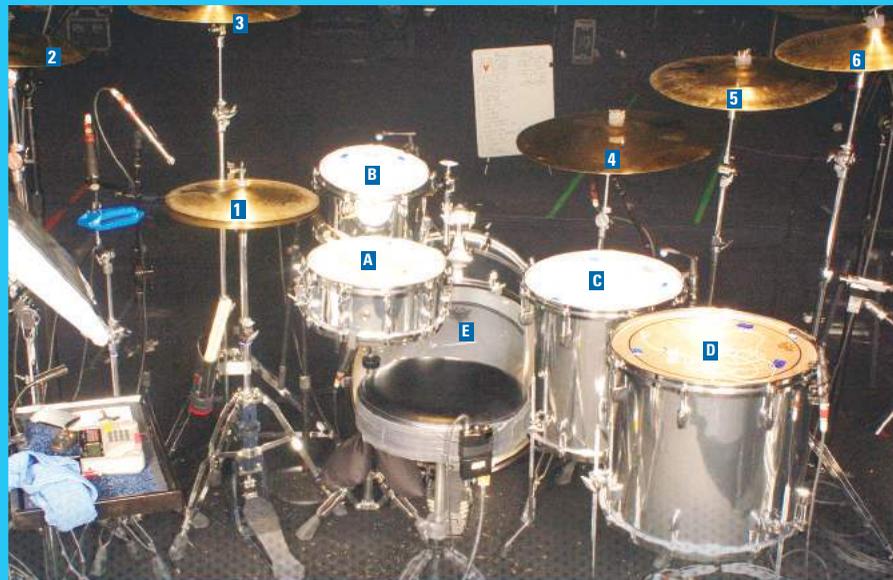
Matt: Not always. But with this band I start every song with a click and then turn it off. When you're playing every night, you need it to be the same, even if you're tired. We did The Today Show, and you've got to be out there at like six in the morning. We're doing the single, and it's like, "I turn it on. chick, chick. I start playing, and I turn it off, and Adam and the guys are like, "It's too fast!" I'm like, "It's six in the morning, and that's why I have this thing." So I know it's the same. And then, especially at the beginning of a tour, our soundman will make me a copy of the show, which I listen to religiously every night to see what's going on and what works. Was that fill a little rushed? And it's always "less is more." That's my thing now. I was a very busy drummer when I was a kid, but now when I listen to music, I just love a deep pocket. When you have a good pocket, you don't want to screw it up by throwing in a bunch of

fills. And the longer you don't do a fill, when you finally do one, it's usually pretty good.

MD: Did you cut tracks live as a band at all?

Matt: No, it was all one instrument at a time. Most of the songs are straight drum performances all the way through. It was an interesting process. I did all the drums in a week, even though at that point we didn't really know the songs. So, the last few weeks of recording, I was like, "Screw this," and by that point everybody was so exhausted that I actually got to go in there and do it over. There are fills that were deleted from this record. It was a battle. Obviously I love simplicity, but I also like. It's definitely a compromise. And these days everything's on the computer. So, three weeks later, I'll be thinking, "I would have done that differently," so at the very end I would go in and do something closer to what I was hearing.

MD: The middle section of the track "Can't



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- 5. 19" K Custom Hybrid crash
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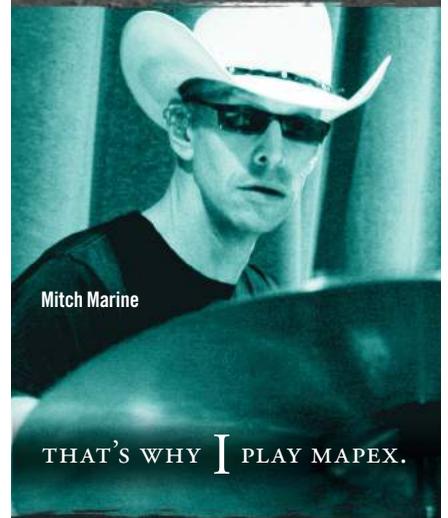
Hardware: Yamaha

Heads: Remo coated Emperor X on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side, clear Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter

Electronics: Yamaha Click Station, Pintech trigger bar, Roland SPD-S

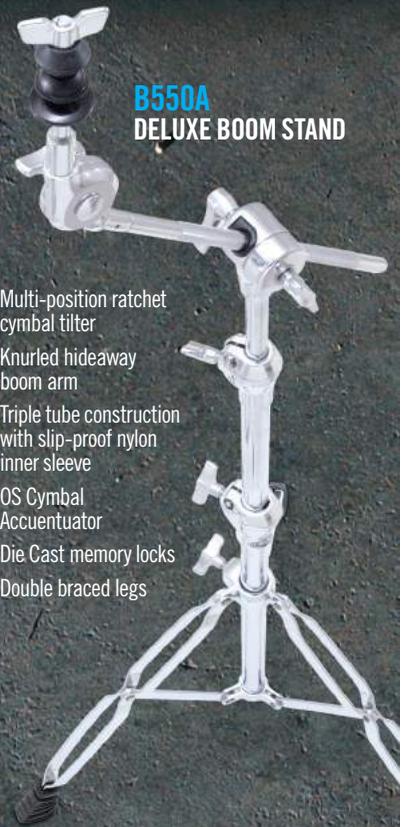
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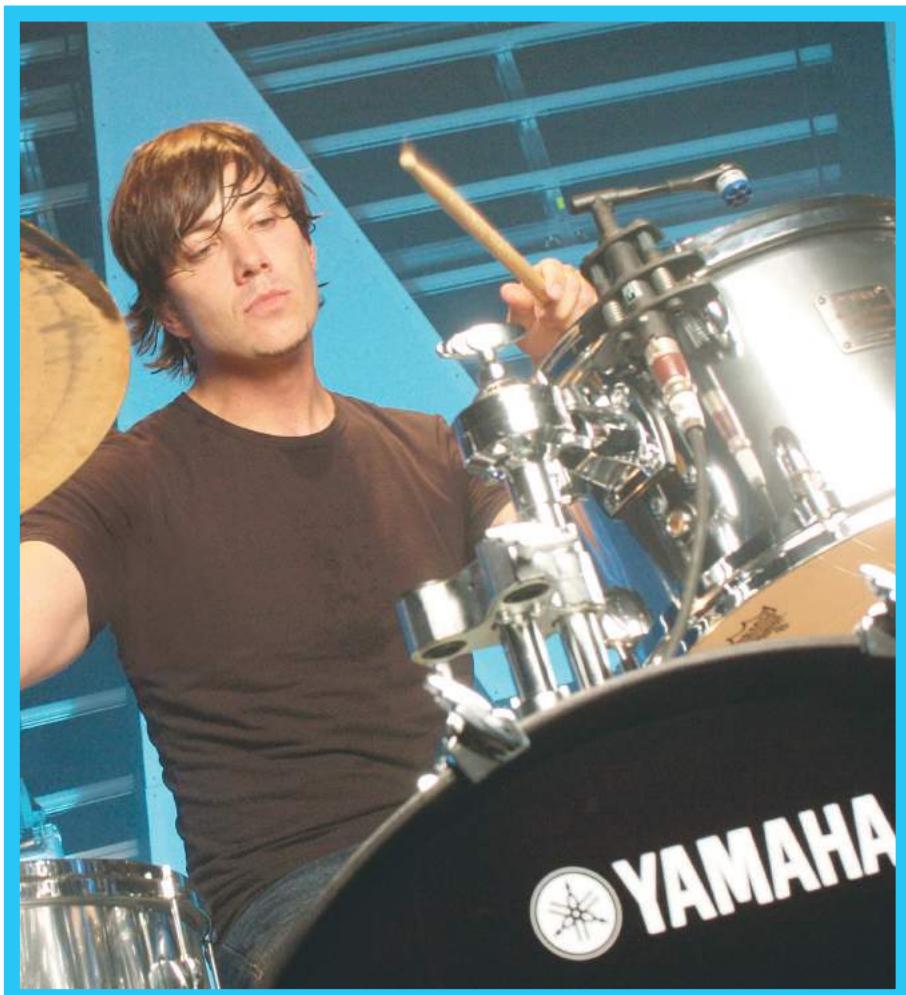
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Stop," from the latest CD, sounds a lot like The Police.

Matt: Yeah, totally. And you know on that song I stayed away from doing any Stewart Copeland riffs because I have no interest in being in a Police cover band, you know what I mean? [laughs]

MD: And of course there was no way you guys knew that The Police would be coming back around when you were cutting the track.

Matt: No, but we opened for them in Miami, which was awesome. I love Stewart Copeland!

MD: Being the rock-solid drummer you are, who taught you how to groove?

Matt: When I was ten years old, my first drum teacher, Rick Hearn, sat me down on the drumset and said [Matt taps a simple straight 2 and 4 beat on his leg] "You'll never master that beat," and I was like, "Yeah, whatever. Let's do 'YYZ'! And then he put me on a snare drum, doing Stick Control for three months, before I could even start playing the drumset—which in the long run, was great for me.

MD: What tips can you offer to develop a better groove?

Matt: I think the best thing you can do is listen and watch. I lived here in New York for fifteen years, and I'd just go to clubs and watch

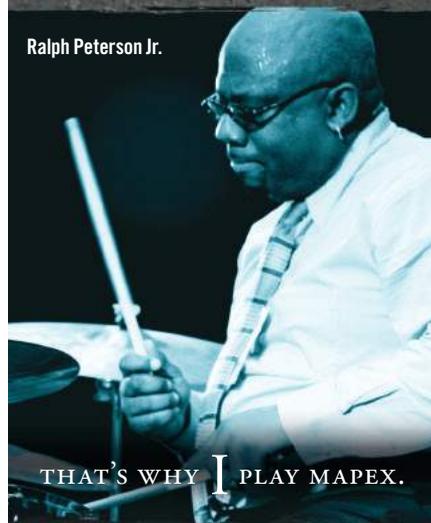
drummers. I dropped out of college after being yelled at by my jazz band teacher, and I realized, if I'm going to do this, college is not going to teach me what it's like to carry a drumset up five flights of stairs and make no money. So I might as well get out there and start doing it.

MD: How did the B-52s gig come about?

Matt: I was drum teching for Sterling Campbell. Before that, I was playing at Arlene Grocery in New York every other night with a million different bands, making like a \$100 a night. The sound guy at Arlene was the guitar tech for the B-52's, and he was like, "Look, they go out of town and do a couple corporate shows every month. We'll give you \$300 a day. You only go away for a weekend. It's three days, and you get \$900. Would you consider being a drum tech?" And I was like, "Well, not really," but I thought, that's pretty good money. So I did it, and that was really when it struck me: As I was watching Sterling and Zach [Alford] do the gig, I was like, "I could do this." There was really no difference between the demands on me when I had amateur status versus if I had real professional status, so it gave me more confidence. When I started playing "Love Shack" with the B-52's it

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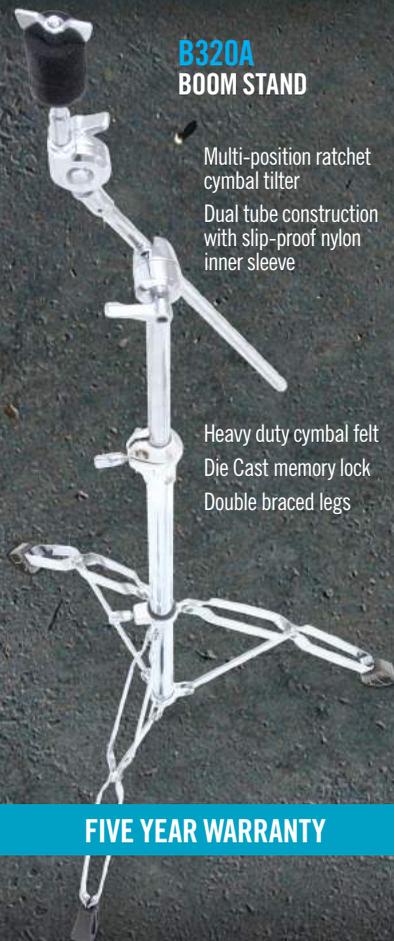


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MATT FLYNN

was like, everybody in the world knows this song, so if I play too fast or too slow, everybody is going to know it.

MD: And as you suggested, watching those guys play every night had to help.

Matt: Exactly, it was great! So when Zach went off with some Japanese artist and Sterling went off to play with David Bowie and the band was like, "Okay, we need somebody," I was like, "Hey, I play," and they let me do it. I climbed right in there.

MD: How old were you when you first took an interest in music?

Matt: Around ten years old. My mom was a piano teacher, so she had me learn to play piano before I moved over to drums.

MD: Has that helped make you a better drummer?

Matt: Absolutely.

MD: Can you read music?

Matt: I can, though I haven't done it in years.

MD: What would you practice growing up? And do you still practice?

Matt: Over the years I've played to just about everything, but now I rarely practice, because I have two kids. Sometimes during soundcheck I can try some things. But basically my whole philosophy is, if I'm given a song, I'm just trying to smooth it out, like a skier or skateboarder smoothing the lines. Just get your line and make it as crisp and clean as it can be, so everything is working. Play what works for the song. That's why I absolutely love Dave Grohl's playing. It's so precise and crisp, there's no fat on it. Everything is done for a reason. So I'll just lock into a groove and just play it over and over. I find a pocket, and that's what I practice. It's no longer about doing fills. I used to practice a beat for a half hour, to the point where you're almost outside your body and it's like you're not even doing it anymore. And like I said, I can't stress enough about just watching people play.

MD: Besides Grohl, do you have any other favorites?

Matt: John Bonham, of course. Who doesn't like him? When I was a kid I loved Terry Bozzio, and I still do. I love the guy who plays with The Brazilian Girls, Aaron Johnston. He's a fantastic drummer. My friend, Matt Johnson, who played with Jeff Buckley, is another. And I really liked Steve Jordan's DVD. When Gavin [McGraw] was on tour with Michelle Branch, I watched Charley Drayton every night, and he's unbelievable. He's a ridiculous pocket guy. I listen to everybody. And to me that's really what it's all about. If it's not grooving,

then you've got nothing.

MD: Do you remember the first time you went into the studio?

Matt: I don't remember my very first time. But I remember the whole click issue was always big with me back then, like trying to figure out exactly how to get comfortable with it.

Because you can be really stiff with it, and getting used to it to the point where you can ignore it takes a lot of time. I could always get in the pocket by myself, but once you throw that thing in there, it's so unmusical that I'd much rather play with the group.

MD: Nowadays it's so much better because back in the day all you had was that "tick, tick, tick." Now you can have a little loop happening or a shaker...

Matt: Totally, and that would always add this level of anxiety. I've just realized through experience that it's not that deep. But it took a while. I'm still not in love with the click. I don't have any problem playing with one now though.

MD: So, how does it feel having a number-one record under your belt?

Matt: It feels good! I haven't even really thought about it, because my wife and I recently had a baby. The whole time this was all happening, my wife was ready to give birth.

MD: How do you juggle both worlds?

Matt: Well, it's interesting. We've been home for the entire time making the record, so I did get to spend a lot of time with my family. It's not easy to tour if you have children, but it could be worse. The idea is that maybe in a few years you've made enough money where you don't have to be away as much. But everybody's got to work and you do the best you can with what you are given.

MD: Lastly, what advice can you offer our readers?

Matt: Well, if this is what you want to do, like I said, you've got to watch people all the time, and you have to really consider what is happening around you in the band. Play for the tune and for the other guys in the band. It's not about you showing off or doing your thing. It's more about the craft of drumming. And also, listen to tapes of yourself playing, and play with everyone that you can play with. Remember that you're never too cool to play with anyone. I'm telling you, you've got to take every gig. I wish I had done that a little earlier than I did, because even the bad experiences teach so much. But playing with everybody, that's the best advice.



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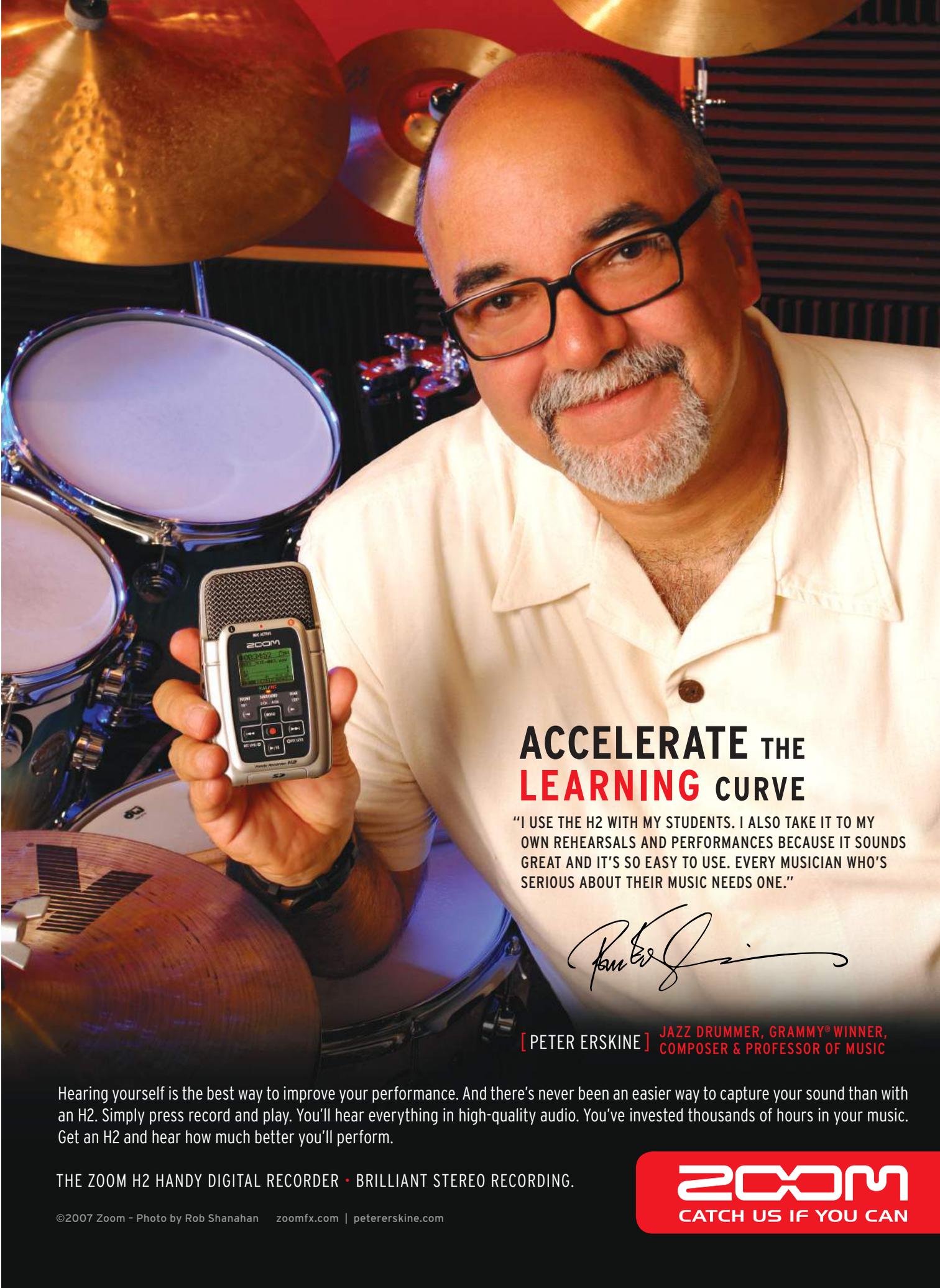
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Jazz Great Jeff “Tain” Watts Wynton, Branford, And Beyond

by Bill Milkowski



Jeff Watts emerged in the early 1980s as the drummer in Wynton Marsalis’ s first quintet. He appears on a string of the trumpet star’ s early offerings, including 1981’ s *Wynton Marsalis*, 1983’ s *Think Of One*, 1984’ s *Hot House Flowers*, 1985’ s pivotal *Black Codes (From The Underground)*, and 1986’ s *Live At Blues Alley*. Watts was nicknamed “Tain” by pianist Kenny Kirkland during their tenure in Wynton’ s band.

The Pittsburgh native left Wynton’ s group to join Branford Marsalis in late 1986. He appeared on a dozen recordings with the acclaimed tenor saxophonist, beginning with 1988’ s *Trio Jeepy* and continuing through 2006’ s *Braggtown*.

Watts exudes an irrepressible intensity behind the kit, marked by a powerful polyrhythmic pulse, a remarkable sense of independence, and a penchant for metric modulations. This distinctive approach has earned him first-call status for recordings with jazz greats including Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Michael Brecker, Betty Carter, Stanley Jordan, Kenny Garrett, Ravi and Alice Coltrane, and David Gilmore. Tain stepped out as a leader and

composer in his own right with superb efforts like 1991’ s *Megawatts*, 1999’ s *Citizen Tain*, 2002’ s *Bar Talk*, and 2004’ s *Detained At The Blue Note*.

Watts’ debut outing with his band Tain & The Ebonix is called *Folk’ s Songs*. It’ s also the first release on his own label, Dark Key Music. After touring in 2007 with Branford Marsalis,

Tain got to work on his next two solo recordings: a jazz quartet reuniting Wynton and Branford, and an Ebonix project that will put a Tainish spin on a collection of electronica- and world music-flavored originals. For this Playback session, Tain examined key tracks on seven significant recordings from his extensive discography.

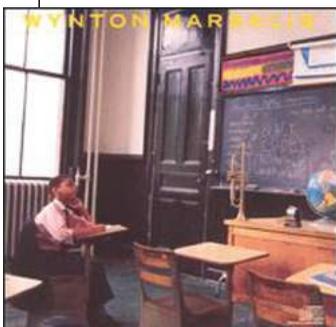
Wynton Marsalis

Black Codes (From The Underground) (1985)

We recorded this album at the same time that Sting was putting his band together with Branford and Kenny Kirkland. So there was a little tension, because the band was reaching a nice peak, and Branford was about to leave.

This album marked an important transition for me. Wynton’ s first few albums would be associated with Miles’ 1960s band. So from a drumming standpoint it was like a Tony Williams type of thing. By the time we got to *Black Codes*, the band had been together for a few years, and I was able to play things that fell under my hands more readily. Many of those came from Elvin, in terms of the time feeling, orchestrating on the drums, and doing sonic things with the cymbals. There was still some phrasing that I got from Tony, but the overall feeling—that driving groove and wide, loping beat—was more from Elvin. And because Kenny Kirkland was so steeped in Afro-Cuban music, we started to mess around with stretching the beat as opposed to metrically chopping it up.

The kit I played on that record was the classic rosewood Sonor Phonic with beechwood shells that everybody complains about because they’ re so heavy. But I still play it. It’ s got a big kick. I had remnants of my Tony Williams thing still going on in the



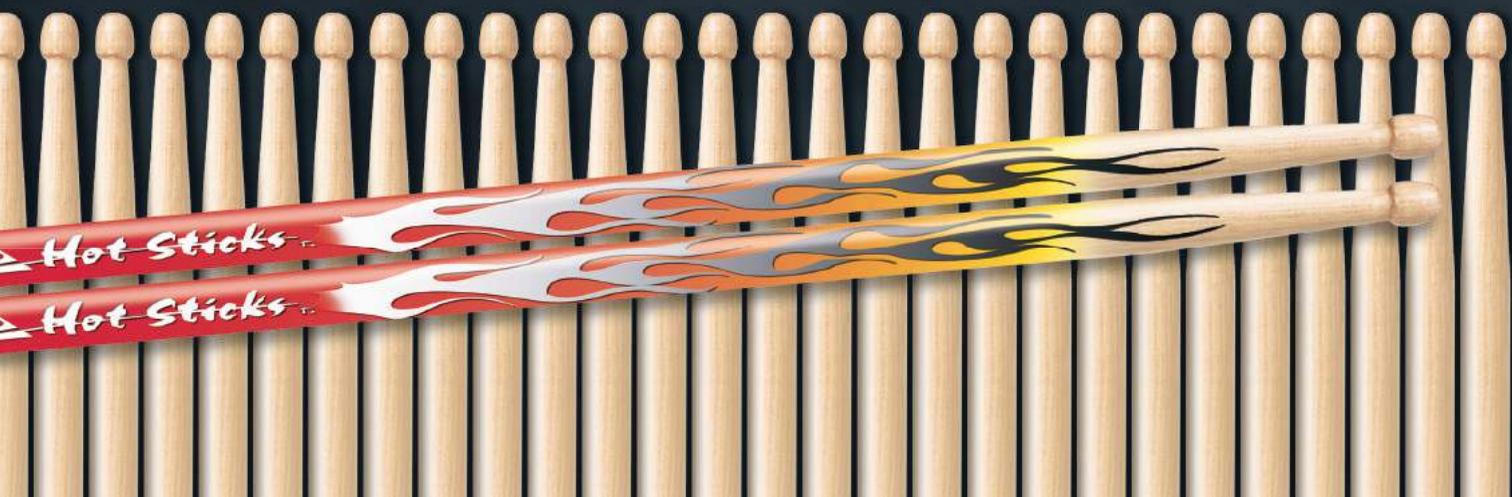


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'70s and '80s. Tony was playing a 24" bass drum at the time, so I decided to split the difference between that and the 20" I usually played, and play a 22" bass drum. It's got an open sound and a plush, smooth attack.

Wynton Marsalis

Live At Blues Alley (1986)

We were at a gig in Toronto in the mid-'80s, at a point when we were doing more standards. At the soundcheck, Wynton said, "I want to play 'Autumn Leaves' tonight, but kind of fast. See if you can think of something." So in between the soundcheck and the gig I thought of a metric modulation device: a cycle of one through seven beats, evenly spaced between two bars of 4/4. The overall effect is that the song just gradually gets faster. Then, after the bridge, it slows down abruptly, back to a whole-note pulse.

What inspired me was how leaves fall in autumn. You see a red leaf and you think, "They're ready to turn." Next day you see fifty red leaves. Then all of a sudden there's a whole bunch of red leaves, then you see fewer and fewer as winter approaches. I just used rhythmic modulation to create that illusion.

That arrangement was what we used on Marsalis Standard Time, Vol. 1. Later, on Live At Blues Alley, the individual band members soloed on that time thing. The kit I played on that recording was my very clear-sounding Sonorlite birch kit.

This tune was a breakthrough for me. It let me apply things that I knew rhythmically in order to make a statement. That opened a door for me to start thinking about composing and arranging tunes, rather than just drumming.



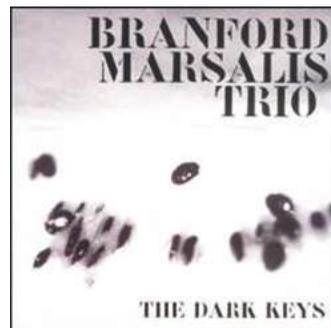
Branford Marsalis

The Dark Keys (1996)

This album was the first thing we did after The Tonight Show. [Branford and Tain played in the house band on the popular NBC show from 1993 to 1994.] In a situation like that you can lose some of your reflexes and your instincts. But it wasn't so bad for me because Kenny Kirkland and I had a steady gig in town. Every Wednesday all these Hollywood people would come to hear us playing some really crazy jazz.

The title track of this album uses a motif from Trane's "A Love Supreme." There's also a device that I use on that piece. Traditionally in jazz swing time, you have triplets that are initiated on 1 and 3. When they resolve on 2 and 4, it's kind of similar to what Elvin or Philly Joe Jones played in their left hands. So I invented this half-time swing figure that resolves on 2 and 4. It's pretty much intuitive, and it's something that I've used to accompany people in the context of their solo. If their solo tends to lean heavily on the 1 and 3, then I'll just go to the other side of that. It kind of feels like I'm playing out of time, but I still have a reference point of 2 and 4...there's just no 1 in it.

"Lykeif" is Branford's tribute to Keith Jarrett. I'm playing brushes on that. It's a rubato piece with a cycle form, and the cycle is determined by the person taking the solo. So you have to really listen. At first I was a little uncomfortable with that direction, because I didn't have a lot of experience with it. I had to develop a vocabulary for sustaining motion without time. I found myself checking out people who are good at playing that 'rolling over the barline pulse,' like Andrew Cyrille, Paul Motian, Rashied Ali, and Don Moye. And I discovered one really cool thing about that kind of playing that can



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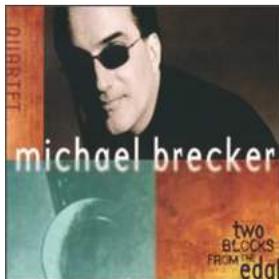
enhance your regular playing. When you don't have time to refer to, you're dealing purely with sound and texture. There's a certain technique involved with just maintaining a tone or a texture around the drums while keeping a dialog going on.

For this album I went back to the rosewood Sonor kit from Black Codes. But since this was a trio project, I used a 16" kick. I hadn't really played a small kick with overtones that you control with the beater. So I started checking out people who do, like Al Foster, Roy Haynes, and Brian Blade. I learned that a small drum gives you the option to have long and short notes, based on your articulation.

Michael Brecker

Two Blocks From The Edge (1997)

This album includes the second recording of my tune "The Impaler." The first was on my first record, Megawatt. It's a hard-swinging piece with a lot of interaction from the drums. I was trying to have some kind of exchange with Michael on this one. I'm playing some cowbell here, incorporating a Cuban vibe. The third version of this tune, on Citizen Tain, is structurally the same. The only thing different is that Wynton and Branford both play on it, and I didn't use the cowbell. I composed conga parts, but we weren't able to include them on this version. Maybe in five years I'll re-record the tune with percussion.



The vamp of the tune is unusual in the respect that when most people do a 7/4 clave, it's kind of like a repeating thing. But I came up with a longer clave that's kind of a mirror image of itself. So the actual clave is like a 2/3 clave bonded to a 3/2 clave that meets at the top of the second bar. Now I'll go on gigs with Latin musicians, and sometimes when they play in seven they'll use my clave, which is an honor.

The swing sections on "The Impaler" are based on a suite on John Coltrane's Transitions. I made the body of the tune out of that. The vamp has roots in Cachao and in The Ohio Players' "Skin Tight." The

kit on this one was the maple Sonor HiLite kit that I play now, but tuned higher.

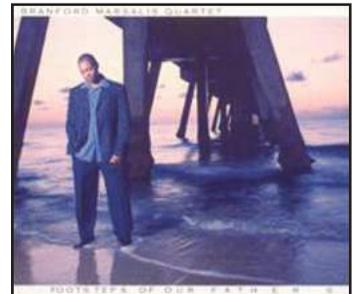
Branford Marsalis

Footsteps Of Our Fathers (2002)

Playing the "Love Supreme" suite in its entirety on this album was a daunting task. That's something that I would not have done. But when I'm working with Branford, my job is to help him do what he's trying to do.

In general, I take on a certain responsibility with Coltrane's music, especially when it's with Elvin playing. You can't just fool around on it, because Trane's thing was about being dead serious...eye of the tiger...let's go! There's an urgency that you have to maintain, and then the music starts to vibrate and transcend. That music—especially when you play it live—demands a certain amount of conviction from the musicians and the audience alike. It's like a big séance or something...a big energy circle. When I'm in that stage, it might sound terrible, but I'm really, really trying.

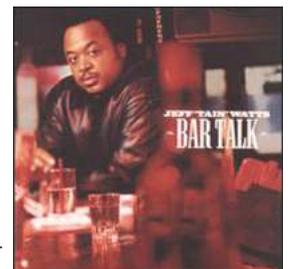
Everybody works on music, in terms of practicing and stuff like that. But more and more I feel like the whole music thing is bigger than me. I feel really privileged to be able to direct all that energy that's not mine. It's for everybody.



Jeff "Tain" Watts

Bar Talk (2002)

This was my second solo album and my first production project. On my previous album, Citizen Tain, it was like, 'Here's my Coltrane tune with a vamp, here's my Monk tune, here's my Ornette Coleman tune....' I felt like I really stretched compositionally on this one.



"Vodville" has three sections, each of which tells part of a story and has a characteristic sound. The story is about someone who's drinking a lot of vodka. It starts with a guy who gets off work, joins some friends at a bar, and has his first few drinks. The opening section gives the feeling of someone trying to be more profound than they are by repeating things they heard someone else say. So the first eight-bar phrase borrows a piece of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps." The harmony starts on the third bar as opposed to the first bar, so it's kind of displaced, but it's there.

The second part is an asymmetrical minor blues, implying that the guy's getting drunker and his conversation is taking on a more base quality. By the first time modulation, the guy is pretty drunk. He leaves the bar and starts walking to his car. A section with five beats over four causes the tempo to speed up...our guy is trying to drive home. There are a couple of abrupt stops until he realizes that he's too drunk to drive fast, after which the tune uses three beats over five to slow down to a tempo that's slower than the original. At that point, the guy's finally at home and talking with his wife. "I know I'm really drunk, and I'm sorry." In that slower section there are bars of 7/8 inserted to create a stumbling feel. The guy is basically saying, "Okay, this is the last time. I won't do it any-more." But of course, it happens over and over again.

In this piece I'm employing rhythmic devices in order to synthesize an organic situation. Mingus and Miles definitely crossed that line in terms of putting two over three, but I'm pretty sure it hasn't happened much in jazz where a pure polyrhythm has been dealt with compositionally. The only person who comes to mind as far as doing that is Frank Zappa. He'd compose very strange rhythmic groupings and get great musicians to play them—and they'd sound very natural. That's what I tried to do here.

Another interesting piece on this album is "Stevie In Rio," which is kind of uncharacteristic for me. The opening theme implies Stevie Wonder from his beginnings with Motown. It's got that feeling from the introduction to Stevie's tune "Lately," where the bass is doubling the melody. So on the opening vamp I'm using a straight snare beat that kind of signifies the early Motown sound. But on the bridge I tried to get kind of Brazilian, thinking about Ivan Lins and composers like that.

For this album I used a Sonor HiLite maple kit, with toms that are

in between power and standard depths. It's nice and warm, but it works best when it's tuned high. When it's tuned for a lower sound, it loses some clarity.

Tain & The Ebonix Folk's Songs (2007)

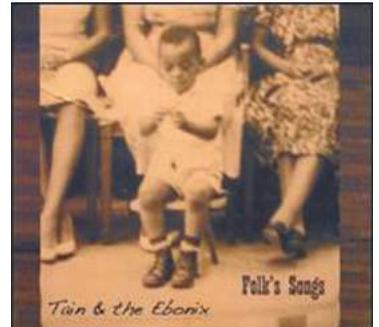
There's some drummy things on this record.

"Rotation" is basically a drum solo over a melody. "Blues 4 Curtis" has a rhythmic grid that I associate with The Mahavishnu Orchestra, where the same rhythmic pie can be cut up to represent two different things. It starts in 6/4, but the bass line is constructed on a dotted quarter-note pulse, where you have two bars of 4/4 that fit into that. The melody is constructed where it works both ways, and the bass line works both ways.

The most overtly drum-oriented thing is "Seed Of Blackzilla," which involves polyrhythmic playing and odd meters. It's basically a samba pattern in 13, and I use different ways of dividing the time. I start with a triplet-based thing, and then I introduce metric modulation and cross-patterns on top of that. It makes the time sound elastic. This is definitely coming out of Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, and ultimately an African sensibility.

I was playing a Sonorlite birch kit on that recording. I played it from 1986 to 1991, and I just resurrected it recently. It can be deep and almost slappy, but you can still hear everything. I also wanted a vintage snare drum for the record that was sensitive yet had a decent backbeat, so I pulled out a 1968 Leedy & Ludwig from my collection.

I think people today are accustomed to having drums and bass in their face on most of the music that they listen to. Not hearing that might be something that turns them off from jazz. So they get a lot of drums and bass on this record.



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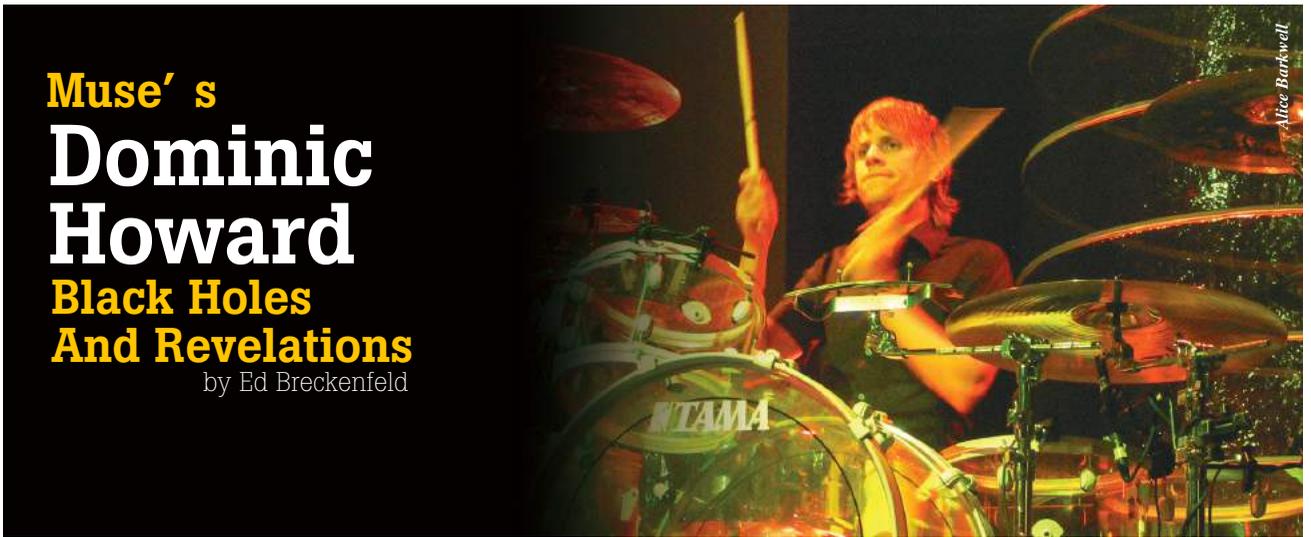
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Muse's Dominic Howard Black Holes And Revelations

by Ed Breckenfeld



Alice Barkwell

MUSIC KEY				
open	○	R.C. Bell	⊗	C.C.
H.H.	×			
T.J.	⊗			
S.D.	⊗			
F.T.	⊗			
B.D.	⊗			
H.H. w/ foot	⊗	ghost note		

England's Muse soars into rock's upper echelon on the strength of their biggest-selling album to date: **Black Holes And Revelations**. Buoyed by major airplay and touring, the band has

moved beyond early comparisons with Radiohead and Queen to forge their own musical identity. For his part, drummer Dominic Howard gives the band whatever it requires, from delicate brush work to explosive prog-type fills. Though he can play simply when called upon, Howard has enough cool grooves and complicated riffs to warrant a good look in this month's Off The Record.

"Take A Bow"

The album's opening track is a scathing political indictment that builds to an explosive climax. When Dominic's groove enters, the slow 12/8 tempo allows the drummer to drop in 64th-note rolls and energetic snare/kick tradeoffs. (2:35)

1

As the song nears its finish, Howard adds more bass drum and snare notes to his splashy ride beat, building intensity right to the end. (3:35)

2

"Map Of The Problematique"

A tom beat dominates the first half of this dance-groove track before Dominic changes to a 16th-note hi-hat pattern for the remainder of the song. The connecting section between the two grooves is this aggressive snare and crash pattern that jumps right out of the speakers. This part also doubles as a perfect ending for the song. (2:10)

3

"Invincible"

After setting the tone with a marching snare pattern early in this tune, Howard adds a U2-like feel to the track with this 16th-note hi-hat beat featuring displaced snare and tom accents. (2:32)

4

The song's instrumental section begins with this 16th-note sequence, played in unison by the band until Dominic's triplet fill releases into the guitar/synth solo. (3:45)

5

"Assassin"

Muse's occasional prog leanings are on display in the intro of this track. Howard locks to the band's fast 16th-note riff with his drum pattern, embellishing it with some 32nd-note snare work before ending in a flashy triplet fill. (0:24)

6 $\text{♩} = 133$

The song ends on the same instrumental sequence, where Dominic drops in another quick fill punctuated by two accents on a China cymbal. These over-the-bar fills show off the drummer's adventurous and sophisticated style. (3:18)

7

"City Of Delusion"

This verse beat matches up to the tune's syncopated guitar rhythms, which is held together by a steady quarter-note bell pattern. (0:43)

8 $\text{♩} = 120$

Dominic enhances the Middle Eastern flavor of the track with this wonderful groove in the second part of the verse. The hand drum-inspired fill included here adds to the effect. (1:01)

9

"Knights Of Cydonia"

The album's closer races along on Howard's galloping offbeat hi-hat groove. It's the perfect groove to express the imagery of the song's title. (0:50)

10 $\text{♩} = 137$



You can contact **Ed Breckenfeld** through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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Simon Says

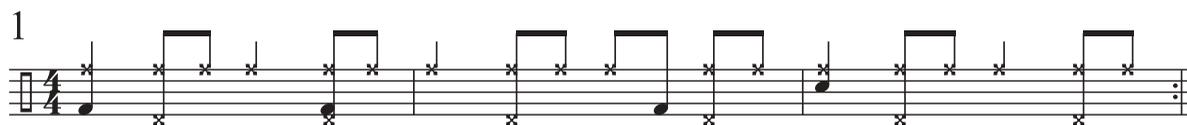
A New Twist On Hip Phrasing, Part 1

by John Riley

MUSIC KEY	
R.C.	
S.D.	
B.D.	
H.H.	

Last year, saxophonist/composer Bob Mintzer brought a new composition to his big band that had a groove that took us all a minute to get under control. After performing and recording this song—"Black Sand" from the CD *Old School, New Lessons*—I found that listeners were also puzzled by the groove and would often ask me about its time signature. Depending on which limb their ear was drawn to, some people have said that the groove sounds like fast 4/4 swing, or fast 3/4 swing, or 12/8, or some kind of halftime funk. That's quite a range!

Bob plays some drums and has been a big fan of drummers since his early days with Buddy Rich's band. So it's natural that he would write hip drum parts. Bob wrote the "Black Sand" groove as a three-measure phrase in fast 4/4, but the underlying groove suggests a twisted "go-go" beat.



The bass drum and snare parts convey a much slower pulse than the fast swing in the ride cymbal and hi-hat. But this blend of pulse rates creates a very natural-sounding groove. So I started thinking of ways to develop other patterns with similar characteristics. Since most songs are built in four-measure phrases, let's begin with a dotted quarter-note figure that slides across the barline.



While playing the standard jazz ride beat, with 2 and 4 on the hi-hat, orchestrate the figure between your bass drum and snare drum.



Now reverse your limbs so that you're starting with the snare drum.



Continue playing the figure with all of the sticking combinations I've listed on the following page (R = bass drum, L = snare drum). You can find these patterns and many more like it in George Lawrence Stone's classic book, *Stick Control*. You might find that the inverted double-stroke combinations and the paradiddle variations are more challenging than you expected. (Playing difficult phrases like these reminds me of the children's game "Simon Says"—where Simon gives a simple command and even though my body under-

stands that command, it insists on doing something else.) Strive to be able to hear the phrasing of the double stroke and paradiddle inversions as they unfold across the barlines.



1.	R	R	L	L	R	R	L	L	R	R	L
2.	L	L	R	R	L	L	R	R	L	L	R
3.	R	L	L	R	R	L	L	R	R	L	L
4.	L	R	R	L	L	R	R	L	L	R	R
5.	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R
6.	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L
7.	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L
8.	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R
9.	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L
10.	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R
11.	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R
12.	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L
13.	R	R	R	L	R	R	R	L	R	R	R
14.	L	L	L	R	L	L	L	R	L	L	L
15.	R	L	L	L	R	L	L	L	R	L	L
16.	L	R	R	R	L	R	R	R	L	R	R

Once you're comfortable with all of the previous combinations, and you can really hear the underlying four-measure phrase, experiment with adding accents to certain snare drum notes.

Concentrate, but have fun. Next time we'll expand the concept to include more syncopated across-the-bar phrases.



John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. His latest book, *The Jazz Drummer's Workshop*, is published by Modern Drummer Publications.



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Odd-Meter Warm-Ups

Relating Complex Phrases To Common Meters

by Eric Novod

MUSIC KEY

T.T. 
 S.D. 
 F.T. 

I'm amazed at some of my former students' abilities to rattle off a complex Tool song without counting it—or actually understanding the complex odd meters within the parts.

Although the ability to memorize complex music and reproduce it is commendable in its own right, it's ultimately to your advantage to understand how complex odd meters are broken down and how they relate to more common time signatures like 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4.

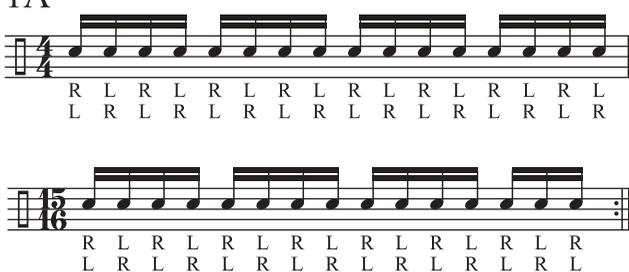
For example, it's helpful to think of 15/16 as a measure of 4/4 with one 16th note removed from any point in the measure. Or that 21/16 is a measure of 5/4 with one 16th note added. Or that 13/16 is a measure of 3/4 with a 16th note added, or a measure of 4/4 with three 16th notes removed. When complex time signatures like these are related to a measure of 3/4, 4/4, or 5/4, subdividing, playing, and understanding them becomes much more natural and practical.

The exercises in this article apply single strokes, double strokes, and paradiddles to several odd-meter phrases in order to help you build technique. They will also help you understand how these complex phrases relate to 4/4. Our focus will be on 15/16, which should be thought of as a measure of 4/4 with a 16th note removed.

The objective is to play a measure of 4/4 and then a measure of 15/16 in a variety of ways. Begin by playing the phrase using alternating single strokes, starting with the right hand each time. Then switch the sticking so that you're starting with the left hand each time. Notice that you have to play a double stroke at the end in order to repeat with the same lead hand.

Once you've practiced leading with each hand, alternate the starting hand on the repeat to create a four-bar phrase. Work on these combinations at different speeds. And remember, the key to hearing the 15/16 is to think of it as a measure of 4/4 with a 16th note removed. Repeat these exercises many times.

1A

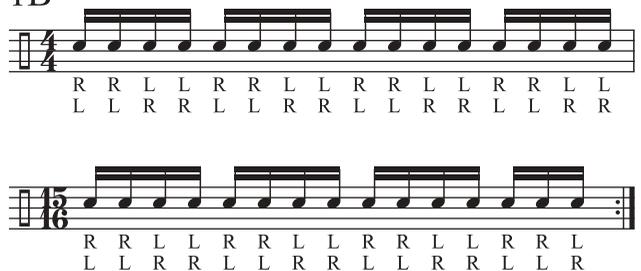


4/4: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
 L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

15/16: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R
 L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

Next, switch to double strokes. Start the doubles with the right hand for multiple repeats, and then start with the left hand. After practicing that, alternate the lead hand on each repeat. Things start to get tricky here. So begin slowly, and gradually build up speed.

1B

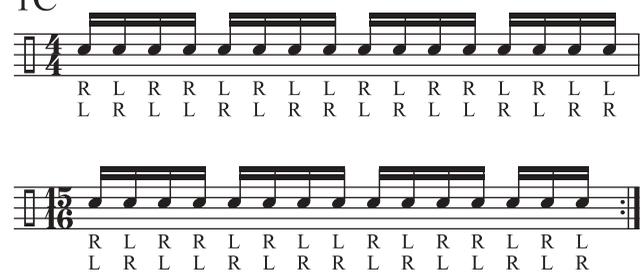


4/4: R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L
 L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R

15/16: R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L
 L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R

Now try paradiddles using the same format. Start the phrase with the right hand for multiple repeats, and then start with the left. Then alternate the starting hand on each repeat.

1C



4/4: R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
 L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R

15/16: R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
 L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R

By now you should have a pretty good understanding of what it feels like to play in 15/16. If you're breezing through them, go back and add accents. Begin by accenting each beat. Then accent the "e" s," the "&" s," and finally the "a" s."

Examples 2–4 display another important aspect of mastering odd-time phrases. While it's most common to add or remove notes from the end of a measure to create odd meters, it doesn't always work that way. In fact, you can drop a 16th note from anywhere in a measure of 4/4 to create 15/16. Example 2 goes through the system again, this time with the dropped 16th note at the end of the first beat.

2



4/4: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
 R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L
 R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

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

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

Example 3 goes through the system again with the dropped 16th note at the end of the second beat.

3

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

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

Example 4 drops the 16th note at the end of the third beat.

4

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

Combining warm-ups and odd-meter phrasing is a relevant and musical exercise to develop technique, but you should also be able to apply these odd-time warm-ups in 4/4. You can do this by adding a 16th-note rest to the phrase. Examples 5A and 5B are two fifteen-note fills that work great in 4/4 time.

5A

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

5B

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

Once you've mastered these fills, try coming up with some of your own.

Eric Novod can be reached at jerseydrum@aol.com.



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Latin Funk

Part 2: More Latin-Inspired Beats

by Jim Payne

MUSIC KEY	
open	○
H.H.	⊗
S.D.	●
B.D.	●

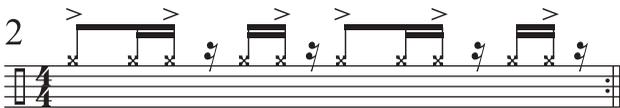
This is the second installment in our study of Latin funk. The basic premise is to play Latin bell patterns with the right hand, and then add the left hand on the snare. Then we'll add the bass drum. It's important to master the hand pattern before adding the bass drum. This will make the more complicated 16th-note patterns easier to understand and play.

The King Kong Beat

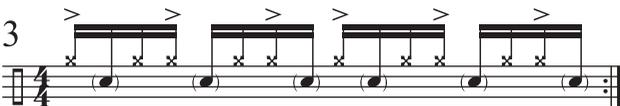
Somewhere along the way, this pattern worked itself into the funk vocabulary. Tower Of Power's David Garibaldi says he first heard it played by Pete DePoe, a drummer who worked with neo-vaudville crooner Leon Redbone in the '70s. (For more on DePoe, check out my book, *The Great Drummers Of R&B, Funk & Soul*.) This rhythm is essentially the first half of the traditional Latin 3:2 cascara pattern, played twice in one measure.



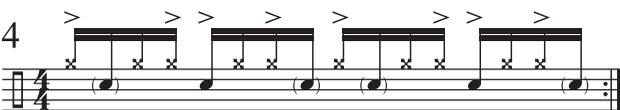
Now add accents to emphasize the "3" side of the clave.



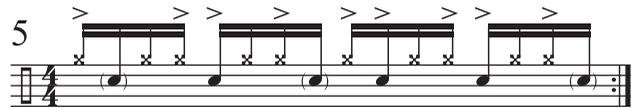
Now fill in the spaces in the pattern with left-hand ghost notes on the snare. This might look complicated, but it shouldn't be too difficult if you've studied hand-to-hand stickings.



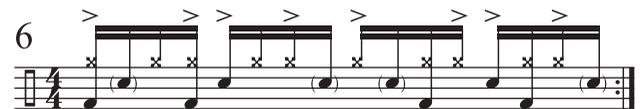
For the next example, add accents on the backbeats.



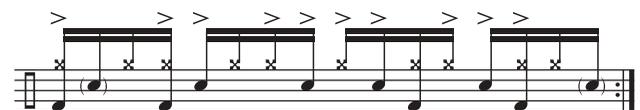
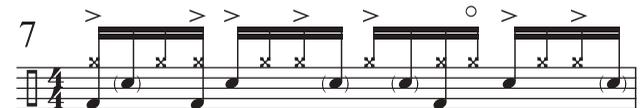
This time, add an accent on the "e" of beat 3. This is a popular funk pattern. Once you have this down, string together Examples 4 and 5 to make a two-bar phrase.



Now we'll begin to add the right foot. You don't have to play a lot of 16th notes on the bass drum when the hands are playing complex patterns. Here's one possibility.

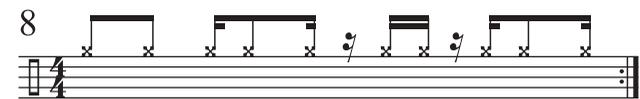


You can create a funky two-bar phrase by changing the bass drum pattern slightly or by adding a hi-hat opening.



Latin-Style Hi-Hat Pattern

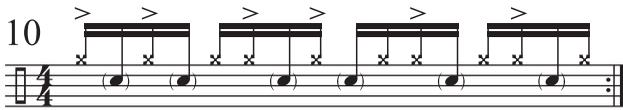
Here's a Latin-flavored hi-hat pattern that cycles into beat 1. I used this rhythm on the tune "Jabo" from my CD *Énergie*.



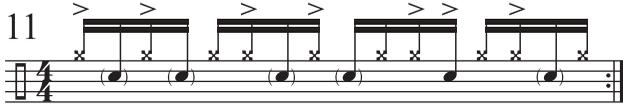
Here's the same pattern with accents.



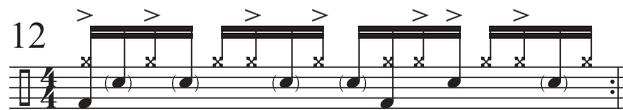
Here's what it looks like with the left hand filling in ghost notes.



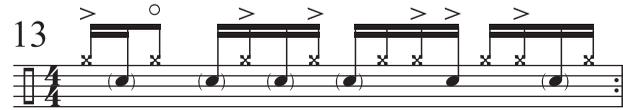
Now add an accent on the "a" of beat 3.



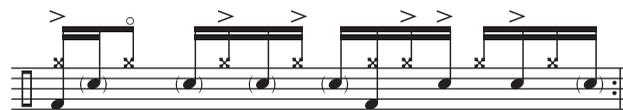
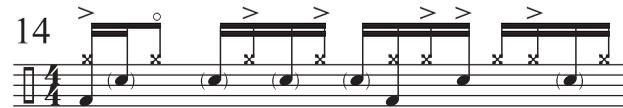
Here's a complete pattern using the bass drum on beat 1 and the "e" of beat 3.



Here's a variation of the previous pattern. This time I added a hi-hat opening on the "&" of beat 1 and I moved the hi-hat on beat 2 to the snare (no accent).

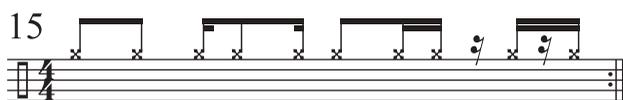


Now try creating a two-bar phrase using the previous ideas. Here's one possibility.

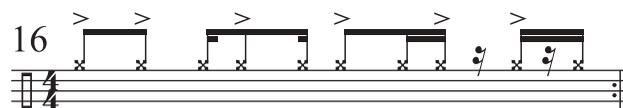


2:3 Cascara Pattern

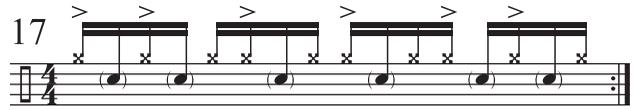
You can do the same things with the traditional 2:3 cascara pattern. Here's the basic rhythm.



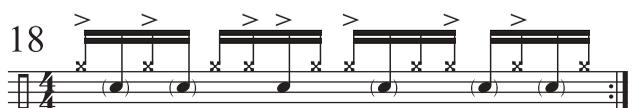
Now add accents.



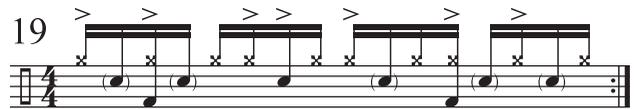
Now fill in the rests with ghost notes.



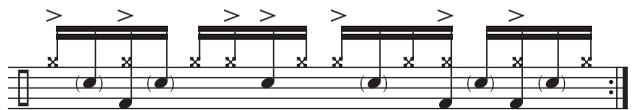
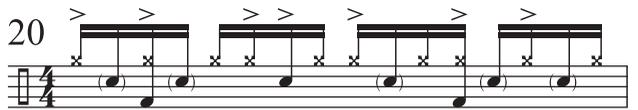
Add a snare drum accent on the "&" of beat 2.



Once you have those down, add the bass drum. Here's what the pattern looks like with the bass drum on the "&" of beat 1 and the "a" of beat 3. The bass drum doesn't always have to fall on beat 1. Grooves like this might freak out your bandmates at first, but once they get used to it they might end up liking it.



Finally, create a funky two-bar phrase by adding an extra bass drum to the last beat.



Jim Payne teaches in New York City and performs with The Jim Payne Band. For sound samples of these beats, visit www.funkydrummer.com.



Afro-Cuban Bata Rhythms

Part 1: History And Feel

by David Gomez

Afro-Cuban bata drums are known around the world as one of the most rhythmically complete instruments. These days, you can hear them in many popular genres. From hip-hop and jazz, to pop and salsa, the bata drums—which were once banned—are becoming an important component in the development of contemporary music.

Bata have an immense and rich vocabulary, so it's a great benefit for all drumset players to study the instrument's traditional rhythms. Learning bata will not only make it easier for you to perform other Afro-Cuban styles and world rhythms with the proper feel, it will also expand your rhythmic and melodic abilities in more conventional settings.

The traditional Bata repertoire encompasses hundreds of rhythmic "conversations" that are used as prayers in the Afro-Cuban religion Santería, also known as Regla de Ocha. One of the unique things about a bata performance is that the three drummers often play in multiple time signatures and in different feels simultaneously. As you're learning some of the bata vocabulary presented in this and future articles, try to make the rhythms feel as natural as possible. Because bata drumming involves so many different rhythms, there's a tendency for new players to sound mechanical in their performances. So always strive for an even flow.

In this month's segment, we'll focus on the history and terminology of the Afro-Cuban bata drums, as told to me by my elders. Then we'll work through a few fundamental feel exercises, which will open up the door to many musical possibilities.

History And Terminology

Although Afro-Cuban bata is gaining popularity around the world, the genre wasn't always so openly embraced. Over three hundred years ago the bata had to be preserved in the minds, hearts, and spirits of the people from Yoruba, Nigeria, who were shipped to Cuba during the Atlantic slave trade. The fact that these drums and their rhythms withstood such an oppressive environment is a testament to the strength of the people who struggled to uphold their religion and music in a "new world."

In Cuba, the bata are a set of three double-headed drums that have a slight hourglass shape. They are known by the religious name "Aña" or "fundamento." Aña is the spirit/deity that allows the drums to function

as mediums between the mortal and the immortal, and fundamento means "sacred" or "a set that has been ritually created." The individual bata drums are named according to their size. "Iya" is the largest drum, and its meaning translates to "mother." "Itotele" is the medium-sized drum, and its name is comprised of two words: itoto ("completely") and tele ("to follow"). The small drum is known as "omele" or "okonkolo," which has its origin in the words "kon kolo." These words translate into "small" or "an object with small dimensions."

The terms for the different parts of the bata drums are as follows: The small side of each drum is called "chacha" or "culata," which are words that emulate the sound made by the drum. The large side is known as "enu," which means "mouth." Both sides of the drums are covered by a membrane called "awo," which translates to "skin."

The set of bata also include a fourth part, known as the "shaworo," which means bells, rattles, and/or jingles. The shaworo are two straps that have multiple bells attached. These straps are strung around the large (iya) drum. There are two types of shaworo. One consists of metallic bells and is used when praying to Afro-Cuban deities, known as "orishas." The other shaworo consists of wooden bells, and it's used only when worshipping ancestors, known as "egungun."

The bata are used in rituals such as the "Oru del Igboodu" and





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"Oru Seco." In these rituals, the drums recite a particular order of rhythmic conversations as prayers to the different orishas. Different passages for the ancestors (egungun) are also implemented. In addition, bata are used in rituals such as the "Iyara Nla" or "Oru Cantado," where they are accompanied by singing and dancing.

It's important to note that the bata drums can literally speak words. Since the Yoruba language, the mother tongue of over fifteen million people from Southwestern Nigeria, is tonal-based, the drums can imitate these sounds using variations of three basic tones—open, slap, and muff. As a result, the bata are able to speak religious prayers, common phrases, and religious poetry.

It has been passed down to me by my elders that around the mid-1800s, two Nigerian slaves by the names of Ayanbi and Atanda Falubi—better known by their Spanish names, No Filomenco Garcia and No Juan "El Cojo"—built the first set of bata drums in Cuba after meeting on a shipping dock. Back in Yoruba Ayanbi was a master bata drummer, and Atanda was an excellent carpenter, priest, and expert in herbal medicine. After a few conversations, these two men came to the realization that although bata rhythms were being played in Cuba on instruments such as cajones and tambourines, there weren't any sets of sacred bata on the entire island. So they made it their duty to build the first ones. Many of today's bata sets can be traced back to those created by these two men, since ceremonially sacred bata drums can only be created in the presence of an elder set.

Popular awareness of the bata drums began in December 1935, when Cuban ethnomusicologist Dr. Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969) documented that scholar Gustavo Urrutia (1881–1958) played religious Yoruba music on the Cuban radio show Cuatro Charlas Radiophonias, which was aimed to promote black economic power. Following in the footsteps of Urrutia, Dr. Ortiz organized a public conference in 1936

called Libertadora, which means "liberator." At this conference, Ortiz presented to the government and the non-religious Cuban public the role of the bata drums. The drummers at this presentation were Pablo Roche (iya), Aguedo Morales (itotele), and Jesus Perez (okonkolo).

Feel Development Exercises

In order to understand bata rhythms and their correct application to the drumset, we must first examine "la clave" ("the key") in 6/8 time. The clave pattern must be absorbed in order for these rhythms to be rhythmically and melodically performed on the drumset. In the following exercises, we will focus on the traditional Afro-Cuban 6/8 clave pattern and several variations. Then we'll work through exercises that focus on transitioning between 6/8 and 4/4 feels.

Example 1 is the traditional 6/8 clave pattern, and Examples 2–9 are clave variations used in many other folkloric Afro-Cuban musical genres, such as Abakua, Bembe, Columbia, and Arara. Although these patterns are called "clave," they aren't meant to be played on an actual set of claves. Instead, they are traditionally played on a bell or a guataca (hoe blade). Here's a step-by-step method for practicing these clave rhythms.

Step one: "Sing, sing, sing." Sing each pattern using any syllables you want.

Step two: Play the patterns on a bell. Work out each pattern separately. Memorizing these patterns will help you internalize the feel. Notes marked with an "O" should be played on the mouth of the bell, while other notes are to be played on the body of the instrument.

Step three: Alternate between the patterns. Go back and forth between the traditional 6/8 clave pattern (Example 1) and each clave variation. For example, begin by playing Example 1 and Example 2. Then return to Example 1 before moving to Example 3. Repeat this pattern until you've played through all of the variations.

1

2

3

4

5

6

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9

Now we're going to work on the transition between 6/8 and 4/4 feels. Exercise 10 illustrates this switch, which is a recurring theme in bata conversations. The first two bars contain the traditional 6/8 clave pattern, while bars 3 and 4 contain the traditional cascara pattern. You need to be able to switch from one meter to another smoothly and naturally in order to understand the feel of bata rhythms.

10

Our final example contains two blank measures followed by two measures of the 4/4 pattern. Insert the clave variations (Examples 2–9) into the blank measures. The goal is to be able to switch between each of the 6/8 clave patterns and the 4/4 pattern without stopping. Remember, if you can't sing it, you can't play it. So practice singing all of the patterns before playing them on an instrument.

11

Next time we'll take a look at a bata rhythm known as "tui-tui" and apply it to the drumset. You can hear the examples in this article, plus those we'll be discussing next month, by logging onto the Education page at www.moderndrummer.com.



Cuban-Colombian drummer/percussionist **David Gomez** is an artist endorser for Latin Percussion, Paiste, and Factory Metal Percussion. For more information, visit www.davegomez.com.



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Thoughts Of The Day

Inside The Mind Of The Drum Guru

by Billy Ward

I'm always experiencing little snippets of thought about drums and drumming. Rather than a long piece about one of these subjects, I thought I'd toss them all out to you in a looser format. My hope is to promote some thought about how you approach your drumming. With a tip of the cap to all those writers who write "thoughts of the day," here are mine, today.

Stop Fighting, Start Enjoying

When you practice, spend some time practicing for fun instead of only fighting a struggle. Too many drummers bang their head against the wall trying to learn a complex groove that has nothing to do with their musical life. If you work from a book, try to make it your own. Imagine that it's music, not an exercise.

Pick Appropriate Exercises

What kind of band would this exercise fit? I personally believe if you can't answer that question, then move on to another exercise. When you've nailed the chosen exercise, tape it and then listen to the tape. Work towards getting your playing to sound like a record. For instance, is the hi-hat at the correct volume compared to the bass drum and snare? Can you think of a song where this exercise can be used? Extend the exercise into a fictional song.

Start With A Solo

Feed your love of music when you practice. One way that I enjoy starting is this: Play one of your favorite grooves, then stray away from it to play a melodic fill. Then go back to the time (your groove), and then stray away again to the melodic fill.

Try to make your fills or "stray-aways" connected in a musical way. When you stumble, which is inevitable for all of us, work out the sticking and practice those fills or licks. You've just added to your musical suitcase something that your ears asked you to play.

I like to start each practice session with a solo. I will build it over time, from day to day, leading to an assembled solo concept. Melody is the key. Build upon melody; the toms and the cymbals are favored here, but also spend some time with the snare turned off.

Don't Cheat—Tune

I've recently discovered that many drummers tune their drums to enable the best rebound for their technique, rather than

choosing the tension of the drums for tone. Work on your hands! Rudiments are your language. The long roll, single-stroke roll, five- and seven-stroke rolls, and all variations of paradiddles are your most important tools. Practice them slowly and then build up the speed. The goal is that every note feels even in tone and dynamics. This means you have control.

Finger Control

Need stronger fingers for your controlled bounces? My DVD Big Time has a very effective exercise for strengthening your fingers that will not damage you. Check it out.

Quiet Practice

Rudiments can be practiced on a pad while watching the late movie on TV. You can improve certain technical aspects of drumming without subjecting your ears and neighbors to drums. I like to think of my drumset as a church, so I try to save my drumset playing for the real deal. Drums are for music.

Identify Who's Doing What

When listening to records, discover who else in the band is playing drums (playing a rhythmic part). For example, in James Brown's music, all the guitarists are drummers. Those are clearly conga drum lines. If a guitarist or keyboardist is playing 8th notes, then maybe your hi-hat doesn't need to do that. Maybe there's something more interesting that belongs in the more staccato parts of your drum groove. I think we drummers get blamed many times for a groove not working, when the problem might actually lie upon the shoulders of one of the other bandmembers. Only an experienced musical drummer can take charge and recommend trying different rhythms for the bandmembers.

Learn from your favorite drummers. Listen to the music of your favorite drummer with the above paragraph in mind. What choices did that drummer make given the song and the arrangement? One example: Younger drummers tend to go to the ride cymbal on choruses, yet this is not an automatic rule. There should be a reason for every tonal change within the drumset orchestra.

Flatter Sincerely

Imitate your favorite drummers. Put that drummer's tone and notes into your hands and feet. Again, tape it. Does it sound just like your hero? If not, you haven't worked hard enough yet. This includes tuning, touch, and everything else. If your drums and

Having your hands move properly is nothing. The only thing that matters is the sound and feel that's hitting your ears.

cymbals are not as professional as your hero's, well, guess what? They would still sound just like them on your drums and cymbals. You'll sound just like you on their gear as well. So work on this.

Simmer Down..But Still Simmer

Playing softly and still maintaining authority over the band's time and groove is a higher, almost Ph.D. level of being a great drummer. One solution is to practice playing everything at different dynamics (play them softly!) and use different objects in your hands with the same grooves. Try a brush in one hand and a stick in the other. Being completely comfortable with these kinds of changes makes your playing more dynamically fluid. One more stretch that creates music in the real world: Take your favorite grooves and be able to translate them to only the snare drum. If you can make music on one drum, you are a musician.

Brush Up

Speaking of brushes, since we now live in a time of microphones being everywhere, why haven't I heard a speed metal track done with brushes yet? That would be so cool! Brushes can be our best friends. They save the day on those church or coffeehouse gigs where the drums have to be quiet, but the drummer doesn't want to feel like he's tiptoeing through the song.

Identify The Perfect Tempo

As I've said before, every song has a "tempo DNA." This is where the tempo is crucial to the song. When rehearsing with your band, learn what that moment is and sing that section to yourself before counting off the band. I hit my Tama Rhythm Watch for the chosen tempo. Then I turn it off quickly and place the groove in my body (while singing the DNA moment to myself). Then I count the

band in. I only give them a one-bar count when playing live because I've put way more effort into choosing the tempo than they have. Why should I give them time to think about it? I'm in charge. It's possible this system would not work with certain groups, but I haven't had a problem with it yet.

Arms, Legs..And Ears

Too many drummers (and way too many bad guitarists) consider the physical act of the movement (playing the beat) to be the goal. This is music! Having your hands move properly is nothing. The only thing that matters is the sound and feel that's hitting your ears. More mediocre musicians need to listen to the result of their playing and place their consciousness there, rather than on the act of the playing. The act is nothing. The sound is everything. Your hands and feet should be responding immediately to the sound that is happening around you.

Finally, as I always say in clinics, art lies in the details. It's a beautiful musical world out there and inside each of us. Good luck!



Billy Ward is an in-demand session drummer and clinician. He's worked with Carly Simon, B.B. King, Robbie

Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne, among many others. His book, *Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming*, is published by Modern Drummer Publications. His new DVD, *Voices Inside My Head*, is just out. Billy can be reached through his Web site, www.billyward.com.



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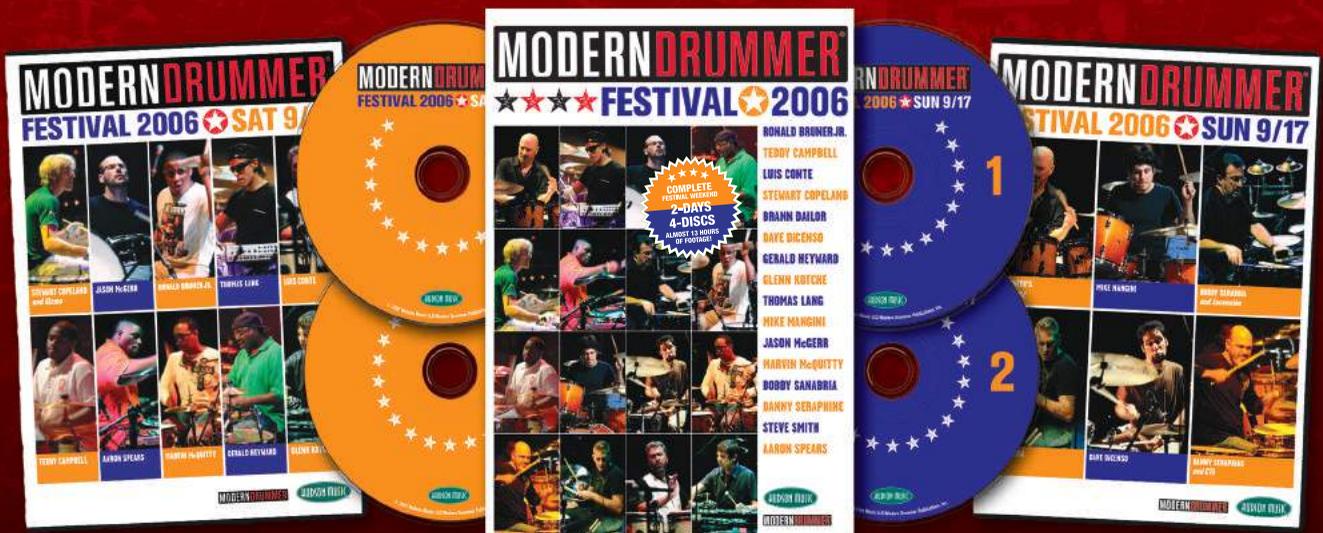


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Building A Successful Teaching Practice

Part 1: Why Teach?

by Robert P. Smith

In this series of articles we' ll be looking at many different aspects of the teaching profession, from setting a curriculum, motivating students, and building your business, to more esoteric subjects such as pedagogical philosophies and working with different personality types. But before we can get to all those issues, we must first ask ourselves, "Why do I want to teach?"

Maybe you' re doing it for the money. Or perhaps you love kids. It could be a means to support other musical pursuits. Or maybe you just like teaching. Whatever your reasons for pursuing this vocation, one overriding concept must remain above all others: You have to be honest with yourself.

Asking Hard Questions

Can you honestly say that you have the students' best interests at heart? Are you quick to anger or easily frustrated? Does the thought of sitting in a room with a child who has problems grasping concepts give you a headache? Would you spend extra time without compensation helping a student? If you aren' t honest with yourself when answering questions like these, you can' t be honest with your students. Everything you do in the classroom will be a façade, due to the fact that you' re not coming from a "real" place.

As a teacher, you have a chance to influence a life. Whether that influence is positive or negative is entirely based upon your commitment and honesty. Can you put out positive, nurturing energy for an extended period of time? Believe me, when you have over fifty students a week, it can be difficult to summon the energy needed to explain 8th notes for the millionth time, or to get a kid to correct his grip. But as a professional and committed teacher, you must give that energy. Anything less would be cheating the student. Again, this is where you must be honest with yourself. Can you do it?

What happens if you have a bad day? Someone hits your car, your spouse yells at you for not mailing the electric bill, and your dog

throws up on the good rug. Can you leave all that at the door when you walk into your classroom? You can' t let personal problems carry over into the lesson and inhibit the learning experience. A teacher' s negative attitude could permanently tarnish a student' s taste for music. I' m sure that' s something no one wants to be responsible for.

It All Counts

Remember this: Every moment you' re with a student, you' re teaching. Actions do, indeed, speak louder than words, and kids will quickly pick up on body language and attitude. I' ve seen many teachers who just showed up, did the minimal amount of instruction needed, and left, thinking that the student had no idea. This is a dangerous, egotistical error. Students are savvier than you think, and they know when a teacher is trying or not. Comments I hear from students who encounter this type of work



Illustration by Jeff Harty

Whatever your reasons for pursuing this vocation, one overriding concept must remain above all others: You have to be honest with yourself.

ethic include, "He doesn't care about us," "Why did she take this job?" and "This is a huge waste of time." Once comments like these get around, it's safe to say that that teacher won't be teaching much longer.

Even more damaging is when this attitude seeps from the teacher into the student. Students will think that if the teacher isn't trying or doesn't care, then why should they? I've seen entire band programs go down the tubes due to one teacher's poor attitude. There is nothing more heartbreaking than seeing 140 kids give up and a good program destroyed.

It Takes More Than Talent

Being a great player does not automatically make one a great teacher. Teaching is an art unto itself, and, like playing, it has to be constantly honed and refined. Too many teachers mindlessly follow the same procedure, give the same speeches, use the same books, and never refine their program—if they in fact have a program. As a teacher, it's your duty to search for new avenues of learning, to stay up on current musical trends and literature, and to seek new ways of explaining concepts. Some of this will happen naturally as you're confronted with new sets of problems, but in most cases you have to

actively pursue it. Are you the type of person to put forth this effort?

Is It Worth It?

After reading this article, you could be thinking that this teaching thing might not be as easy as it originally seemed. You might sense that the fate of the Western world hangs in the balance with your decision. Not so. Being honest with yourself is something that you, as an artist, do on a regular basis. It's what keeps you practicing. Just transfer that honest, self-assessing mindset over to your teaching practice, and you'll find that being a positive, conscientious teacher who actually cares about students will come naturally. Just remember to be honest with yourself, and you'll always be successful.

Next time we'll take a look at ways in which you can start to build your teaching practice. See you then!

Rob Smith is a graduate of Temple University in jazz performance. He maintains a successful private teaching practice in the Philadelphia area. He also performs in various jazz groups and big bands, records commercial jingles, and works with such artists as St. Alborne, Mike Montrey, and The Helots. You can contact Rob at jabondo@msn.com.



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The advertisement features a central image of a drummer wearing sunglasses, positioned behind a drum set. Several Turkish cymbals are prominently displayed in the foreground, including a large crash cymbal with the word 'Jazz' on it, and several smaller cymbals with 'Rock Beat' and 'Rock Beat Raw' branding. The background is a dark, patterned surface with a crescent moon and stars, suggesting a night sky or a stage backdrop. The overall aesthetic is professional and focused on the product's branding and variety.

Playing In The Pits: Drumming For Musical Theater

Part 2: Getting Started

by Larry Lelli

In Part 1 of this series, we covered basic information that you should be aware of before taking a gig playing for a musical theater show. This month we'll get more in-depth, and I'll share some "tricks" that will be helpful when you begin playing in the pits.

It Ain't All Drumset

Let's say you've just accepted your first show at a local dinner theater, and the musical director (MD) emails you the equipment list. Everything seems fine: "snare drum, bass drum, floor tom," until you see..." bell tree, temple blocks, ratchet, and gong." What the...?

Nowadays, many shows will expect you to play additional percussion instruments as well as drumset. This may occur because the percussionist is busy playing another instrument during a break in your drum part. Or it could be a matter of the theater lacking the money (or the pit space) to hire a separate percussionist. Sometimes the drum and percussion parts will have been

previously re-orchestrated into a "combined book," as we lovingly call them on Broadway. Other times it will be up to you to combine the two books into something manageable for you to play by yourself.

A Show Drummer's Gear

Most shows don't expect you to own big percussion items like timpani, xylophones, or symphonic gongs. (Contact the MD to determine which of those the show will provide.) But you are expected to own a drumset, as well as smaller items like woodblocks, wind chimes, cowbells, a triangle, a tambourine, etc. Buy quality instruments like these early in your show-drumming career, and you'll never have to buy them again.

If you're just starting out and you can't afford to buy all of these small items, see if you can borrow them from a friend, or talk to a local school about using their gear. Take care of anything that you borrow, and make sure that you return it in the same condition that you received it. And add a thank-you note. Respect and gratitude go a long way.

Your stick bag should contain sticks, brushes, triangle beaters, and a pair each of general timpani, xylophone, vibe, and bell mallets. To make your life much easier, get a pair of multi-percussion sticks—or, as many people call them, mallet sticks. These are regular drumsticks with mallets attached on the butt ends. I use them on about 75% of the show work that I do. I can play with the tips for regular drumset passages, and then flip them over in a split second to play timpani, concert bass drum, or cymbal rolls. No more stressing over fast stick changes.

Creating A Setup

Once you know what equipment you need, it's time to figure out how to set it all up. Most times there won't be room for a full drumset along with



This setup is an approximation of the one Larry used for a recent Broadway production of Stephen Sondheim's Assassins.

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everything else. You' ll need to strip down your kit to the basics. The less-is-more theory always works best in the pits. I often sketch out a setup diagram for a new show, then make adjustments as needed during rehearsals.

Start by looking at the music and, if a CD of the show is available, studying it. This will help you to determine what you really need. Kick and snare are usually essential, and perhaps you' ll need a floor tom to fake some timpani rolls. But you might not need any rack toms. Now get creative. Will you need to play bongos quite often? Try mounting them over your kick drum where the rack toms usually go. Pay attention to fast instrument changes within the music, and try to place those instruments close together. Clip that triangle and squeeze that splash cymbal in anywhere they' ll fit...maybe even under the hi-hat. A towel laid on a flat music stand placed over your hi-hat or floor tom creates a trap table to hold mallets and small percussion items.

Your final arrangement doesn' t have to be pretty. It just has to work efficiently for you, and it has to fit within the (undoubtedly too-small) space you have in the pit.

Check out the photo of my setup from Assassins. This is a layout for a master class I gave at PASIC in 2006; the actual pit setup was much more condensed. You can see how I squeezed the Granite Blocks over the floor tom, and I boomed triangles, splash cymbals, Jam Blocks, and tambourines into every little space I could. LP makes excellent accessory mounts and brackets for small percussion items, as do many other manufacturers. A setup like this would not have been possible without such mounts, so make sure you always have a good supply of them.

Playing The Parts

It can be tricky to cover additional percussion parts while you' re simultaneously keeping time on the drumset. Just remember that the most important thing is to keep the music and the tempo grounded. If trying to catch that triplet woodblock figure is throwing off your drumset groove, either go home and woodshed that figure until you have it down solidly, or discreetly ask the MD if you can leave that particular woodblock lick out. We only have so many arms and legs, and sometimes it' s just impossible to cover everything. Try to determine your limitations early in the rehearsal period, and focus on doing what' s necessary to maintain the musical integrity of the show.

That being said, with a little imagination you can often cover some tricky multiple parts. For instance, I used a trick during Assassins in order to play the gong while keeping time on the drumset. I simply hung the gong mallet on a string in front of the gong. This allowed me to keep the time going with my feet and my left hand (alternating between the hi-hat and the snare) while reaching behind me to grab the dangling mallet for the gong hit. I didn' t have to put down my stick or worry about picking up and putting down a gong mallet.

I' ve used all sorts of tricks in the Broadway pits. I' ve played drumset with bell mallets to facilitate a bell part in the middle of a 2-beat groove. I' ve held two mallets in one hand to play a cymbal roll while hitting a triangle with a beater in the other hand. And then there' s the old standby: keeping time with just my feet (on kick and hat) for a measure or two while switching from sticks to brushes. It' s okay to be unconventional—if doing so allows you to play the part musically and serve the music. You might look a little funny holding a stick in your mouth so you can make a lone ratchet roll, but the MD will appreciate your efforts.

Working With Conductors

There are many theories about the drummer/conductor relationship, but my favorite is this: If you think of the show as a big bus full of people, the conductor is the one who steers that bus, while the drummer is the engine. One can' t work without the other. If the drummer isn' t responding to how the conductor is steering, the conductor loses control of the bus. The orchestra and the actors might fall apart, and the whole thing might crash into a ditch! So conductors need you. It' s your job to do everything possible to keep them

You might look a little funny holding a stick in your mouth so you can make a lone ratchet roll. But the MD will appreciate your efforts.

happy and keep the bus—that is, the show—on the road. (Tommy Igoe wrote some very good articles on this subject in the February and March 2004 issues of *Modern Drummer*, so check those out for a good starting point.)

On the regional theater scene, you' ll typically encounter the "piano conductor" (PC), who will also likely be the musical director. Since PCs are playing piano most of the time instead of actually conducting with their hands, it can be a bit tricky to understand and follow their conducting directions.

Ask to attend one of the early pre-production cast rehearsals before you and the other musicians are required to be there. Observe and get a feel for how the PC operates. How does he start the songs? Does he count off the tempo first? Does he tap his foot beforehand? Does he simply give a nod with his head, and that' s the downbeat? How is his time? Does he bob his head to the tempo while playing, and does that head-bobbing actually match the tempo he' s playing? How does he cut off the singers at the end of songs...with his hand, or with his head? These are things to look for when encountering a new PC. And remember, no two PCs are the same. It' s your job to figure out how to follow each one you work with; this will give you a head start.

If attending a pre-production rehearsal isn' t possible, then gather all this information as quickly as you can during the initial orchestra rehearsals. At this stage it' s okay to make a mistake once or twice. But you should have a good grip on what the PC is doing after that. Stay attentive, and if it seems like cues are never the same twice, ask a tactful and non-confrontational question like, "Do you want me to hit this crash at the moment you cut off the singers?" Diplomacy is key, since you don' t want the PC to feel self-conscious about what he or she is doing. (You also don' t want the PC to think you don' t know what you' re doing.)

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PIT DRUMMING

Another tricky issue is tempo. How do you know if the PC actually wants the tempo to change, or if the piano playing is just rushing or dragging? Again, this is trial and error, so keep your eyes and ears open. Suppose, during the first run-through of a dance section, you follow the way the PC is speeding up a little bit, and the choreographer starts yelling that the tempo is too fast. In that case you might try to keep the tempo a bit steadier there, even if the PC is rushing. But if the PC flashes you a dirty look on the next run-through, just follow, and let the PC and the choreographer battle it out.

Conversely, there might be times when the PC or the choreographer wants the tempo to move up or down for a particular section, so make notes in your music as best you can. I'll often write basic notes, like "a bit faster" or "a bit slower," or even more subtle cues like "push it a little" or "pull back," to remind me of certain desired minor tempo fluctuations.

It's important to remember that when you're playing a show, tempos are always going to vary. Just because the PC said during rehearsals, "The tempo for this song is 96 bpm..." don't assume that it's always going to be there. Sometimes the cast might be tired after a two-show day, and the PC will take the tempo a bit slower for them. On the other hand, maybe the cast had birthday cake and coffee before the show. They're all hopped up on sugar and caffeine, and they want to take it fast tonight. Tempos will fluctuate from song to song and from show to show—and that's okay, as long as it's happening on purpose.

The bottom line is, you are there to follow the PC, and to interpret what he or she wants. You need to be the glue that holds the whole band together. Just envision yourself as rubber cement, rather than super glue. Keep it all together with enough flexibility to move either way if needed, and everyone will love you.

On With The Show

You now have enough information and tricks in your bag to confidently begin playing for musicals. Keep your eyes and ears open, be aware of how you fit into the "big picture" of the show, and do your best to keep the conductor happy and keep that bus on the road. Hopefully, I'll eventually see you in the trenches...on Broadway!



Larry Lelli is a veteran first-call Broadway drummer whose credits include *The Producers*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Assassins*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *110 In The Shade*. He has performed or recorded with The Mamas & The Papas, Doug Stone, Sebastian Bach, and Vanessa Williams. Larry endorses Yamaha, Sabian, Remo, Latin Percussion, Vic Firth, Puresound, Roc-N-Soc, and FutureSonics products. You can contact him at www.larrylelli.com.



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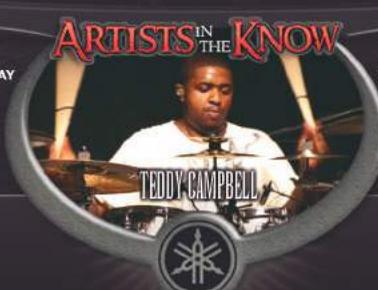
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Tortoise/The Sea And Cake's John McEntire Soma Electronic Music Studios

story by Michael Dawson
photos by Gene Ambo

Experimental rock guru John McEntire is not only a primary rhythmic force behind acclaimed instrumental group Tortoise (which also includes drummer/percussionists John Herndon and Dan Bitney), impressionistic pop/rock band The Sea And Cake, and several other Chicago-based projects, he's also one of the most sought-after recording and mix engineers in the business.

When he's not on the road supporting whatever project he most recently completed (The Sea And Cake's *Everybody Was* released in 2007, while Tortoise continues to tour regularly), you're most likely to find John pushing faders in his own commercial recording space, Soma Electronic Music Studios, located in the Ukrainian Village in downtown Chicago. "I'm there pretty much every day when I'm not on tour," says McEntire with the matter-of-fact tone of someone who's obviously content juggling roles as record producer, sonic sculptor, and percussion performer.

In addition to being McEntire's personal playground for what-

ever auditory experiments he wants to conduct, like 2007's hip-hop groove project *Bumps*, Soma Studios is home base for some of Chicago's most creative and high-profile musicians, including jazz artists Fred Anderson and Hamid Drake, as well as alt-rockers Bright Eyes, Spoon, Teenage Fanclub, and Wilco.

A big reason that these artists come to McEntire's space is to take advantage of the drummer/engineer's expansive collection of unique gear. "I started gathering equipment around the time that I got out of college," John recalls. "At first, I was buying a lot of synthesizers and drum machines. Then as things progressed I started getting proper studio gear—outboard effects and microphones. It's been a slow, incremental process. But when we opened this space seven years ago, there was another push to get a whole bunch of equipment that would be attractive to people."

Now Soma Studios sports a rare Trident A-Range 32-channel console, Pro Tools HD 2 Accel, a 2" 24-track analog tape machine, a large collection of top-notch microphones, a variety of outboard effects processors (including spring and plate reverb units), and a wide range of classic synths and drum machines. McEntire also keeps several drumkits on hand. "I've always had

three or four kits floating around," says John. "The main one that I use for touring and recording is a C&C, with a 16x24 kick, 9x13 and 16x16 toms, and a 6 1/2x14 snare. We also have a mid-'70s Gretsch set in standard sizes—22", 12", 13", and 16". That kit instantly sounds good, no matter what. And we have a mid-'60s jazz-sized Ludwig—18", 12", and 14"—in black oyster pearl. That kit is magic as well. I also have a stainless-steel Ludwig kick drum that has an insane amount of sub-bass. And I recently acquired a couple pieces of WFL gear, including a 26" kick. It still has the original calfskin heads on it."

So how did McEntire progress from making homemade recordings with his band Tortoise to owning a full-scale production facility?

"Soma has been in its current state for about seven years," says John. "Before that, I had a simple home-studio setup with an Otari 8-track tape machine and a Mackie mixer in a loft space where a bunch of us lived. I recorded some Tortoise and Sea And Cake stuff in those days. But in the mid to late '90s I was working at a studio in town called Idful. I did everything there until I got my home setup going a little bit better."

"When Idful closed in '97 or '98," John explains, "I lost a major place to do work. We could track at the loft, but it wasn't optimum because we only had one room to play in. And it was small, so you couldn't get much isola-



Soma Studios sports a vast collection of modern and vintage effects processors.

studio. "It was a big project. Luckily I know a lot of people who are good carpenters. And my friend Bill Skibbe, who helped build Steve Albini's Electrical Audio studio, was a tremendous asset. Because he had gone through that experience, he knew firsthand what to do and what not to do."

These days, McEntire spends most of his stu-

what most people would consider 'natural.'

"For the kick, I'll sweep between 100 and 500 Hz to find out if there's something troublesome in there, and then I'll cut that out. I'll also do a reciprocal boost/cut on kicks and toms. I'll put a high-pass filter between 40 and 50 Hz, and I'll add a peak somewhere between 50 and 80 Hz. That usually brings out

the fundamental of the drum, while not overloading the subs. If it needs a little more attack, I'll sweep between 3 and 5 kHz to find something to boost a little.

"I tend to add a lot of top end on the snare," McEntire adds. "I'll either put a shelf or a peak up pretty high, like 8–10 kHz, and add a fair amount. I'll also put a peak near 100 Hz to bring out the body of the sound. And in the overheads, I usually cut out a lot of mid-range, or whatever frequencies of the room are getting emphasized too much, which is usually between 800 Hz and 2 kHz."

Ironically, when John went into the studio with The Sea And Cake to record *Everybody*, they decided not to use the drummer's space. "We just wanted to do things a little bit differently," John explains.

"I usually don't have a problem with being both the engineer and the drummer, but I have to admit that it was nice to be able to get away from it and not have to do all of the tracking."



The control room houses a rare Trident console, as well as several keyboard and analog synths.



tion. So I needed another space that was a little bigger and addressed some of the concerns that I had about isolation and overall quality issues."

After discovering a perfect location—an abandoned building owned by a friend—McEntire spent a few years constructing his

studio time mixing for other artists. And when it comes to drums, he's not afraid to do some serious tweaking. "You shouldn't be afraid to use EQ," John emphasizes. "Microphones tend to pick up some of the less flattering aspects of drumkits—lots of midrange and low-mids. So you have to do a lot of carving to get it to sound like

Pedals That Kick!

Innovative Approaches To Bass Drum Pedal Design

by Paul Bielewicz

The fundamental design of a bass drum pedal hasn't changed in decades. It usually consists of a cam-driven beater that's controlled by a spring-assisted footboard, all mounted to a baseplate and frame. However, in the past decade or so, some manufacturers have begun to rethink certain elements of pedal design.

Four new concepts in pedal design are on the market today, each of which offers a very different take on the mechanics involved with bringing a beater into contact with a bass drum head. Each company completely re-examined the equation, leaving virtually no aspect of traditional design unquestioned. Let's take a look.

Drumnetics Magnetic-Action Single Pedal

The Drumnetics pedal does away with springs, and instead operates on the principle of opposing magnetic polarity. One

strong magnet is mounted on the top of the baseplate, while a second is on the underside of the footboard. When the footboard is depressed, the two magnets are brought close together. Their opposing polarity causes them to repel each other. The result of this is a tight, crisp compression when the pedal is depressed, and a quick return to its original position when it's released. The strength of the magnetic repulsion—and thus much of the pedal's feel—can be adjusted to the user's preference by adjusting the position of the top and bottom magnets.

The farther a traditional spring is stretched, the more difficult it is for it to continue stretching, and the stiffer the pedal feels. The action of the Drumnetics pedal's magnets is less progressive. As the footboard is pushed down and the magnets repel, the magnetic field changes shape as if it were a balloon filled with air, shifting to accommodate the relative positions of the footboard and baseplate. Also unlike a spring, the magnets in this pedal will never wear out or become misshapen over time. They will continue to oppose each other indefinitely.

Pros: The overall design of the Drumnetics pedal is elegantly simple, without a lot of fancy adjustments to figure out—just straightforward functionality. With its relatively small size and weight, the pedal is easy to carry. The crisp motion and smooth movement is very comfortable and satisfying when it connects the beater with the bass drum head.

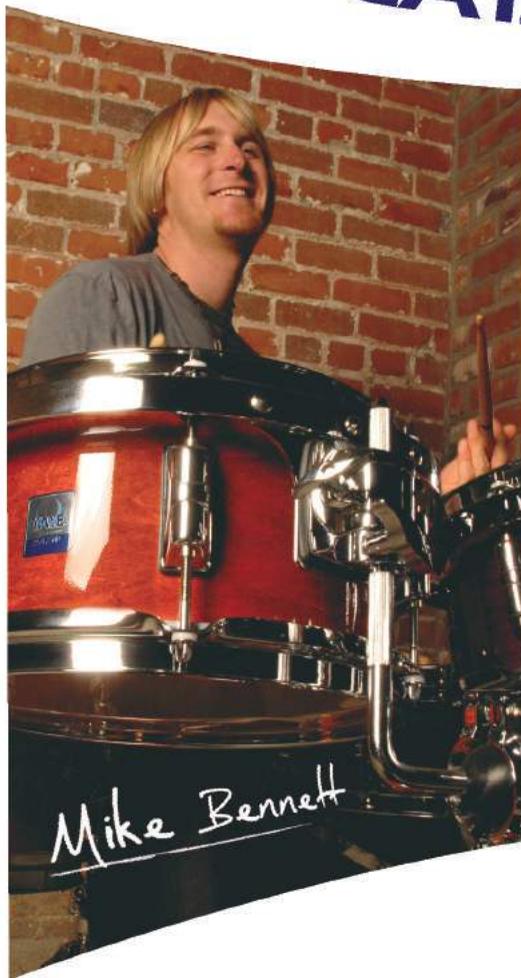
Cons: The beater height adjustment range is limited. The lowest point allowable for the beater is about 12³/₄" from the ground. This was not a design oversight, but rather a conscious choice related to the center-alignment of the footboard, beater shaft, and linkage assembly. But it gives the beater a fairly heavy throw, which cannot be reduced by lowering it.

Drumnetics Magnetic-Action Pedal



A view of the magnets on the underside of the footboard and on the top of the baseplate

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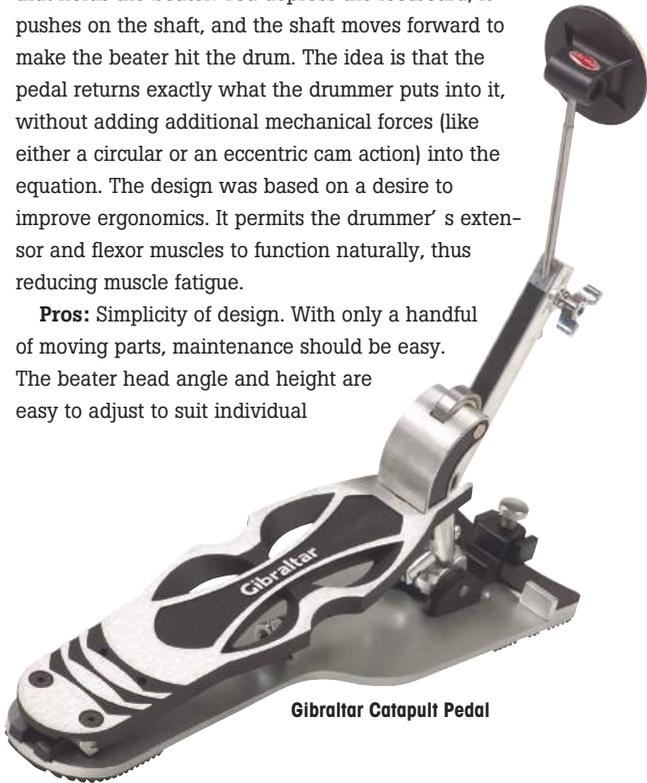
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Gibraltar Catapult Linear Motion Single Pedal

The Catapult pedal by Gibraltar is the most radical-looking model in our survey group. Unlike a traditional pedal, there is no external frame or cam-drive assembly. Instead, the Catapult utilizes a rolling bearing at the front of the footboard, which contacts a curved shaft that holds the beater. You depress the footboard, it pushes on the shaft, and the shaft moves forward to make the beater hit the drum. The idea is that the pedal returns exactly what the drummer puts into it, without adding additional mechanical forces (like either a circular or an eccentric cam action) into the equation. The design was based on a desire to improve ergonomics. It permits the drummer's extensor and flexor muscles to function naturally, thus reducing muscle fatigue.

Pros: Simplicity of design. With only a handful of moving parts, maintenance should be easy. The beater head angle and height are easy to adjust to suit individual



Gibraltar Catapult Pedal

needs. A memory lock is provided for setting the beater shaft height.

Cons: The Gibraltar pedal functions by a direct-drive action, rather than benefiting from the additional leverage and mechanical advantage that a cam-driven assembly can provide. This, coupled with the relatively short travel distance of the beater when the pedal is depressed, can inhibit volume and projection.

If muscle fatigue is a problem that you encounter when playing prolonged sessions, you might find the Catapult pedal helpful. But you'll sacrifice some of the benefits of a traditional pedal in exchange for the improved ergonomics. Further, the vertex of the footboard (the pivot hinge) sits far back from the bass drum head, which can result in acute knee and ankle joint angles depending on how close to the bass drum you position your throne. The ergonomic benefit of reduced muscle fatigue might be offset by the uncomfortable playing angle forced upon your joints, or the distance at which you must position your throne to avoid this.

The beater—a 2³/₄"-diameter plastic base covered in felt on the batter surface—gives a muffled, understated hit. Coupled with the relatively short stroke of the beater shaft and the lack of adjustability of the beater-shaft angle, it's difficult to generate the levels of volume and power that the other pedals in our survey group provided.

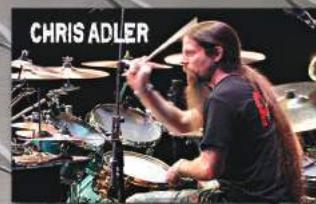
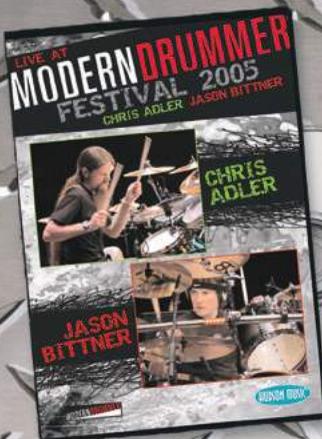
Pacific Bow-Oriented Action (B.O.A.) Double Pedal

The B.O.A. pedal utilizes a flexible Flex-Tech footboard rather than traditional springs to create tension and to facilitate quick return. The footboard pivots at the edge of a rigid hold-down plate, so there's no

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footboard hinge, either. However, like a traditional pedal, the B.O.A. pedal utilizes a frame-based assembly and a cam-based beater action.

Pros: The B.O.A. operates in virtual silence, and is arguably the smoothest pedal of our survey group due to the flexible nature of the Flex-Tech material. It's also very quick, with speed limited only by the drummer's ability. The position of the footboard can be adjusted to increase or decrease the force of the footboard flexion.

The pedal is fitted with an innovative HardCore beater that consists of an exposed hard plastic center surrounded by rubbery foam. The harder one hits, the more the foam compresses and the more the hard center impacts the head, thus increasing volume and attack.



Pacific B.O.A. double pedal

The large, smooth universal joints on the double pedal's connecting rod accurately translate the movement of the left foot directly into the bass drum head. The hoop clamp adjustment is conveniently located and easy to operate. Spring-tensioned pins are available to push into your drum mat to help the pedal stay where it belongs.

Cons: You'll need to allow a little more space when packing this pedal, because the baseplate width is the largest of our survey group. The pedal isn't "quick and easy" to set up out of the box, but Pacific's Web site includes a helpful instructional video.

Trick Pro 1-V Double Bass Drum Pedal

The Trick Pro 1-V might appear the closest to a "traditional" design of any pedal in our survey group. But that appearance is largely superficial, since nearly every individual element of traditional pedal design has been re-thought, and many have been improved upon.

The Pro 1-V's main claim to fame is its instant tension adjustment. A large knob located on the main spring housing can be turned clockwise to increase spring tension, and counterclockwise to decrease tension, literally while you're playing the pedal. While this feature facilitates convenient adjustment, the mechanism supporting it features a pretty complicated design. The housing holds an inter-

A promotional advertisement for Protection Racket drum cases. It features a man, Jimmy Chamberlin, sitting in the driver's seat of an orange van. The van has "Jimmy Chamberlin Smashing Pumpkins" and "On the road with Protection Racket drum cases in 2007" written on the side. In the foreground, several black drum cases are stacked. A logo of a man with sunglasses and a goatee is in the bottom right. Text at the bottom includes "Proud to be distributed in the USA by Big Bang Distribution", "www.bigbangdist.com", "myspace.com/protectionracketdrumcases", and "www.protectionracket.com". A vertical phone number "Big Bang Distribution (800) 547-6401" is on the right edge.

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HOW THEY COMPARE



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Trick Pro 1-V

Adjustable Features	Magnet location (top & bottom), Footboard angle, Beater shaft height, Beater shaft angle	Beater head angle, Beater shaft height, Spring tension,	Beater shaft height, Flex board tension, Beater shaft angle, Cam length (split cam adjustment), Distance between two pedals	Beater shaft height, Beater shaft angle, Spring tension, Footboard angle, Footboard connection to assembly, Beater head angle, Distance between two pedals
Weight (rounded to nearest 1/2 lb.)	3 1/2 lbs.	5 lbs.	12 1/2 lbs.	12 1/2 lbs.
Footboard Dimensions (L"xW")	11 1/2 x 3	13 1/4 x 3 5/8	11 1/4 x 3	12 3/4 x 3 1/8
Baseplate Dimensions (L"xW")	13 1/4 x 4	17 3/16 x 4 1/2	13 7/8 x 6 3/4	14 5/8 x 4 7/8
Beater Height Range (inches from floor when striking head)	12 3/4-14 1/4	12-15 1/4	11-13 1/4	9-13 3/8
Beater Shaft Angle Range	5°-50°	60°-70°	5°-90°	0°-90°
Footboard Angle Range	30°-35°	14°-18°	20°-22°	10°-25°
Beater Type	Hard rubber	Plastic with	Plastic core with foam-felt surface	Aluminum with rubber surround plastic cover
Linkage	Solid (direct)	Roller bearing	Solid (direct)	Solid (direct)
Available As Double Pedal?	To Be Introduced January '08	No	Yes	Yes
List Price	\$499	\$199.99	\$799.99	\$1,199.99
Web Site	www.drumnetics.com	www.gibraltarhardware.com	www.pacificdrums.com	www.trickdrums.com

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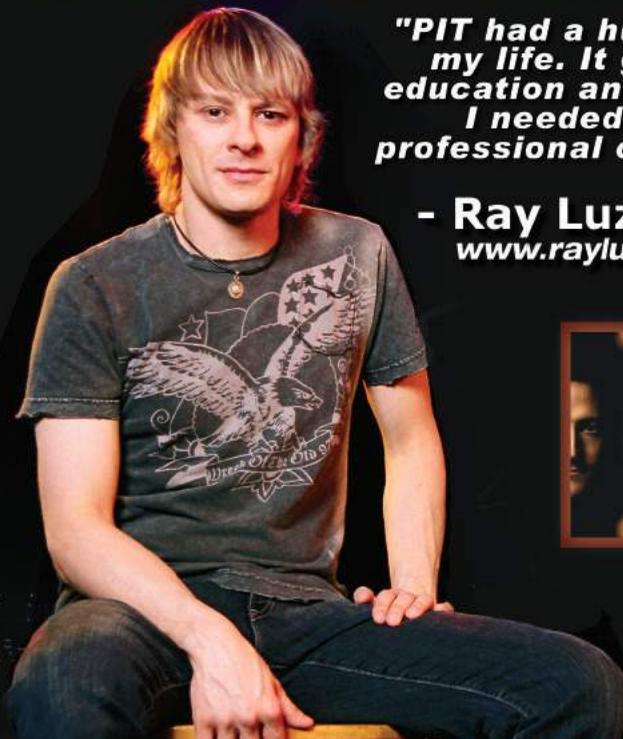


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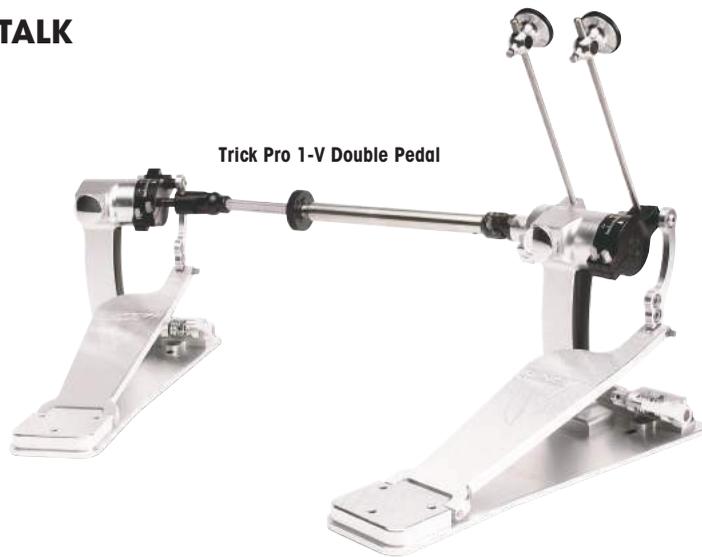
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nal compression spring against a pivoting lever arm. That arm, in turn, is contacted by a rolling bearing, which controls the motion of the split cam assembly and beater shaft. As the pedal's footboard is depressed, the bearing moves along the pivoting lever, which then compresses the spring, creating the tension of the pedal and facilitating the return to the home position.

The split-cam assembly consists of two lockable cams: one controlling footboard angle, and one controlling beater shaft angle. They feature location marks for dialing in and recording optimal settings for different playing situations. This assembly provides the added benefit of allowing the pedal to be adaptable to a hoop-clamp-mounted trigger, or even to a cocktail kit.

The Pro 1-V double pedal has a variety of additional innovative features. Notable among these are the Adjustment Cluster, the rapid-release Slide-Trac hoop clamp, the fully adjustable beater head, and the Zero Backlash Free Floating Universal Joint System on the connecting rod.

Pros: The overall engineering and design innovations of the Pro 1-V pedal are noteworthy. The range of adjustability offered is unequaled among our survey group.

Cons: Those who desire a simple, straightforward pedal might be put off by the time and effort required to calibrate and fine-tune the Pro 1-V. Additionally, as with any complex machine, the more moving parts, linkages, connections, and precision tolerances something has, the greater the possibility that something could break or go wrong. And finally, with mechanical complexity also comes a high price tag.

Paul Bielewicz holds a bachelor of science degree in industrial and systems engineering from Rochester Institute Of Technology. Paul is also a veteran drummer with a fascination for the art, science, and engineering of drums. You can contact Paul at PJB_Drums@yahoo.com.



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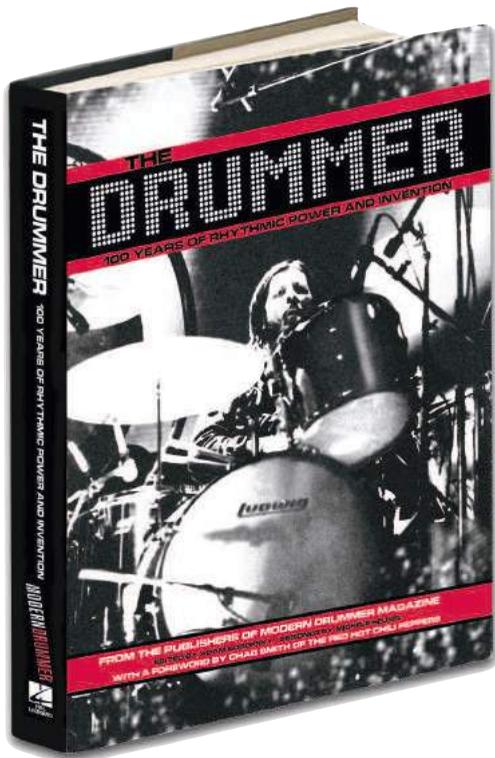
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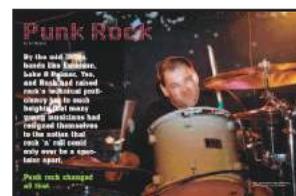
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VST Drumming

Part 2: Creating A Custom Electronic Kit

by John Emrich

In the past couple years, there has been a growth in the number of e-drum companies. And the technology being used has continued to improve. In the August '07 issue of *MD*, we discussed the general concept of VST drumming. As drummers, we're always looking for ways to be unique. Thankfully, the current advances in virtual studio technology (VST) and MIDI controllers have made it possible for us to create an original software-based drumkit that can be continually upgraded to evolve with our music.

In order to build a VST drumset from scratch, you need to pick up a few basic components. You need something to hit, something to convert what you play into MIDI information, software containing the sounds you want to use, and a host machine to store and control all of this information. For this article I will use my personal system as an example, but there are many different options to choose from. With a little research, you'll be able to put together a custom VST drumset that fits with what you need, as well as what you can afford.

Things You Hit

There are three playing surfaces to consider when shopping for trigger devices: real heads, mesh heads, and rubber pads. If you're only interested in adding a couple of electronic pads to

your acoustic set, all you need are some small rubber pads like Roland PD7s or PD8s, Yamaha TP100s or TP120s, or DrumTech's Flat Pad. If you have an old electronic kit, any of those pads should work fine. You can also find a lot of used electronic drum gear on eBay or at your local drum shop.

Rubber pads are often the least expensive option, and they'll fit easily into tight spaces around your kit. Plus, they have a ton of rebound, which can make fast patterns a breeze. (Word of caution: Not all rubber pads feel the same. And some of the harder ones can cause injury after extended use.)

If you need a playing surface that makes minimal contact noise, look into devices using mesh heads, like those by Hart, Pintech, and Roland. Although these types of pads tend to feel a little bit like playing on a trampoline, they are very quiet and their trigger response is excellent. The downside of mesh-head drums is that they are more expensive than rubber pads. But you can replace the heads when they wear out, whereas with rubber pads, you have to replace the entire thing. Mesh heads are also a little easier to control, so that you can prevent misfires and cross-talk. (Cross-talk is when playing one pad accidentally triggers another pad to sound.)

Other electronic drum companies, like X-Drum, Boom Theory, and Wirges are using real drumheads on their instruments. The most obvious benefit of using trigger devices with real heads is

When choosing things to hit, you can go with mesh-head drums like Roland's PD100 (1) and Hart's AcuPad (2), real-head drums like Alesis's DM5 (3) and Wirges' electronic drums (4)...



... or rubber pads like Roland's PD7 (5), Yamaha's PCY80S (6), and Drum Tech's Flat Pad (7).



Multi-pad controllers, like the drumKAT, Mandala, Alesis Control Pad, and Zendrums shown here (clockwise from top left), offer a great way to trigger different sounds without taking up too much space.



The Alesis Trigger IO converts pad hits to MIDI information.

that they feel closer to acoustic drums than the other choices. But the stick sound is also louder when compared to mesh and rubber pads. (Real-head electronic drums produce a sound comparable to that of a Remo practice pad.) Most of these types of drumsets can also be outfitted with mesh heads to bring down the contact noise. Then to quiet down rimshots, you can add some rubber trim, similar to what's used on most car doors. Real-head electronic kits cost about the same as high-quality mesh-head sets.

If you want to trigger multiple sounds, but space is of utmost concern, look into a multi-pad controller, like Alesis's Control Pad or Alternate Mode's drumKAT. These types of pads are perfect for musical theater gigs, because they allow you to add a treasure chest of percussion sounds without taking up too much floor space. Multi-pads also work great if you want to trigger loops or backing tracks while you play.

There are also other multi-pad controllers that offer even greater flexibility. The

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ELECTRONIC INSIGHTS

Mandala drum has the capability to apply real-time control of many different MIDI parameters (like pitch, decay, etc.), while the Zendrum is capable of reproducing the sounds of an entire drumset in a very small package. And the dynamic sensitivity is incredible. Bela Fleck & The Flecktones' Roy "Futureman" Wooton is a Zendrum user, while Tool's Danny Carey has incorporated the Mandala drum into his drumset.

As you're shopping for trigger devices, keep in mind that you can always upgrade once you get your system up and running. Just be aware that whichever pad you use for the snare should be able to trigger more than one sound (rimclicks, rimshots, and regular strokes). So you might want to spend a little extra money on a good-quality multi-zone snare pad from the start.

Trigger-To-MIDI

When putting together a VST drumkit, you want to make sure that everything works fast and that all of the components are compatible with one another. Aside from the quality of your audio card, the trigger-to-MIDI interface (the device that converts the analog signal from your drum pads into digital information) is the most important part of a solid, fast-acting system. So do some research to find what will work best for you.

This is my studio electronic kit, which I use some or all of depending on the type of project. It consists of (clockwise from bottom left): a Zendrum LT, an Alesis Control Pad, an Alternate Mode drumKAT Turbo, an X-Drum X2 electronic drumset with Visualite cymbals, an Alesis Trigger iO, a BFD Turbo Receptor (in rack), and a Mandala drum.

The Alesis Trigger iO, which includes USB connectivity and features ten dual-zone inputs and a hi-hat controller input, and the Roland TMC6, which features six inputs, are very affordable options. And since you're going to be using software-based VST instruments for your sounds, you don't have to spend extra money on a module that includes built-in samples. It's more important to choose a device based on its trigger parameters. Look for something with dual-input triggers, and a continuous-control input (to use with an electronic hi-hat pedal), and good sensitivity and rejection features.

If you already have an electronic drumset, you could use that mod-



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ule for your trigger-to-MIDI interface. You' ll just need to get a high-quality interface for your host. For my system, I use the BFD Turbo Receptor, which has a built-in MIDI interface. So all I have to do is connect a MIDI cable from the Alesis Trigger iO to the back of the receptor, and I' m ready to go.

Software

The biggest advantage to using software as your sound source is that the drum sounds can be whatever you want, including very high-quality audio samples. For instance, each hit in Fxpansion' s BFD triggers up to eleven 24-bit/44.1-kHz WAV files for each dynamic level. (Most stand-alone electronic drum modules trigger between four to eight sounds per hit.) So VST instruments like BFD capitalize on the power of your computer to store and trigger multiple dynamic samples, which allows you to use very realistic sounds.

Other companies making drum software include Toontrack (Superior and EZdrummer), XLN Audio (Addictive Drums), and Native Instruments (Battery). These companies use different approaches to handling the audio and MIDI, but the basic concept is the same.

When using software, you can also add studio-quality effects to your drum sounds. And you can control them in real-time as you play. One of my favorite tricks is to run different drum sounds through various guitar effects, like a flanger. Then I control the parameters of the effect with a continuous-controller foot pedal.

The Host

I chose the BFD Turbo Receptor as my host (the device that stores your sounds and communicates with the software, interface, and triggers) because of its speed and durability. To use the Receptor, you' ll need to pick up a cheap monitor and a PSP mouse so you can navigate the software most effectively.

You can also use a computer as your host machine. Just be careful to buy a computer that' s optimized for working with VST instruments. You' ll want a computer with at least two gigabytes of RAM and a 7,200-rpm hard drive in order to have optimal performance. Finding the right computer is very important because if you cut corners and get a less powerful machine, you' ll pay for it later. Your VST drum system needs to work without failing, and you want to plan for future growth.

You should also invest in an uninterrupted power supply. These units can be expensive, but they are necessary in order to keep the show going smoothly. Just imagine reaching the final chorus of your band' s hit single and having your VST kit get zapped because of a power surge— not a good way to end the set!

I also recommend backing up everything on external hard drives. I use Glyph hard drives for this purpose. That way, if I needed to start from

scratch with a new computer or receptor, I could have one built and loaded with all of my preferences within a couple of hours.

I' ve just described some of the key elements of my VST setup, as well as a few alternatives for you to choose from. There are many options out there that will help you create an electronic kit that fits exactly what you want and need.



John Emrich is a professional drummer/producer based in the Washington, DC area. As a sound engineer, he has produced two expansion packs for Fxpansion' s software drum module BFD. He can be reached at www.johnemrich.com.

For a demonstration of VST drumming, check out John' s videos on the Multi-Media page at www.modrndrummer.com.



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Celebrating Yamaha's Fortieth

A Look At The US Operation

by Rick Van Horn

It's been forty years since Yamaha began manufacturing drums in Japan in 1967. The company has spent most of this past year celebrating that fact by doing what they've done throughout those forty years: focusing on the products they make, on the artists that play and promote those products, and on the customers that buy them.

Yamaha's history features dozens of drum innovations, including the "System Drums" concept, hideaway booms, ball tom mounts, the locking hi-hat clutch, the Subkick low-frequency capture device, and the Nouveau quick-release lug casing. Yamaha can also lay claim to being the only drum manufacturer to offer professional kits in four different wood types.

But perhaps no other accomplishment has had such a lasting impact on drumming as the 1979 introduction of the Recording Custom series—the first drums to offer a 100%-birch shell. The series became an immediate hit with drummers and sound engineers alike, and it dramatically changed people's perspectives regarding wood choices for drum manufacturing.

A Big Job

Of course, Yamaha doesn't just make drums. They also offer an extensive line of electronic percussion, along with state-of-the-art drum hardware and accessories. And the US arm of the company—Yamaha Corporation Of America (YCA)—has some addi-

tional irons in the fire, including the distribution of Paiste cymbals and the recent re-introduction of the Rogers drum line. [See the review of the new Rogers drums in the September '07 *MD*.]

Keeping those irons hot is the task given to Dave Jewell and Jim Haler, who are based at YCA's headquarters in Buena Park, California. Dave is marketing manager for Yamaha acoustic and electronic drums, as well as distribution manager for Paiste cymbals. Jim is product manager for Yamaha's lines—which often means serving as a one-man consumer hotline. "I'll get calls forwarded to me from guys who want certain parts for their ten-year-old hi-hat stands but don't know what they need," says Jim. "It's a virtual one-on-one training session with the consumer."

Jim and Dave are also responsible for the content of the Yamaha Drums Web site, along with planning budgets and marketing programs. It's a lot for two individuals to handle. Fortunately, as Dave puts it, "Jim and I are both drummers, and we're genuinely passionate about drums."

Serving The Artists

Two other key members of the YCA drum team—also drummers themselves—are international artist relations manager Joe Testa



YAMAHA ON DISPLAY Here's a look at Yamaha Drums' complete product line.

ABSOLUTE MAPLE SERIES

Absolute Maple kits are made of North American maple for warm, full sustain and outstanding projection. Drums are hand-crafted in a small factory in Japan, employing Yamaha's staggered diagonal-seamed, Air Seal System shells. Master painters meticulously apply one of over thirty finishes to each drum, after which the bearing edges are cut and the drums are assembled using sleek, single-screw Absolute lugs and aluminum die-cast hoops.

List price: \$6,650 for a five-piece kit with hardware.



ABSOLUTE MAPLE NOUVEAU SERIES

Absolute Maple Nouveau kits feature the same design and construction features as Absolute Maple kits. But they come fitted with Yamaha's innovative Nouveau quick-release lug and aluminum die-cast hoops to provide maximum resonance with rich overtones.

List price: \$6,650 for a five-piece kit with hardware.



ABSOLUTE BIRCH SERIES

Absolute Birch drums feature the low-end punch and warm deep fundamental of Hokkaido birch shells. The drums are hand-crafted as with other Absolute series, and they come fitted with single-screw Absolute lugs and aluminum die-cast hoops.

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ABSOLUTE BIRCH NOUVEAU

Absolute Birch Nouveau kits feature the same design and construction features as Absolute Birch kits, but come fitted with Nouveau quick-release lugs and aluminum die-cast hoops.

List price: \$6,650 for a five-piece kit with hardware.



MAPLE CUSTOM SERIES

Maple Custom drums have slightly thicker shells than Absolute Maple models, so they have more attack while still maintaining the warmth and body of North American maple. Low-mass single-screw lugs let the shell vibrate freely for long sustain and wide dynamic response.

List price: \$6,000 for a five-piece shell pack.

RECORDING CUSTOM SERIES

The low-end punch and naturally EQ-ed sound of Hokkaido birch shells make the Recording Customs a favorite choice of engineers. The combination of staggered-diagonal-seamed Air Seal System shells and high-tension lugs make these drums easy to tune for any musical situation.

List price: \$5,070 for a five-piece shell pack.



OAK CUSTOM SERIES

Oak Custom drums have a low fundamental pitch with a good blend of mid and high frequencies. They respond well at low dynamic levels, yet they have a loud, razor-sharp attack, making them versatile enough for any musical genre.

List price: \$4,080 for a five-piece kit with hardware.

TOUR CUSTOM SERIES

Tour Custom shells are constructed of 100% maple. Drums feature 60° bearing edges with a slightly rounded profile to enhance their low-end characteristics. Toms are mounted with Yamaha's YESS suspension system for added sustain. Kits are available in four high-gloss lacquer finishes as components, as shell packs, or as complete drumsets with 700 or 800 series hardware.

List price: \$2,149.99 for a five-piece kit with hardware.



STAGE CUSTOM NOUVEAU SERIES

Stage Custom Nouveau shells feature an outer ply of birch or oak and additional plies of Philippine mahogany and falkata. The drums have a warm, deep tone with moderate sustain. Stage Custom Nouveau lugs are crafted from a proprietary fiber-reinforced composite to make the kits light and resonant. Kits are available in four glosses and one matte finish.

List price: \$1,399 for a five-piece kit with hardware.



SIGNATURE SNARE DRUMS

Yamaha has collaborated with many of its artists to create snare drums that project each artist's distinctive musical voice. The drums vary widely in dimension, wood type, finish, and functional features.

List prices range from \$499 to \$1,379.

WOOD SNARE DRUMS

Yamaha wood snare drums are designed to offer a wide dynamic and tuning range, as well as sensitivity. Drums are available in 100% maple, oak, birch, beech, and a combination birch/mahogany/falkata shell for tone that range from bright and loud to warm and punchy.

List prices range from \$160 to \$1,220.



METAL SNARE DRUMS

Yamaha's steel snare drums have bright attack and long decay, while brass drums have a balanced attack, rich tone, and warmth. Aluminum drums offer bright attack, quick decay, and fat bottom end, while copper drums produce dark tones, a wide dynamic response, and punchy low end. Yamaha offers these drums in a wide selection of

depths and diameters to suit any style of playing.

List prices range from \$269 to \$699.

KABUTO SNARE DRUM

The name "Kabuto" comes from the helmet worn by Japanese Samurai warriors. The Kabuto snare's steel shell creates a bright, cutting tone, while the red finish adds a bit of warmth and body. The simple, reliable strainer works smoothly, and the eight-lug design means that there are fewer lugs to dampen the shell.

List price: \$319.



DRUMSET HARDWARE

Yamaha drumset hardware is made in the Yamaha motorcycle factory in Indonesia, where every piece is put through a thirty-seven-step manufacturing and quality-control process. This results in the same level of quality and versatility within the super-duty 900 series, road-ready 800 series, gig-ready 700 series, or lightweight 600 series.

List prices vary with series and item.

FOOT PEDALS

Yamaha recently redesigned several key features on its foot pedals for better performance. The hinges have tighter tolerances to eliminate side-to-side movement of the footboards. The baseplates are flattened to work on a wide variety of surfaces. The beater hubs have been reinforced and the holes re-shaped for a more secure grip on the beater shafts. The cams on the one-touch hoop clamps have also been re-shaped for a more secure grip on bass drum hoops.

List prices range from \$110 to \$699.



DTX ELECTRONIC DRUMSETS

Yamaha has combined forty years of acoustic drum-making with leading-edge technology to offer a series of DTX electronic drumsets for every level of application. Each electronic set comes with realistic samples of Yamaha's most popular acoustic drums, as well as a selection of electronic, special-effect, and percussion voices.

List prices range from \$1,059.00 to \$2,099.99.

SUBKICK

The SKRM-100 Subkick is a capture device that consists of a speaker that's shock-mounted into a 10" drumshell and reverse-wired to an XLR jack. The speaker works like a microphone diaphragm, picking up low frequencies from 50 to 200 Hz. The included stand makes the Subkick portable and versatile.

List price: \$630.



CLICKSTATION

The CLST-100 Clickstation is a multi-function metronome designed to help drummers of every level sharpen their skills. It can store eighty-six patterns, and twenty songs can be arranged in chains for consecutive playback. Additional features include a silent vibrating pad that pulses the tempo, multiple subdivisions, a MIDI In jack, a pad input to start and stop the metronome, and a backlit LCD control panel.

List price: \$189.

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The Most Recorded Kit Of All Time?

When Yamaha introduced the Recording Custom series in 1979, they were the first drums with 100%-birch shells. Their controlled response and tonal depth found immediate favor with dozens of studio drummers, including Steve Gadd. The extensive use of Recording Custom drums on sessions over the past three decades supports Yamaha's claim that the Recording Custom is the most recorded drumkit ever.



and drum artist relations specialist Jordan Barth. They operate from the Yamaha Artist Services Hollywood (YASH) center, which was recently opened in the heart of Hollywood's studio district. The facility includes a lounge, a drum customizing shop, a showroom that features virtually every drum and hardware item in the Yamaha catalog, and a recording studio.

Joe and Jordan express their passion for drumming by supporting Yamaha's extensive roster of endorsers. At the YASH facility, they stock and maintain a small inventory of backline gear for artists to use at venues in the LA area. And it's here that they schedule and plan drum clinics and other Yamaha-sponsored events across the country.

Says Joe Testa, "The showroom is designed to let artists A/B all of Yamaha's drumkits. There's also an auxiliary space containing over fifty snare drums. Artists will come in and 'cherry pick' from this selection to take on studio sessions, so it's sort of a 'revolving collection.'"

Jordan Barth adds, "Our recording studio is set up adjacent to the showroom, so that if an artist wants to hear how the different

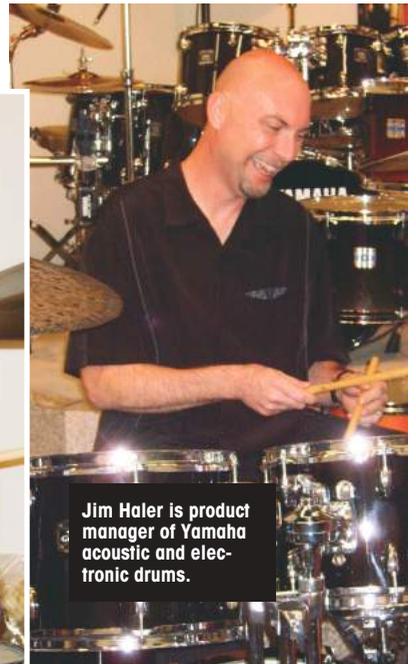
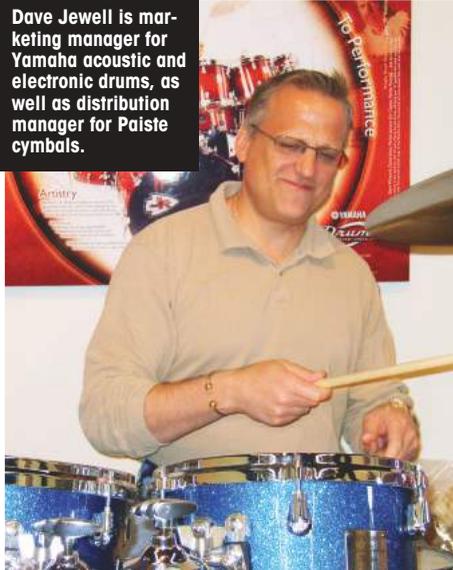
drumkits sound once they go through a microphone, we can record them and then listen back under pretty close to professional conditions. We'll also be using the studio to record drum sounds that we can put up on our Web site for consumers to hear."

The YASH facility will also be a site for prototype development and custom jobs done in association with Yamaha drum artists. Some of the resulting concepts might stay with those artists, but others will likely find their way back to Yamaha's drum factory in Japan, to be incorporated into production drums of the future.

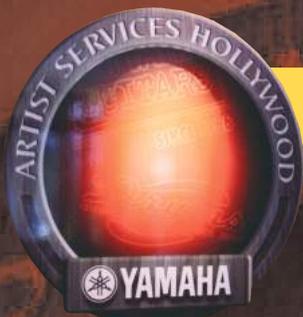
"Ever since we opened," says Jordan Barth, "people have been constantly stopping by. Artists come in every day wanting to go into the showroom and play, or to test some snare drums. And considering how extensive our lines are, they'll often see something and say, 'I didn't know you guys made this.' They get really excited, like kids in a toy store."

"The bottom line," Joe Testa concludes,

Dave Jewell is marketing manager for Yamaha acoustic and electronic drums, as well as distribution manager for Paiste cymbals.



Jim Haler is product manager of Yamaha acoustic and electronic drums.



A Visit To YASH

Drum artist relations specialist Jordan Barth (left) and international artist relations manager Joe Testa support Yamaha's drum stars from the company's new Yamaha Artist Service Hollywood (YASH) facility.



Each of Yamaha's four different wood drumkits is available for testing.

Pick a snare...any snare....



The YASH facility's recording studio lets artists hear how gear will sound on a track.

"is that YASH is a comfortable place with lots of gear and no pressure—a home away from home for Yamaha artists. We're here for them...and because of them."

Serving The Customers

Dave Jewell and Jim Haler were drum salesmen in music stores for many years, so they know that one key to selling drums is making sure that potential customers can play them. Says Dave, "We got discouraged when consumers would call us up and say, 'I can't find a store that has your beech, birch, maple,

and oak kits in stock to compare them.' So for the past few years, we've been offering incentives to shops that carry all of our high-end lines. These are our Absolute Drum Shops. They're proudly listed on our yamahadrums.com site, along with their contact info and a link to map each one of them. This makes them easy for our customers to find."

Yamaha also has a special program, called FasTrack, that lets drummers create their own custom kits. Says Jim Haler, "We're talking about 100% handcrafted drums, custom-made in Japan to the customer's specs for

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-H.E.A.R. Founding Donor,
Musician Pete Townshend
Rolling Stone Magazine
July, 1989.

Photo by Chauky Davis

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YAMAHA

shell type, bearing edges, hardware, and finish. And they're shipped to the dealer in eight to twelve weeks."

The DTXperience

Besides his duties pertaining to Yamaha's acoustic drums, Jim spends considerable time moderating the DTXperience.com Web site, which is totally dedicated to the company's electronic percussion line. In addition to seeing product descriptions and specs, Web browsers can download the owner's manual for any of Yamaha's current electronic kits. Of course, even the best manuals can be a little confusing. So the site also offers tutorials written in "regular-guy" language by Jim.

"When average drummers buy an electronic kit," says Jim, "they often get intimidated. So they find two kits that they like in the sound module, and that's all they play. By creating the DTXperience.com site, we're getting people to really explore what electronic drums can do. I've also been able to help people with

parts issues on the site. I have a 'handle' on the site's private message feature, and everybody online knows I work for Yamaha. I've been able to get customers taken care of worldwide just through moderating the site."

Product Development And The Future

Yamaha celebrated their fortieth birthday in 2007 by creating unique anniversary drumkits and a special snare drum. But these were artistic variations on existing themes, rather than genuinely new innovations.

"We haven't had any new product in some time," Dave Jewell admits. "Every year, we present product plans to our corporate headquarters, telling them what we think will be best for our customers. By the end of 2007 we'll be introducing some new Yamaha hardware that's going to be fantastic, and there's a new kit in the works for the 2008 NAMM show that will conform to the specs that we wanted. So we're very optimistic and excited about the future of Yamaha Drums."

Birthday Beauties

To commemorate their forty years of drum production, Yamaha turned to Japanese tradition for artistic inspiration. The result is three limited-edition drumkits and a special snare drum.

The 40th Anniversary Washi set (seen on page 158) is a Recording Custom kit wrapped with washi paper (a type of Japanese paper used in traditional Japanese arts). Custom artwork features scenes from the Genpei War, which was a pivotal point in Japanese history. As a basis for the washi wrap, Yamaha used scenes depicted in a hand-painted paneled screen that's displayed in the Takamatsu Historical Museum in Japan. In the artwork and on the drumset, gilded golden clouds provide a striking contrast to dark blue sea water, while the vivid colors on the armor of the soldiers and horses draw the viewers into each battle scene.

Additional 40th Anniversary birch kits honor The Temple Of The Golden Pavilion and The Temple Of The Silver Pavilion, located in Kyoto, Japan. The Golden Temple kit comes with chrome hardware; the Silver Temple kit comes with anodized black hardware.

The Phoenix snare drum comes hand-engraved with part of the same Phoenix logo that in the late 1800s adorned the reed organs made by Nippon Gakki, the predecessor to Yamaha Corporation. The 6 1/2x13 drum's brass shell features aluminum die-cast hoops and one-piece lugs. The engraving is applied by hand to the shell's black lacquered finish.

Clockwise from top right: The Temple Of The Golden Pavilion drumset, the Phoenix snare drum, and the Temple Of The Silver Pavilion drumset



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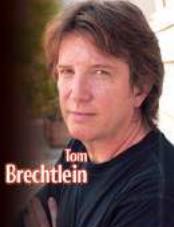


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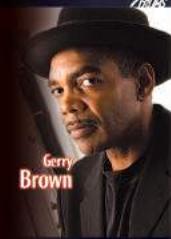
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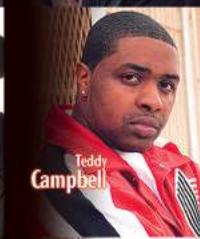
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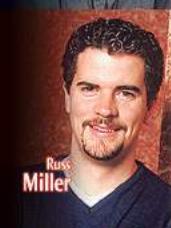
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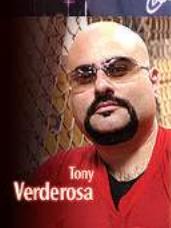
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COLLEGE DRUMMING

FROM FINDING SCHOOLS TO PASSING THE AUDITION

by David Glover

What do Kenny Aronoff, Thomas Lang, Bill Stewart, Antonio Sanchez, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Keith Carlock, and Vinnie Colaiuta all have in common? Besides being some of the most amazing and in-demand drummers on earth, they all attended college to better themselves musically.

The decisions that every student is faced with in regard to higher education can be daunting. If drumset is your primary instrument, there are some added challenges and questions that need to be asked. I’ve been on both sides of this issue, first as a music student armed with little more than a passion for drumming, and now as a college percussion professor helping students to ask the right questions—and, hopefully, to make better-informed decisions—about college. The purpose of this article is not to give drumset students the answers to their questions, but rather to point out the right questions to ask.

Any student who’s seriously considering music as a career should read the following statement, and do some serious soul-searching based on it before reading any further: If you can see yourself doing *anything* other than music for a living, then go do *that*.

While the above statement might sound harsh, the reality is that being a music major is one of the most physically and mentally demanding degrees at any college or university. It is crucial that you’re passionate about music, and that being a musician makes you happy even on your worst days in the practice room or on the lamest gig of all time.

Now that that’s out of the way, let’s start with the questions that every student should ask. We’ll follow that up with questions that are more specific to drummers. Finally, we’ll get into preparing you for your college drumset audition.

What Schools Can I Afford?

College isn’t cheap now, and it’s not going to get any cheaper. Still, there are plenty of ways to finance an education, including scholarships, loans, grants, flipping burgers, gigging, and a multitude of other options.

To begin with, try to get as many scholarships, grants, and loans as possible. Make sure you fill out the US government’s

Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) regardless of how much money you or your parents make annually. You never know what funds might be out there waiting for you...and hey, it’s free.

It’s important to get whatever financial aid you can, because working one’s way through college is extremely tough on a music major. Every minute spent working could be time spent in the practice room. If you must work while at college, try to do it in a way that keeps you musically oriented. Try teaching in a small private studio, helping out with the drumline at a local high school, or gigging around town with anyone who’ll have you.

Once you determine how much you can afford for a four- or five-year degree, you should begin narrowing down your school choices by cost. Every school has a total cost estimate (available through the admissions office or online) that should list all expenses, including tuition, room & board, meals, books, parking, and other fees.

JUST BECAUSE YOU SPENT ALL OF YOUR TIME IN HIGH SCHOOL PERFECTING YOUR PARADIDDLE INSTEAD OF MEMORIZING MATH FORMULAS DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL BE KEPT OUT OF SCHOOLS WITH HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

What Type Of School Should I Attend?

Schools can be broken down into two broad categories: public (state) and private. Public schools are usually a lot cheaper than private schools because they receive much of their operating costs from federal and state taxes. Private schools exist mainly on tuition dollars, along with private and corporate donations.

However, several factors can alter these cost differences. For example, tuition at a state school can rise astronomically if you're coming from another state. So if you're looking at state schools, look in your home state first. Also, check to see if a school that interests you in a neighboring state offers an in-state tuition waiver for students from your state.

Though private schools are generally more expensive than state schools, they often have more scholarship money to offer per student than state schools do, making them quite competitive. Additionally, many private schools have other incentives that cannot be offered at public institutions, such as religious affiliation, technical and trade degree offerings, music conservatories, broader choices in applied teachers, and looser curriculum guidelines. To some students these incentives might be worth the added cost of attending a private school.

Your high school grades (GPA or QPA) and test scores (SAT and ACT) will play a major role in determining which schools are available to you. The higher these scores, the more opportunities you'll have—not only regarding what schools you can apply for, but also how much financial assistance you might be eligible for.

On the other hand, just because you spent all of your time in high school perfecting your paradiddle instead of memorizing the formula for finding the hypotenuse of a triangle, that doesn't mean you'll be kept out of schools with high academic standards. If you play well enough, most music programs will pull whatever strings they can to get you into their institution, including grade and test score forgiveness. So keep pounding out your pata-fla-flas, and study hard for those tests!

How Far From Home Am I Willing To Go?

For many prospective college students, school location is a major decision. Balancing many parents' desire to keep "their babies" close to home against those babies' desire to get as far away from home as possible can be very difficult and highly emotional. However, as a musician, it's important to at least consider schools in a city or state in which you see yourself working after you graduate. If your desire is to be the next great touring or recording drummer, then you might consider schools in or around New York City, Los Angeles, or Nashville. If you see yourself as a gigging drummer on a busy local music scene, then get yourself to a city big enough to support your musical goals and put food on the table. If you want to be a music teacher, research the areas where music education is thriving, and find colleges in those locales. If your desire is to be

rich...well, you should probably find another profession.

The main reason for relocating to these areas is simply to allow yourself the time to get to know the musicians, the scene, the area's musical needs, and how you fit into that culture, all while enjoying the minimal pressure and relative safety of the college environment. Also keep in mind that if you don't go to college for your undergraduate degree in or near the career city of your choice, there is always graduate school.

As a musician, often the easiest way to narrow your choice of where to go is to ask yourself some questions about what is important to you once you get to college. Which leads us to...

What Should Be My Major?

Most prospective college students don't ponder this question enough. In years past, students had two choices: performer or teacher. Today, in addition to those options, undergraduates can pursue music degrees ranging from technology, business, and therapy to composition, theory, history, or sound engineering.

For drummers, the main concern with all of those major subjects is that they take time away from playing the drums while you're in your prime developmental years as a musician. That's fine if you want to play drums on the side while you pursue a musical career in another area. But if you're passionate about being a drummer for a living, check the course listings for the degrees you're interested in and find out how many contact hours you'll have during the average school day. These contact hours would be all of your ensembles, private instruction, and however many hours are left after your general course work for practice time. What you'll probably find is that there's little room for practice built into any degree program except performance.

At about this point in any discussion of majoring in performance, someone will utter some variation of this phrase: "No one will ever ask to see your degree before they give you a gig." While there is some truth to that, the fact is that the best musicians—and, usually, the ones that are gigging the most—spent more time honing their skills behind their instrument than everyone else did. If you desire to be one of these people, then pursue a degree that will allow you the most time to practice and play your instrument. This is not to say that every drummer should become a music performance major, just that it's an option that deserves consideration. (Fortunately, many music-education degree programs were designed by people wise enough to know that better musicians also make better music teachers.)

To get the "real scoop" on the time requirements of a major program, go to open houses at the institutions you're interested in. Seek out current students and find out what their daily schedule is like. Ask them how they decided on their major. Current students are an invaluable source of information to help you answer many of the questions in this article. By talking with them, and by doing a

YOU MIGHT BE THE ONLY DRUMSET PLAYER AT YOUR SCHOOL, OR YOU MIGHT BE ONE OF A HUNDRED. THIS CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE.

little additional research, you should be able to find the right degree fit for your personal goals.

What Am I looking For In A Percussion Instructor?

One of the most important series of questions every undergraduate must ask concerns your percussion instructor(s). Every undergraduate percussionist should ask the following questions from every potential percussion/drumset instructor at the schools they are interested in.

1. Will I be studying with you at every lesson, with several different instructors, with a graduate student, or with some combination of these?

If you're paying to study with the main percussion instructor at your school of choice, you might reasonably expect to actually study with that person. However, many students are surprised to find out—often too late—that they're going to be studying with a graduate assistant for some or all of their lessons as an undergraduate. Don't get me wrong, graduate assistants can often teach just as well as the major professor. In addition, some schools are large enough to have several full-time percussion instructors on staff, so you might study keyboard percussion with

one professor, drumset with another, and orchestral percussion with yet another. Just make sure you know how many lessons you're going to receive from each professor, and whether that arrangement meets your goals as a percussionist. For example, if you want to be a jazz drummer, spending the bulk of your lessons working on four-mallet marimba solos with the mallet keyboard professor might not be the best use of your time.

2. How often will we have lessons, and how long will they be?

The frequency and length of lessons can vary greatly depending on what school and major you've chosen. At some universities, every student gets a one-hour lesson once a week, regardless of major. At others, performance majors will get longer lessons (and sometimes more of them) than other majors will. Make sure you know what you're paying for before you get there.

3. What are you going to prepare me to do?

This has as much to do with you as with your professor. The more you know about your career and life goals, the better a good professor can help you attain those goals. This question is to check whether or not the instructor is prepared to get someone with your goals from point "A" to point "B."

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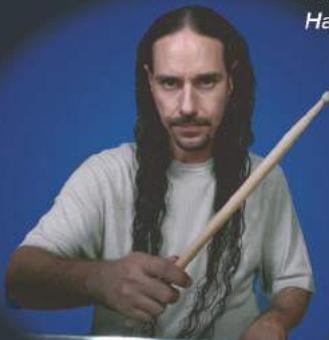


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4. How are you going to help me achieve my goals?

This question can gain you insight into what your lessons will be like during your time at that university. And the easiest and most effective way to answer this question is to take a lesson or two with the instructor before you commit to the university for four or more years. If your school is local, this shouldn't be a problem. But even if it might involve a brief trip, the cost will likely be offset by what you'll learn about the professor's teaching style, methods, and ability to motivate you. Perhaps most importantly, you'll get an idea of whether or not you can get along with this person for four or more years. This might save you thousands of dollars and endless misery.

Final Questions

There are a couple of other important questions to deal with before you start filling out applications. The first is: How much competition can you handle while at college? You might be the only drumset player at your chosen school, or you might be just one of a hundred. This can make a huge difference during your college years. How much you learn, how many ensembles you get to play in, the quality of those ensembles, how much you're pushed to practice, the availability of practice rooms, and how much you can learn from your peers are all greatly affected by this situation. Make sure to find out how many drummers will be attending the school during your freshman year so you can better gauge your decision.

Remaining questions include: What are the facilities like at your prospective schools? How many practice rooms are there? What's the policy for the use of the practice rooms, in terms of time limits, sign-up sheets, and room sharing? How late you can practice at night? Is there a place to set up and store your personal equipment? Answers to these questions will help you get a better idea of what

your practice routine might be like.

Once again, it's a good idea to ask a current student some of these questions. A school might boast of how many practice rooms they have, but a student can tell you how many of those rooms have drumkits or other percussion instruments set up and available, and how hard it is to schedule a room at a given time.

The Application Process

Once all of your questions have been answered, it's time to start submitting applications. This can be a time-consuming and pricey process, so it's important to have your choices narrowed down beforehand. Still, I encourage students to fill out at least three applications, even if they think they have a good idea of where they want to go. You might be denied acceptance at your first-choice school, your financial circumstances might change, or you might decide that you want to stay closer to home. So give yourself options.

Send in your applications and register for auditions as soon as you're eligible to do so. This will enable you to get a timeline for your preparation.

How Should I Prepare For Auditions?

Most college and university music departments have a page on their Web sites devoted to audition information. Look for dates and times, exact locations, any tests or proficiency exams you might need to take on the audition date (theory, history, sight-singing, ear training, and piano tests are common), and what paperwork you might need to fill out.

While the school's Web site will be a great place to start, for the drum/percussion audition itself you should contact the head of each



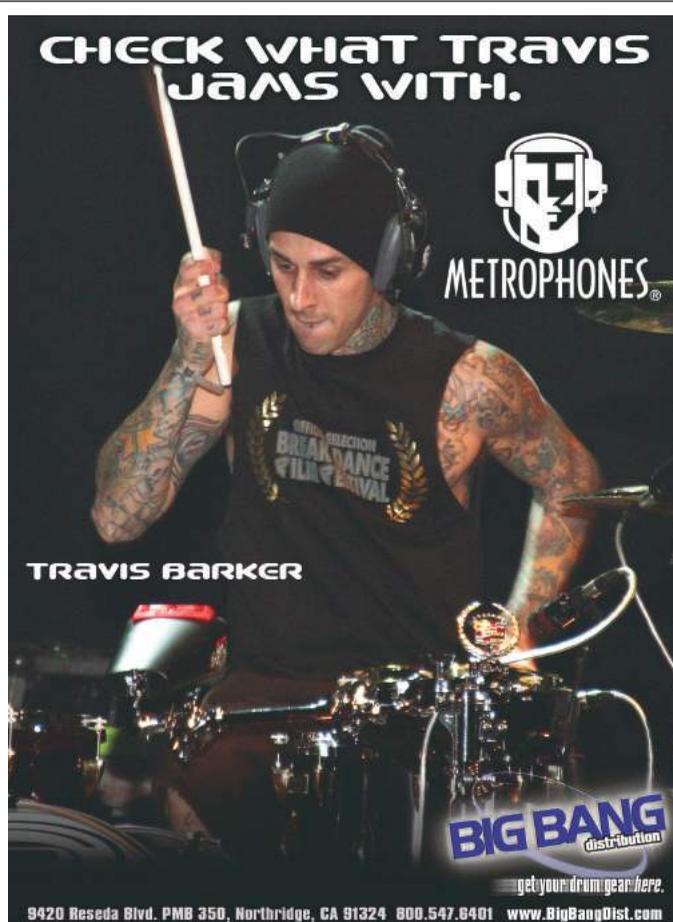
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COLLEGE DRUMMING

percussion department by phone or email. Even better would be to find out where they're performing and try to talk to them face-to-face before or after a gig. Some percussion departments will have their specific audition requirements on a separate Web page, but don't be afraid to contact each instructor personally to clarify any questions you might have. This is a great way to find out how interested they are in you as a student, as well as how good they are at answering their email and phone messages.

Most percussion auditions require snare drum playing (a concert and/or rudimental etude), one or two mallet keyboard solos (two-mallet and/or four-mallet literature), a timpani solo, and sight-reading on any or all of the above instruments. Hand drumming, drumset, rudiments, and orchestral excerpts will be required for some schools, but not all. This is why it's crucial that you research the schools to which you are applying. Find out what they want to hear, and prepare music that fits those requests.

If you want drumset to be your primary instrument in college, you need to find schools that will allow you to pursue it as a major. They can be difficult to find, and even those that do will generally offer drumset as an option only for a jazz degree. There are some significant exceptions, however, which is all the more reason to do your research carefully before you send your applications.

Every school is a little different when it comes to drumset audition requirements. Most audition panels will want to hear you play time in different styles, such as swing, funk/rock, Afro-Cuban styles like mambo and cha-cha, and Brazilian grooves like bossa nova and samba. Other requests might include brush playing, soloing, playing with a rhythm section, playing along with pre-recorded etudes or charts, sight-reading big band charts, or playing in odd times. Most audition panels will be listening for you to play authentically and competently in each of the above styles, so focus on this during your practice. Keep in mind that audition panels are often made up largely of non-drummers, so they'll be listening for solid time, dynamic sensitivity, and overall musicality, not how effortlessly you pulled off that over-the-bar quintuplet fill.

Lastly, seek the advice of a local drummer or percussionist who's familiar with the college audition process. Ask him or her to help you prepare the right music for your auditions, and perhaps to recommend some other pro-

fessionals to help tutor you on piano, theory, or ear training. And remember: Don't be afraid to ask questions.

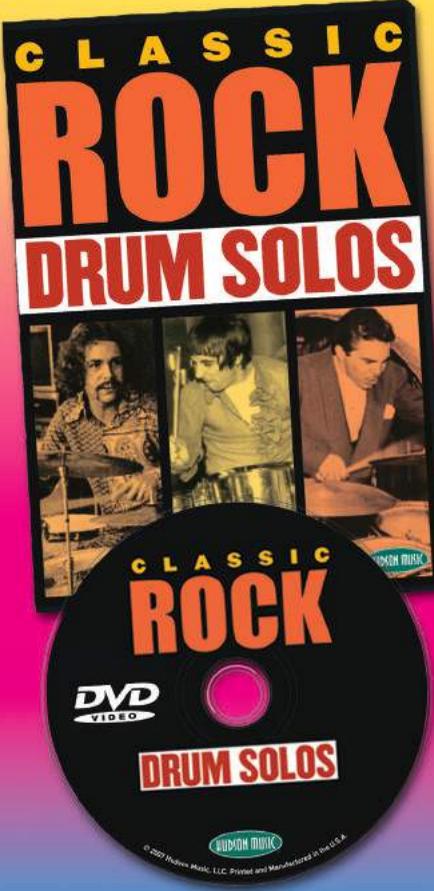
Good luck with this very important step in your musical life.



Dr. David Glover is the percussion professor at Slippery Rock University Of Pennsylvania. He holds degrees from The University Of North Florida (BAE), The Florida State University (MME and MM), and The University Of Texas At Austin (DMA). In addition to teaching at SRU, Dr. Glover performs as a drummer and percussionist in Pittsburgh and throughout the region. Questions can be directed to david.glover@sru.edu.



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- SHADOW WILSON

Up & Coming Drummers

Building Buzz The Old-Fashioned Way

DAVID SEGEDY

After graduating from high school in 2006, David Segedy immediately hit the road with quirky art-pop trio Arrah & The Ferns in support of their Standard Recordings release *Evan Is A Vegan*. At the same time, David also recorded drum tracks with fellow Indiana alternative folk-rockers This Story, and he played percussion with experimental band Everything, Now!



Since that whirlwind first year, which included an opening slot for alternative prog giants Deerhoof, Segedy has continued to tour on his hybrid percussion/drumset with Arrah & The Ferns. He's also made two solo drum recordings, *Chillin' With The Wiz* and *On The Mountaintop With Nothing To Shout*. And when he's not recording or touring, David teaches drums at the Cornerstone Center For The Arts in downtown Muncie, Indiana.

Current gig: Arrah & The Ferns

Location: Bloomington, Indiana

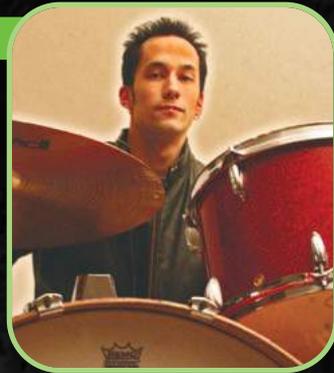
Tools: Pearl drums and hardware, Zildjian cymbals, Remo and LP percussion, Vater sticks, and Vic Firth brushes

Influences: Art Blakey, Dave Hardman, Zach Hill, Erick Sherman, Dan Schepper

More info: www.myspace.com/whoabroawesome, www.myspace.com/arahandtheferns

E-ROCK

E-rock's interest in drumming began at age three. Although he's mainly self-taught, this energetic and creative drummer drew a lot of inspiration from rock heavyweights like Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, and KISS, as well as early Motown records. He later fine-tuned his skills by studying other styles, including R&B, jazz, hip-hop, and drum 'n' bass.



Throughout his young career, E-rock has played in many bands, and he has done numerous sessions in the US and Europe. Some of the notable artists he's worked with are Adam Hawkins, Peter Mew, G.E. Smith, T. Bone Wolk, Janek Gwizdala, Rob Bailey, Steve Holly, John Eaton, Jam Master Jay, Randy Allen, Robt Ptak, JIVEjones, and The Trans-Siberian Orchestra.

Currently, E-rock's explosive drumming can be heard with Hello Eden, a New Jersey rock band whose fourth self-produced album, *Constant Stranger*, is continuing to build buzz in the New York metropolitan area.

Current gig: Hello Eden

Location: New Jersey

Tools: Modern Drumshop custom drums, Pearl hardware, Vater sticks, Remo heads, Paiste cymbals, and whatever isn't broken.

More info: www.myspace.com/helloedeneric

JERRY PENTECOST

Affectionately labeled as "the black Keith Moon" by his peers, twenty-two-year-old Jerry Pentecost's impassioned drumming style—which fuses Moonie's reckless abandon with the explosiveness and creativity of Jon Theodore and the stick-twirling acrobatics of John Blackwell—has been a major force behind the growing success of edgy Nashville rock trio Sound And Shape. In 2006, Jerry performed over 220 shows in support of his band's debut album, *Where Machines End Their Lives*. The momentum continued in '07, as Sound And Shape served up their dynamic brand of guitar-driven art rock to audiences across the nation. Their second record, *The Love Electric*, is scheduled for release later this year.



When he's not on the road with Sound And Shape, Pentecost stays active on the local and regional scene doing sessions and gigs whenever he can.

Current gig: Sound And Shape

Location: Hendersonville, Tennessee

Tools: Tama Rockstar kit, Zildjian cymbals, Aquarian heads, Vic Firth 5B sticks

Influences: Steve Smith, John Blackwell Jr., Chad Smith, Jon Theodore

More info: www.myspace.com/soundandshape1

BILL JARRY

Thirty-year-old Bill Jarry has been drumming with Boston-based power-rock band 4" Stud for the past three years. Their debut self-titled CD, which was released in 2006, helped to secure the band substantial Internet and local radio airplay throughout '07. Jarry and company have also continued to bring their energetic live show to wider audiences throughout the northeast region.



Jarry began drumming seventeen years ago, after immersing himself in the classic rock sounds of Led Zeppelin and Rush. He also credits two Boston drumming heroes, Dave DiCenso and Keith Harris, as major inspirations. "I remember seeing Dave for the first time with Two Ton Shoe and being blown away by his amazing abilities," says Jarry. "I also have fond memories of studying with Keith Harris. These amazing drummers, as well as masters like Buddy Rich, Carter Beauford, and Stewart Copeland, are sources of continual inspiration."

Current gig: 4" Stud

Location: Boston, Massachusetts

Tools: C&C Custom drums, Zildjian cymbals, Remo heads, Pearl hardware, Vic Firth sticks

Influences: Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Neil Peart, Dave Weckl, Carter Beauford, Dave DiCenso, Stewart Copeland, Keith Harris

More info: www.4inchstud.com

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(steve kimock band)

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Dirk Verbeuren
(soilwork)

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Jason Bittner
(shadows fall)

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Brann Dailor
(mastodon)

*qualifying models:
IS52C4, IS52NFC4, IS50C4

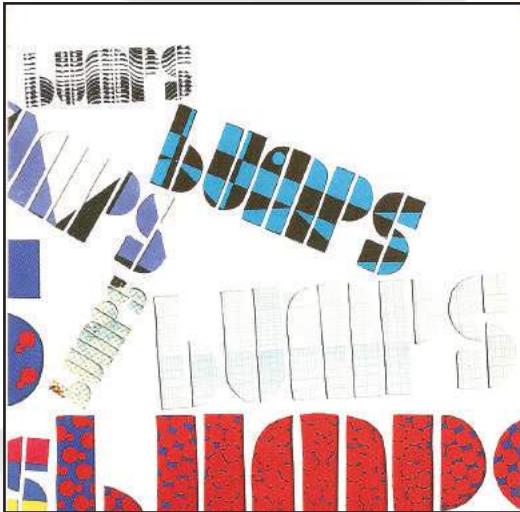
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TAMA

RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale

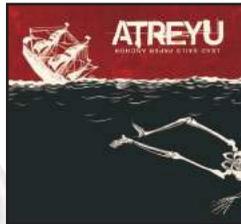
- ★★★★★ Classic
- ★★★★☆ Excellent
- ★★★☆☆ Good
- ★★☆☆☆ Fair
- ★☆☆☆☆ Poor



BUMPS STONES THROW

★★★★★

Post-rock provocateurs **JOHN MCENTIRE**, **JOHN HERNDON**, and **DAN BITNEY** (of Tortoise fame) get their ya-yas out on this mad disc of rattling live and affected drum loops and percussion. Like the sound of an out-of-control Akai MPC re-imagined by flesh & blood drummers, BUMPS blasts breakbeats to woody smithereens. Is it live, treated, or programmed? It's all that and more. The twenty-three tracks on *Stones Throw* run the gamut from 808 Afro drills ("Craven") and Stubblefield funk ("Deal Tree") to flowing dub filigrees ("As Bond Did") and rumbling Gadd-like sambas ("Nashira"). Throughout, the drums sound trashed and distorted, but the underlying rhythmic message is entirely human. **Ken Micallef**



ATREYU LEAD SAILS PAPER ANCHOR

★★★★★

After three albums on the indie circuit, the crushing major-label debut from Orange County's Atreyu bursts open with the hearty hardcore slammer "Doomsday." With drummer **BRANDON SALLER**'s practical yet punishing approach, *Lead Sails Paper Anchor* benefits from playing that's smart and sincere. The Phil Rudd-esque no-nonsense verses of "Honor" are pristine, keeping the song clutter-free. The heavily swingin' "Falling Down" and tight kicking of "Lose It" are additional pluses, aided and abetted by John Feldmann's stellar production. Saller's able to play it strong yet safe on this latest installment, without diluting any of the album's inherent excitement. (Hollywood) **Waleed Rashidi**



CHARLIE HUNTER TRIO MISTICO

★★★★★

The wonder of Charlie Hunter's technique—he plays a bass line and a guitar part simultaneously on a single instrument—can get lost on disc, when his jaw-dropping picking can't be seen. Not this time. *Mistico* is a blast of a swamp-funk hootenanny, regardless of whether the bassist and guitarist happen to be the same person. Much credit belongs to drummer **SIMON LOTT**, who plays with a deep, loose Louisiana groove that greases up Hunter's gears just right. The leader hands Lott the baton for occasional short solos that are sometimes awash in compression and always full of super-tasty wide-open licks. (Fantasy) **Michael Parillo**

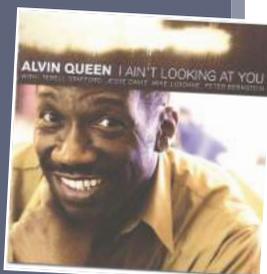
TAKING THE REINS

ALVIN QUEEN

I AIN'T LOOKING AT YOU

Taking a break from his chair with Oscar Peterson, drummer **ALVIN QUEEN** leads a quintet of pure swinging pleasure. Mixing hard bop and soul-jazz, Queen delivers an aggressive, gritty swing and a fat sound anchored with precision. Check out that shuffle; he's got a deeper pocket than Donald Trump.

(Enja/Justin Time) **Jeff Potter**



LARRY FINN LET THE BOYS PLAY

Drummer/composer Finn lays down the funk with conviction and a rock-solid groove. His retro-funk material had my feet tapping and head bopping right outta the gate. Á la Tower Of Power, Finn's Garibaldi-esque chops are impressive and in the pocket.

(www.larryfinn.com) **Mike Haid**

MY LATEST OBSESSION

LETA AND LONDONBOY OF WE ARE STANDARD



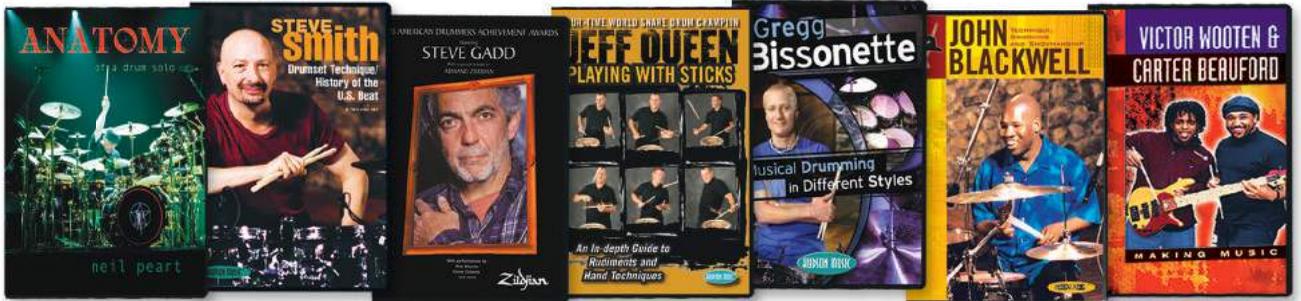
Leta: I started to listen to music while I was still inside my mother's womb—her playing piano, or listening to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Years ago, I began to decide what I liked: Velvet Underground, David Bowie, Kinks, Hendrix. In my first band, El Inquilino Comunista, we started to play covers by The Pixies, Sonic Youth (we were the opening band for them in 1995), or my friends in the band Yo La Tengo. The bands that I am listening to today are !!!, Primal Scream, How I Became The Bomb, and all the bands that we are playing with today.

LondonBoy: I have listened to all kinds of music in my life, but in the beginning it was basically a lot of rubbish on my family's vacations. Then I began to listen to Nirvana, Spanish bands who played garage music, La Movida Madrileña and his punk-tech-no-pop, and on the same day in two separate years, I discovered two really important bands: Death In Vegas and Liars. Those two groups changed my view of music. Now I'm listening to what my friends recommend (Justice, Digitalism, !!!'s great last album), and I'm re-listening to bands like Jane's Addiction, Love, and Kool & The Gang. My favorite bands are her majesty Velvet Underground, The Beatles, Primal Scream, Kraftwerk, Can, and Neu! I know these are very different bands but I don't mind. It's only music, it's only energy, and We Are Standard is this—energy.



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OTEP THE ASCENSION

★★★★★

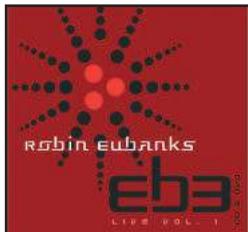
They say there's nothing like making a great first impression, and Otep's third album, *The Ascension*, makes good on that. Early in the disc, drummer **BRIAN WOLFF** delivers with cuts like "Martyrs," where he's found spraying 16ths with hands and feet, and "Confrontation," in which he aptly attacks listeners with a driving, rock bruising. A moderate misstep arrives in a very brave but ultimately battered metallic cover of Nirvana's "Breed." Fortunately Otep recovers nicely with "Eat The Children," and even wedges in a very drum-intensive and impressive "Home Grown." (Capitol) **Waleed Rashidi**



THE CLAUDIA QUINTET FOR

★★★★★

Drummer/composer **JOHN HOLLENBECK** is a plucky original who makes music both mischievous and profound. With an unorthodox ensemble of drums, accordion, clarinet, vibes, and bass, the leader weds jazz, funk, and the repeated motifs of contemporary classical (à la Steve Reich). Prompting a lucid, crystalline sound, Hollenbeck's writing shows a brilliance for startling sonorities. And his quirky, compelling odd-meter drum patterns are simultaneously chamber motifs and great grooves. He's a rising star, due equally to his compositions and his drumming. Pay attention: The quintet's sly overlapping between improv and composition creates a delightful cat & mouse game. (Cuneiform) **Jeff Potter**

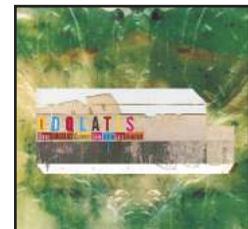


ROBIN EUBANKS LIVE VOL. 1

★★★★★

Robin Eubanks has been doing unusually fine things with the trombone for many years, and his nimble, condensed EB3 band, as featured on his new CD, *Live Vol. 1*, stretches the limits of what three musicians can do. Besides playing trombone, Eubanks adds live looping on trombone and percussion pads. Drummer **KENWOOD DENNARD**, a formidable performer on kit alone, is also playing left-hand keyboard bass on many of the songs, taking the concept of independence to new levels. That's right, walking bass with his left hand while keeping rhythmic track of M-Base-ish tunes in 6/8 with his right hand and feet. The times he picks up two sticks are also rewarding, like his soaring drum solo intro to "Pentacourse." (RKM Music)

Robin Tolleson



DAVE DOUGLAS QUINTET LIVE AT THE JAZZ STANDARD

★★★★★

CLARENCE PENN has been expanding and developing his drumming with The Dave Douglas Quintet for some time now. Douglas's latest CD is culled from the week's worth of recordings he made available on his Web site some months back. Each piece has its own mood and texture, something Penn helps foster with his admirable fluidity. Yet what's most compelling is how Penn, bassist **James Genus**, and Fender Rhodes player **Uri Caine** listen and work together through displaced post-funk and Douglas's sense of swing. Check out "War Room" for an exemplary performance from this killer jazz group. (GreenLeaf)

Martin Patmos



VARIOUS ARTISTS VEE-JAY: THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

★★★★★

Other classic American labels might have a sexier image and a more recognizable "sound"—Motown and Stax come to mind—but few record companies can compete with the sheer diversity, popularity, and influence of Vee-Jay's output. Boasting top-notch hits in the styles of doo-

wop, blues, jazz, Gospel, early rock 'n' roll, and nearly every other sub-genre of American roots music, this four-disc collection, by definition, is a wellspring of important drumming styles. The examples are too numerous to list here, and many of the drummers' names are sadly lost to history. But one listen to the thumping toms on "I Wish You Would" by Billy Boy Arnold ought to convince any drummer that a few months spent saving pennies for this collection would be time well spent.

(Shout Factory) **Adam Budofsky**

EXTREMIE BEATS



by Michael Parillo

BEHEMOTH, THE RED CHORD, CTHONIC

The Apostasy from Behemoth, Poland's dark lords of metal, plays like a full-color travel brochure for hell. It actually makes the netherworld—in this case an orgy of sub-guttural rasps, feel-the-evil guitars, and breakneck double bass—seem like a pretty fun place. Drummer **INFERNO**'s power and pinpoint control never flag, but he tends to torture cymbals in short bursts, presumably because his prolonged wailing would cause them to melt. (Century Media)

The Red Chord hails from Boston, but the band also knows from Hades; *Prey For Eyes* is only ever so slightly less brutal than *The Apostasy*, and the vocals prowl the same throat-ripping low-end domain. **BRAD FICKEISEN** explodes in fiery frenzies, chopping up the time into smaller and smaller units until you expect the drums to simply hummm. (Metal Blade)

On *Seediq Bale* from Taiwan's Cthonic (which means "relating to the underworld"), keyboards mix with guitars, set against—you guessed it—raspy dystopian vocals. Only this time it's a high-pitched rasp. Synth tones and inorganic-sounding basses and toms make for a somewhat claustrophobic atmosphere, but a solid sense of metal-epic songwriting keeps fists pumping. **DANI** has a flair for the dramatic and flits handily between 4/4 and triplet time, never missing the chance to blaze a huge roll. (Down Port)

ON THE BEATEN PATH

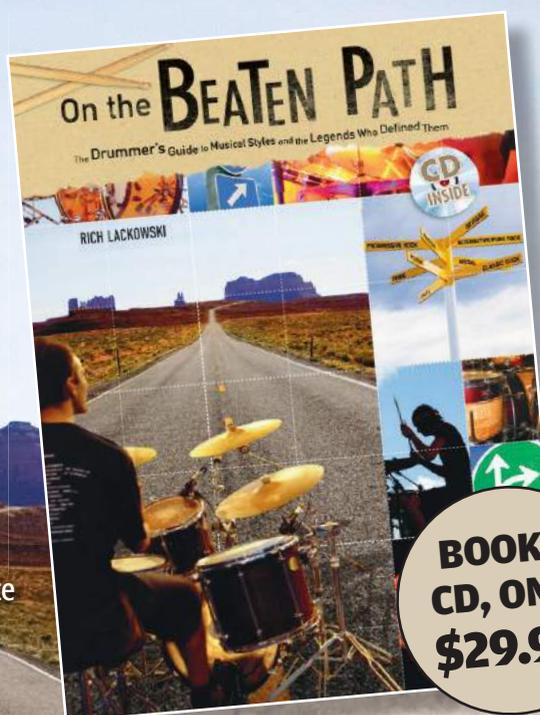
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Billy Cobham	Max Roach
Tré Cool	Chad Smith
Stewart Copeland	John "Jabo" Starks
Sly Dunbar	Ringo Starr
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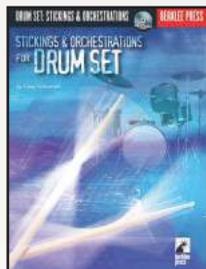
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MULTI-MEDIA

STICKINGS AND ORCHESTRATIONS FOR DRUMSET BY CASEY SCHEUERELL

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ADVANCED \$19.95

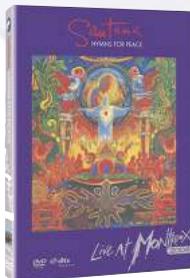


Drumming great Casey Scheuerell is also a top-notch educator, as is exemplified in this 85-page rudiment-based tour-de-force of user-friendly, inspiring exercises. Creative variations on paradiddles, triplets, ratamacues, and flam-rolls encompass the bulk of the content, and each section concludes with a well-produced and stylistically diverse play-along track, with and without drums, that incorporates the techniques that Scheuerell thoroughly explains in each section. The book is well marked, so it's easy to follow along with all of the exercises featured on the accompanying CD. This nicely priced package is a breath of fresh air in the educational book/CD department, as it puts a fun, challenging, and interesting twist on the basic rudiments. (Berklee Press)

Mike Haid

SANTANA HYMNS FOR PEACE, LIVE AT MONTREUX 2004

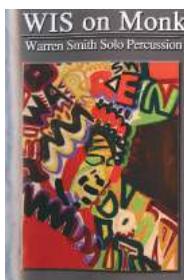
DVD LEVEL: ALL \$24.98



Carlos Santana had grand plans for the 2004 Montreux Jazz Festival: uniting his band with a fleet of musical luminaries for a huge set of rock, pop, and jazz standards. The results, captured on DVD with a lush sound mix, are often exhilarating, despite a few lightweight segments. Santana's ensemble acts like a big band for the modern era—it's equally at home swinging, pounding, and percolating, always over a fine-mesh web of Latin rhythm created by **DENNIS CHAMBERS** and percussionists **KARL PERAZZO** and **RAUL REKOW**. Apart from a few quick solo turns, the drummers aren't spotlighted, but their graceful, perfectly calibrated parts supply Santana's heartbeat and help inspire thrilling solos from guests **Wayne Shorter**, **Herbie Hancock**, and **John McLaughlin**, among others. (Eagle Eye) **Michael Parillo**

WARREN SMITH WIS ON MONK: SOLO PERCUSSION

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$20

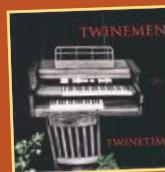


Warren Smith's solo percussion DVD, *WIS On Monk*, is more than just a beautiful tribute to Thelonious Monk; it's the culmination of sixty years of music-making. Opening up with marimba and vibraphone, Smith goes beyond the written page and improvises with an array of hanging percussion such as bells, blocks, and gongs. Most of Monk's "Epistrophe" is played on three timpani drums, "Brilliant Corners" opens with light bells and metal xylophone, and "Well You Needn't" travels from marimba to xylophone to a wonderful drumset sequence and then back to marimba. Smith goes through several costume/mask changes as his mood dictates, keeping you on your toes. As the scene moves to his live solo concert at Studio WIS, we get an even better sense of his musical genius (my favorite piece being "Conversations With Papa Jo"). Warren Smith's musical history reads like a who's who, from jazz to Broadway, Motown to rock, and he's *still* on the scene. (www.freedomartrecords.com) **David Licht**

And Furthermore...

TWINEMEN TWINETIME

The Morphine sound—low, smoky, soulful, and slightly evil—has lived on through several combos who've carried the musical torch of that band's late leader, Mark Sandman.



Twinemen features Morphine vets **Dana Colley** (sax) and **BILLY CONWAY** (drums), plus singer **Laurie Sargent** and bassist **Jeremy Moses Curtis**, and you better believe that slinky, scary feel is still there. Conway is key: Just when you think he's happiest staying out of the way, he tweaks you with some ever-so-subtle hi-hat splat that inevitably brings an involuntary "Yeah" to your lips. (Hi-N-Dry)

Adam Budofsky

TASSOS SPILIOPOULOS WAIT FOR DUSK

London-based drummer **ASAF SIRKIS** plays formidably on *Wait For Dusk*, a moody album from guitarist Tassos Spiliotopoulos. Dig the interesting ride patterns on "Other Ways."

(www.konnex-records.de) **Ilya Stelmovsky**

THE FLAMING LIPS U.F.O.s AT THE ZOO

The intergalactic pomp and circumstance of a Flaming Lips show wouldn't amount to more than an alt-rock sci-fi convention if the music didn't

strike such a unique balance of heavy and heavenly. Touring drummer **KLIPH SCURLOCK** supplies the heavy here, and this live DVD's crystal-clear mix makes it seem like he's dropping "Yoshimi Part 2"'s stuttering breakbeat and keeping thundering time on "Race For The Prize" right in your media room. (Warner Bros.) **Patrick Berkery**



CALIFORNIA TRANSIT AUTHORITY FULL CIRCLE

DANNY SERAPHINE played outstanding jazz-rock drums early on with Chicago Transit Authority (soon shortened to Chicago), and the new CTA (*California Transit Authority*) is—surprise—also an electric jazz-rock band with a scene-stealing guitar slinger, a role now filled by the able Marc Bonilla. *Full Circle* features several Bonilla originals, and Seraphine shows he's still got game, skillfully setting up and nailing the kicks on rearranged Chicago classics like "South California Purples" and "Make Me Smile." (www.ctatheband.com) **Robin Tolleson**

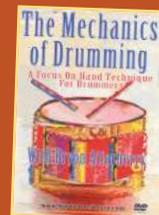
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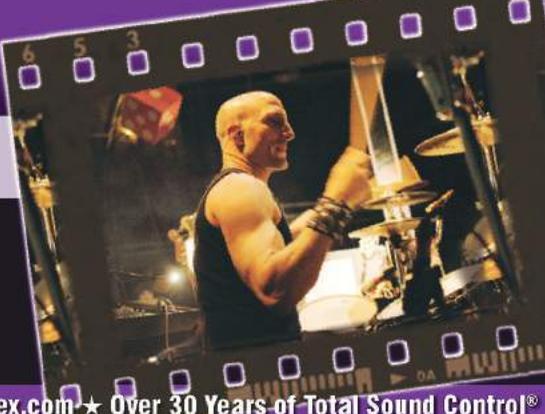
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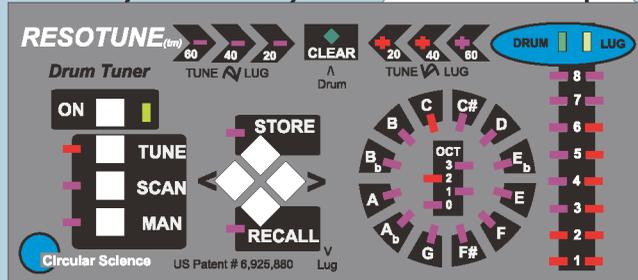
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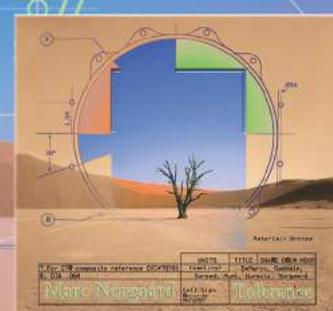
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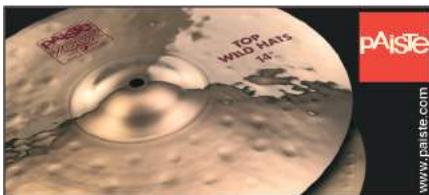



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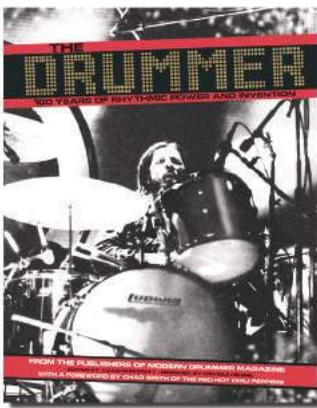


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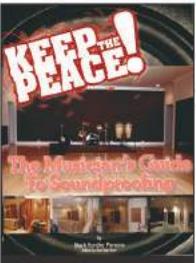


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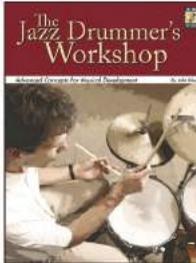


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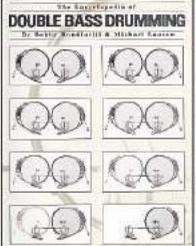
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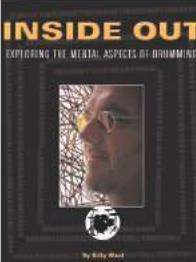
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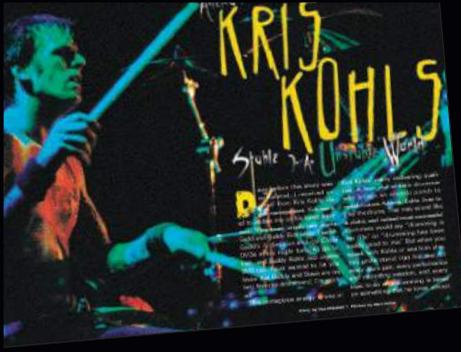


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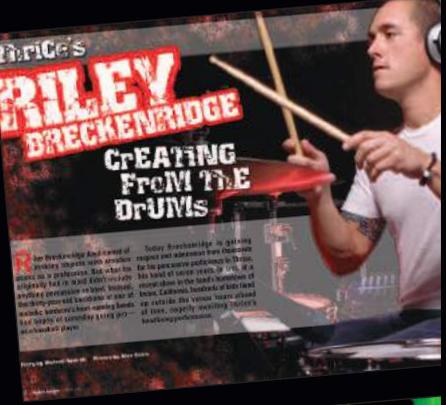
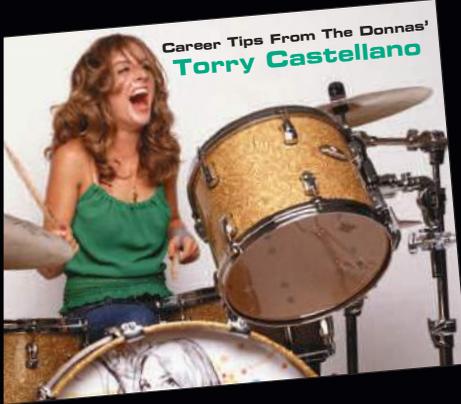
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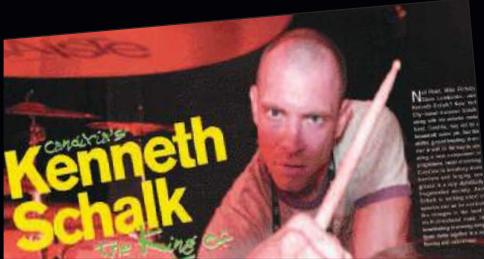


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2007 DCI World Championship Results

Story and photos by Lauren Vogel Weiss

Drum Corps International held its first World Championship on the West Coast this past August 11, in the historic Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. Using the “home state” crowd to its advantage, **The Blue Devils**, from Concord, California, placed first to win an unprecedented twelfth DCI title. Their program, “Winged Victory,” traced Greek mythological figures from darkness into light, with music ranging from “Bird And Bela In B Flat” by Don Sebesky, to Stravinsky’s “Rite Of Spring” and “Firebird,” to “The Kiss” by Michael Torte.

The Blue Devils also won the Fred Sanford Award for Best Percussion Performance—for the tenth time in the corps’ fifty-year history. “I’m ecstatic!” exclaimed director of percussion Scott Johnson, who has been with The Blue Devils for all of their championships and “high drum” titles. “This season has been great. We asked the drumline to do things we didn’t think they could do, and they just kept beating it up.”

Finishing in second place overall were **The Cadets**, from Allentown, Pennsylvania. Their controversial show, titled “This I Believe,” featured narration throughout the program. Last year’s champions, **The Cavaliers**, from Rosemont, Illinois, placed third. **The Spartans**, from Nashua, New Hampshire, won the Division II title (for corps with 71 to 135 members). **Memphis Sound**, from Memphis, Tennessee, won in Division III (for corps with 30 to 79 members).

On August 8, Sponsors Of Musical Enrichment hosted the Individual & Ensemble competition. Three soloists from The Blue Devils won their individual categories, while members of The Blue



The Blue Devils of Concord, California won their twelfth DCI World Championship at the Rose Bowl this past August. Their drumline also took home the Fred Sanford Award for best percussion performance.

Knights from Denver, Colorado won two of the three ensemble categories. (The I&E winners are shown in the accompanying photos.)

For the first time, DCI hosted a drumset clinic in conjunction with the Festival Marketplace outside the stadium. **Gregg Bissonette**—a one-time member of the North Texas State University marching band—wowed the audience with some amazing drumset solos. He also played a couple of tunes with **Patricia Islas** on vibes and Doug Ross on bass. “This was my first drum corps show,” Bissonette admitted. “The time, feel, and precision are so great, even when they’re running all over the field. I never dreamed it was this intense.” Gregg’s appearance was sponsored by Mapex, Zildjian, Vic Firth, Remo, Shure, LP, DW pedals, and Hudson Music.

The 2008 World Championships will be held August 5–9 in the new Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. For more information on joining or viewing drum & bugle corps, contact DCI at www.dci.org.



Gregg Bissonette took the words “drum and bugle” literally during his DCI clinic.



From left: Sorayah Bourenane, Nick Ryan, Ryan George, Nathan George, and Phil Maynes of The Blue Knights earned the title of Best Bass Drum Ensemble.



Amanda Montemayor of The Blue Knights won Best Individual Timpani.



Academy's Wesley Anderson won the Multi-Percussion award with a drumset solo.



Three members of The Blue Devils who won Individual competition awards are, from left, Colby Beers (multi-tenor), Noel Alvarez (snare), and Yuki Suzuki (keyboard).



The Blue Knights won the Best Percussion Ensemble award. Back row, from left: Frank Gonzalez, Kameisha Addison, Christy Montemayor, Amanda Montemayor, Scott Watson. Front row, from left: Sarah K. Richards, Kyle Inouye, Jenny Breth, Lauren Maxwell, Allison Greenbaum.



Santa Clara Vanguard won the Best Cymbal Ensemble award for the second year in a row. Pictured from left are Travis Vernon, Nick Richards, Brandon McVeigh, and Nithin Kumar.

FINAL SCORES

CORPS	TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	DRUM SCORE (out of 10)	CORPS	TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	DRUM SCORE (out of 10)
1. Blue Devils	98.00	9.85 (1st)	7. Bluecoats	94.05	9.70 (2nd)
2. The Cadets	97.025	9.525 (4th)	8. Blue Knights	90.275	8.875 (9th)
3. The Cavaliers	96.35	9.35 (6th)	9. Boston Crusaders	89.10	9.05 (8th)
4. Phantom Regiment	94.85	9.65 (3rd)	10. Colts	86.15	8.55 (12th)
5. Santa Clara Vanguard	94.175	9.225 (7th)	11. Glassmen	85.75	8.75 (10th)
6. Carolina Crown	94.15	9.40 (5th)	12. Spirit from JSU	84.50	8.60 (11th)

New York Rock & Roll Fantasy Camp

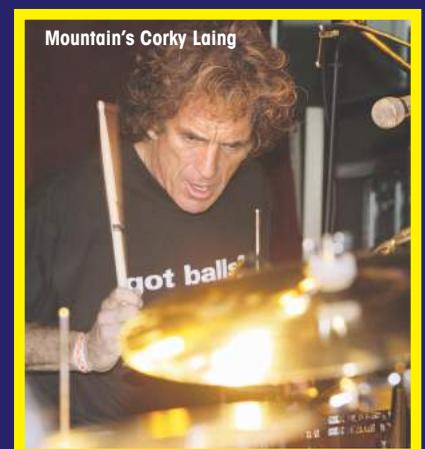
New York City rocked this past August 30 through September 3, as the Rock & Roll Fantasy Camp came to town. Attendees got to hang, jam, and play in bands with legendary guitarists, vocalists, and bassists, as well as with stellar drummers Simon Kirke (Bad Company/Free), Corky Laing (Mountain), Alan White (Yes), Max Weinberg (Bruce Springsteen/Conan O' Brien), and returning counselor, session drummer, and Collective teacher Sandy Gennaro.

Playing with and learning from these masters can, indeed, be the realization of a fantasy. It's not cheap (\$8,000!), but the experience is well worth the cost. So start saving up for the next camp. More information is available at www.rockandrollfantasycamp.com and www.moderndrummer.com.

Billy Amendola



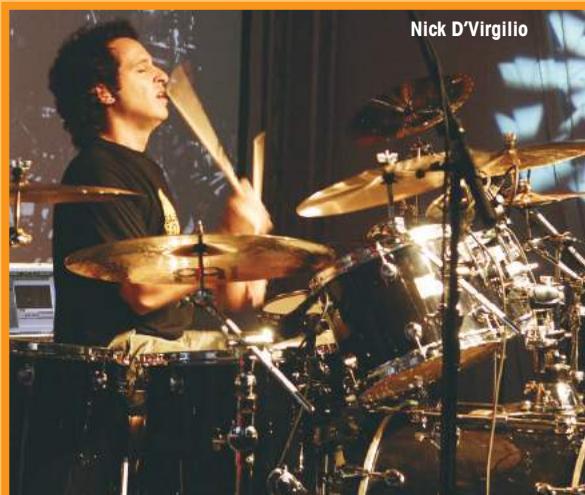
Simon Kirke (left) and camper Dave Carlson



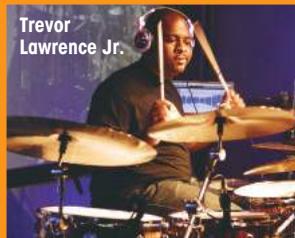
Mountain's Corky Laing

International Drumming Events

All stories and photos by Heinz Kronberger



Nick D'Virgilio



Trevor Lawrence Jr.



Wolfgang Haffner

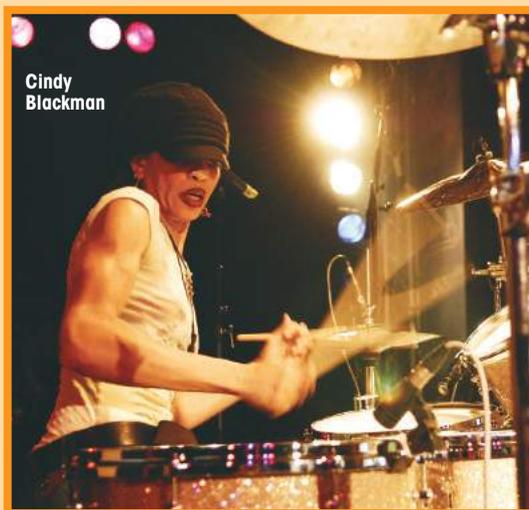
The third **MEINL DRUM FESTIVAL** drew nearly 2,000 drummers to Meinl's cymbal factory in Gutenstetten, Germany this past September 8.

The day started with a dynamic opening set by **Nick D'Virgilio** of Spock's Beard, followed by stunning performances from **Flo Dauner** and **Roland Peil**, **Trevor Lawrence Jr.**, **Derek Roddy**, **Ralf Gustke**, and **Wolfgang Haffner**. Masterclasses included Lawrence on "The Lost Art Of Studio Drumming," Haffner on time and groove, Dauner on hip-hop grooves and playing with a click, D'Virgilio on drumming and singing, and Gustke on "Microtiming & Groove Metamorphosis." Chris Adler from Lamb Of God was on hand to sign autographs.

Videos and photos of the event can be seen at www.meinlcymbals.com. The next Meinl Drum Fest will take place September 6 and 7, 2008.

Adams Drumworld, Europe's biggest drumshop, held their fourth **DRUMWORLD FESTIVAL** this past September 16 in IJltervoort, The Netherlands. The show opened with Primal Scream drummer **Darrin Mooney**. He was followed by **Cindy Blackman** and **Gary Chaffee**, who took the opportunity to do a sort of masterclass—for a few hundred people!

Flo Mounier took the stage with his blast-beats, followed by jazz master **Peter Erskine**. The show closed with **Jonathan Mover**. It was a great day of different drumming styles. For information on next year's show, go to www.Drumworld.nl.



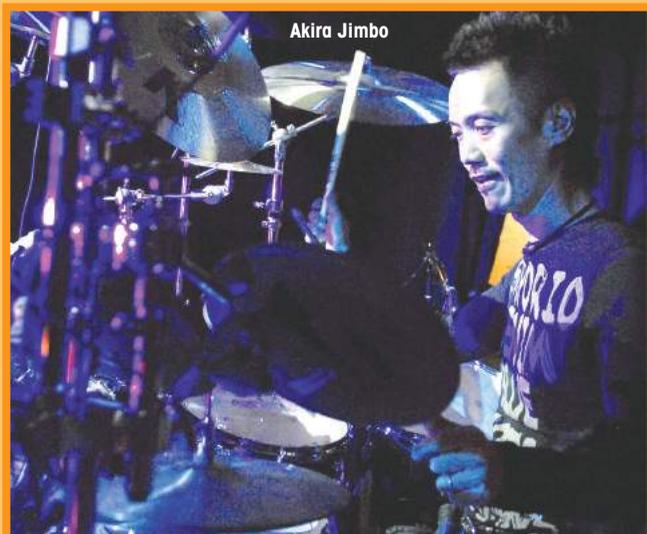
Cindy Blackman



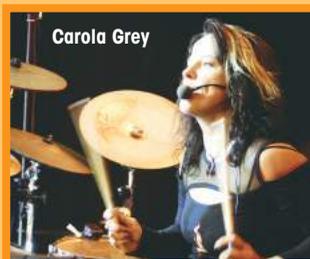
Flo Mounier



Darrin Mooney



Akira Jimbo



Carola Grey



Phil Maturano

The eighth **PPC DRUMNIGHT**, sponsored by PPC Music of Hannover, Germany, took place this past August 31. The Drumnight actually started early in the afternoon, with percussion entertainer **Pitti Hecht**. Throughout the balance of the day and into the evening, an audience of 1,000 drummers enjoyed performances by **Phil Maturano**, **Massimo Pacciani**, **Carola Grey**, **Charly Antolini**, **Benny Greb**, **Derek Roddy**, and **Akira Jimbo**. More information is available at www.ppc-music.de.

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In Memoriam

Gordon "Specs" Powell

Gordon "Specs" Powell, a top jazz and studio drummer for over thirty years, died in Escondido, California this past September 15 of kidney disease. He was eighty-five.

Powell began his career in Harlem during the swing era, and he recorded with such greats as Red Norvo, Erroll Garner, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Tatum, and Billie Holiday. He left jazz to pursue a career as a studio drummer, becoming the first black musician at a national network—CBS New York—in 1943. From 1947 to 1972 he was a member of the Ray Bloch orchestra on The Ed Sullivan Show, The Jackie Gleason Show, Candid Camera, and a host of radio and television specials.

Powell was also on some of the most rec-

ognizable commercials and soundtracks in American recording history. These included "I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing" for Coca-Cola, as well as the soundtracks to Jane Fonda's *Barbarella*, Hanna Barbera's *The Man Called Flintstone*, and Gordon Parks' *Shaft*.

Powell also had an impact on percussion manufacturing. His request for a device that would allow him to quickly switch from vibes to bongos led his friend (and Latin Percussion founder) Martin Cohen to develop the first bongo bracket for stand-mounted playing. In 2006, Specs was presented with the National Association of Music Manufacturers (NAMM) Support Music Award in honor of his lifetime achievements.



Courtesy of NAMM



Courtesy of the Powell estate

Specs in the late 1940s, with CBS bandleader Ray Bloch (left) and announcer Danny Seymour.

Sandy Feldstein

Author, educator, composer, and publisher Sandy Feldstein died this past August 30, following a year-long battle with cancer. He was sixty-six.

A drummer since childhood, Feldstein co-authored the popular instructional book *Alfred's Drum Method*, in addition to writing or collaborating on hundreds of compositions for concert bands and orchestral ensembles. He also enjoyed a long career in music publishing, including key positions with Alfred Publishing, Columbia Pictures Publishing, and Carl Fischer Music. In the late 1990s, he founded his own company, PlayinTime Productions. Feldstein's passion for music education led him to serve as chairman of the educational committee of the National Academy Of Recording Arts And Sciences, which produces the Grammy Awards.

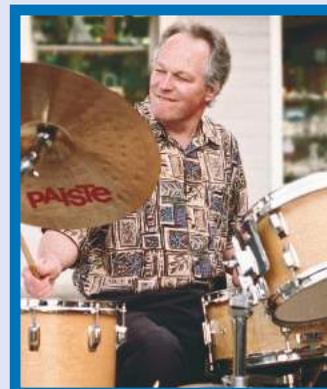
The Sandy Feldstein Music Education Fund has been established to grant scholarships to music students. To donate, go to musicforall.org.



Paul Bleifuss

Drummer and custom drum builder Paul Bleifuss died this past September 5 after battling lung cancer. He was sixty.

Bleifuss' love affair with drums began at the age of ten. In 1978 he began working on his own drums to improve their sound and performance. Over the years, he developed a deep understanding of drums and drum construction. His reputation spread, and other drummers began asking Bleifuss to work on their kits. He soon went from improving the quality of "off the shelf" drums to building his own line of custom drums at his San Diego, California shop. His Bleifuss drum line came to be regarded highly in the Southern California drum community and across the country.



Remo Drum Days In Los Angeles

Hundreds of kids and adults experienced different drum and percussion instruments during Remo Drum Days LA events this past summer. In partnership with the Los Angeles Park & Recreation Department, Remo held a series of kids' drum and percussion workshops covering many styles of drumming. Middle Eastern drumming was taught by master percussionist **Souhail Kasper**, Asian drumming was taught by Japanese percussionist **Kris Bergstrom**, **George Ortiz** (Poncho Sanchez Latin Jazz Band) taught Latin drumming, djembe specialist **Leon Mobley** taught African drumming, and Brazilian drumming was taught by **Linda Yudin** and the drummers of **Viver Brasil**.

The workshops culminated with concerts at which students shared the stage with well-known Remo artists and their bands. At the end of each concert Remo staged a community drum circle to encourage the recreational use of musical instruments as a life-enhancement process.



Leon Mobley taught an African percussion workshop for kids at Remo Drum Days LA.





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The War Memorial Kit

This unique kit was created by Trick Percussion and Chicago-area artist Dan Ceresa, for use by the 101st Rock Division. That band—led by guitarist Joe Cantafio and featuring drummer Tim Scruggs—tours bases in the Middle East to entertain US troops there. The kit features images from US military history since the American Revolution.

The project was near to Trick president Mike Dorfman's heart, since his father was a highly decorated World War II marine. (The photo on the middle rack tom is of Mike's dad.) Likewise, the kit serves as a memorial to bandleader Cantafio's nephew Ryan Cantafio, who was killed in action in Iraq. His photo is on the third rack tom.

Says Mike Dorfman, "I wanted everyone who sees this kit to remember all of the veterans throughout history, and for the men and women who are currently serving to know that we're thinking about them—and proud of them."



Is Your Drumkit Something Special?

Of course it is! Now how about sharing your cool creation with thousands of fellow *Modern Drummer* readers. Simply send us some photos and a brief description of your unique set, and we'll consider it for inclusion in *Kit Of The Month*. And if we do pick your pride & joy for coverage in *MD*, we'll send you a cool new MD Drum Bag/Cooler—for free! Just follow the simple directions below.



Photo Requirements

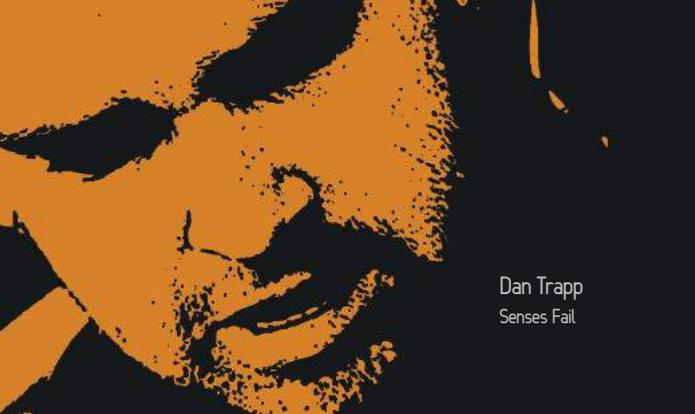
1. Photos must be high-quality, sharp-focus, well-lit, and in color. High-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Show only drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
6. Digital photos on disk and print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.
7. Digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to rvh@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message.



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