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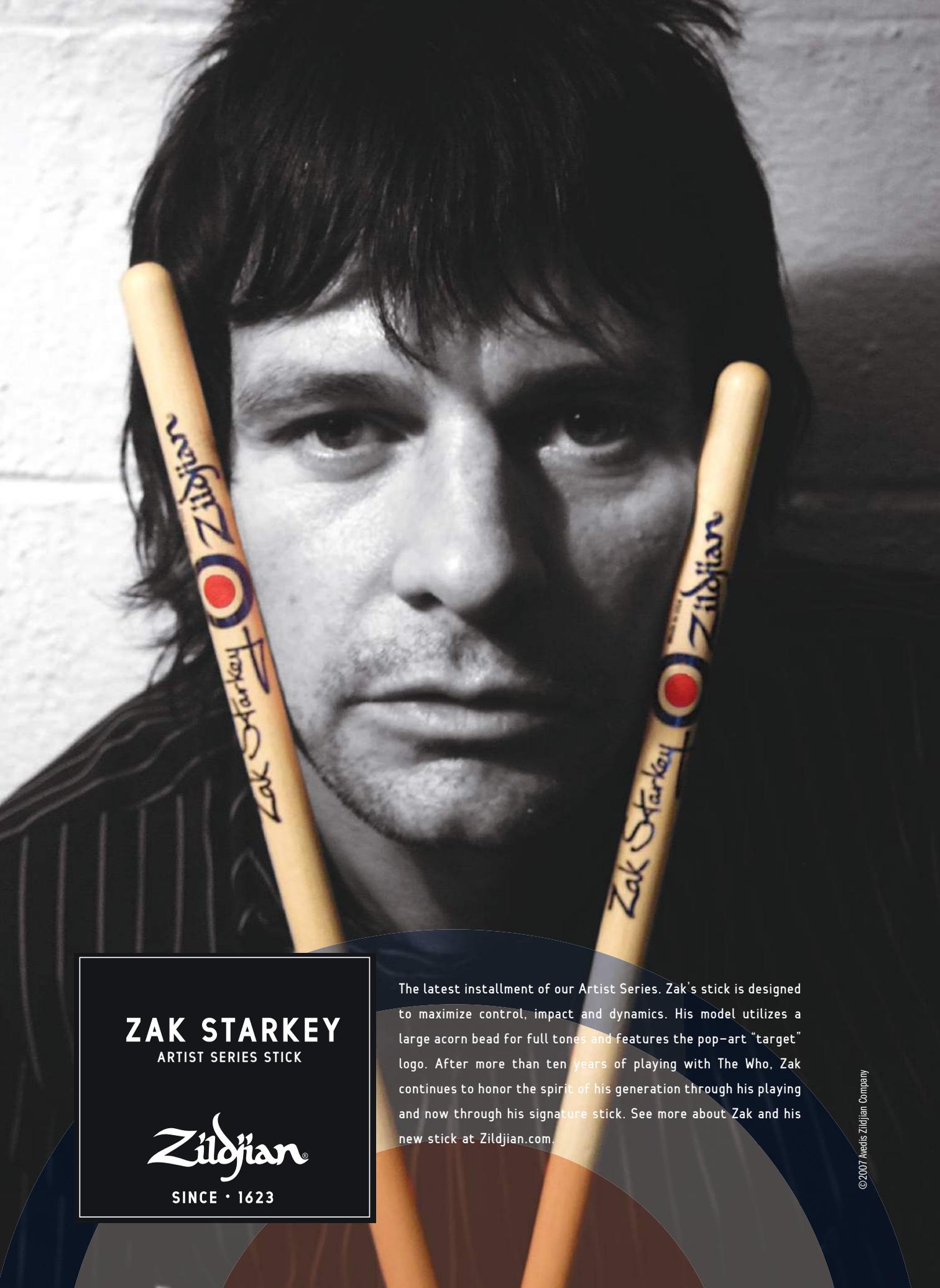


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Fred Eltringham # The Wallflowers, The Dixie Chicks, The Wreckers

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Scott F. Crago # Eagles, Don Henley, Glenn Frey

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Donald Barrett # Carson Daly TV-Show, Seal, Jesse McCartney

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FEATURES

<< 48 Led Zeppelin' s **Jason Bonham**

Can you imagine a more coveted yet stressful gig than backing up a re-formed Led Zeppelin, replacing the greatest rock drummer of all time? Oh yeah, and that drum god happened to have been your dad. Jason Bonham embraces the heaviness, and delivers the goods.

62 **The Art Of Brush Playing**

Lush and romantic. fast and furious. The brushes are one of the most adaptable—and unexplored—tools in a drummer' s stick bag. In this special report, MD gathered true geniuses of the art for tips, tricks, and tales of brush mastery.

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Allison Miller personifies the modern drum artist, splitting her time between indie-pop stars Ani DiFranco and Erin McKeown, and exploratory jazzers like Marty Ehrlich and Dr. Lonnie Smith.

98 **Zappa Plays Zappa' s Joe Travers**

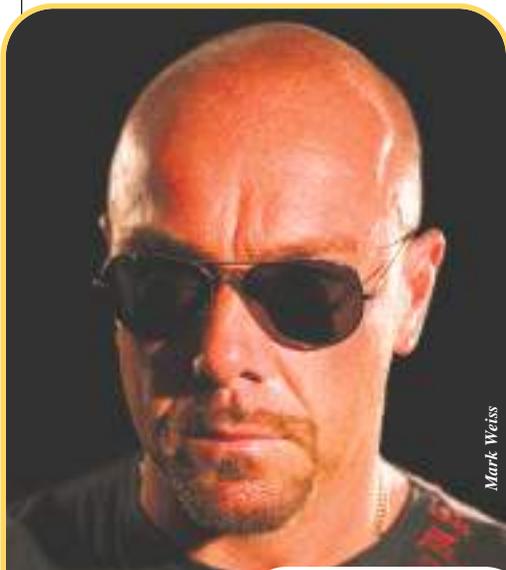
Joe Travers has fulfilled his destiny to play the music of Frank Zappa with the maestro' s gifted alumni. He' s also the keeper of the vast, historical Zappa tape vault. What a life!

WIN! WIN! WIN!

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Fabulous Prizes From Gretsch Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Gibraltar Hardware, Evans Heads, Vater Sticks, TKL Bags, And Modern Drummer, With A Total Value Of More Than

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Paul La Rosa



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Globe-trotter Hamid Drake is a regular at international jazz festivals. But when he returns home, Drake gets right back to some serious playing in his living-room practice space.



Gene Ambo

128 **A Different View** **Viktor Krauss**

Bassist Viktor Krauss. simply put, musicians just love playing with the guy. So it' s no surprise that Viktor has shared studio and stage time with some of the greatest drummers of the age.





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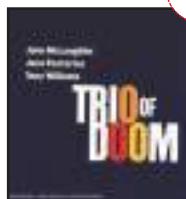
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**MD's 2008
READERS POLL
BALLOT**

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CARL ALLEN PLAYS THE FIRST TOTALLY CUSTOM JAZZ-TAILORED DRUM SET IN HISTORY.

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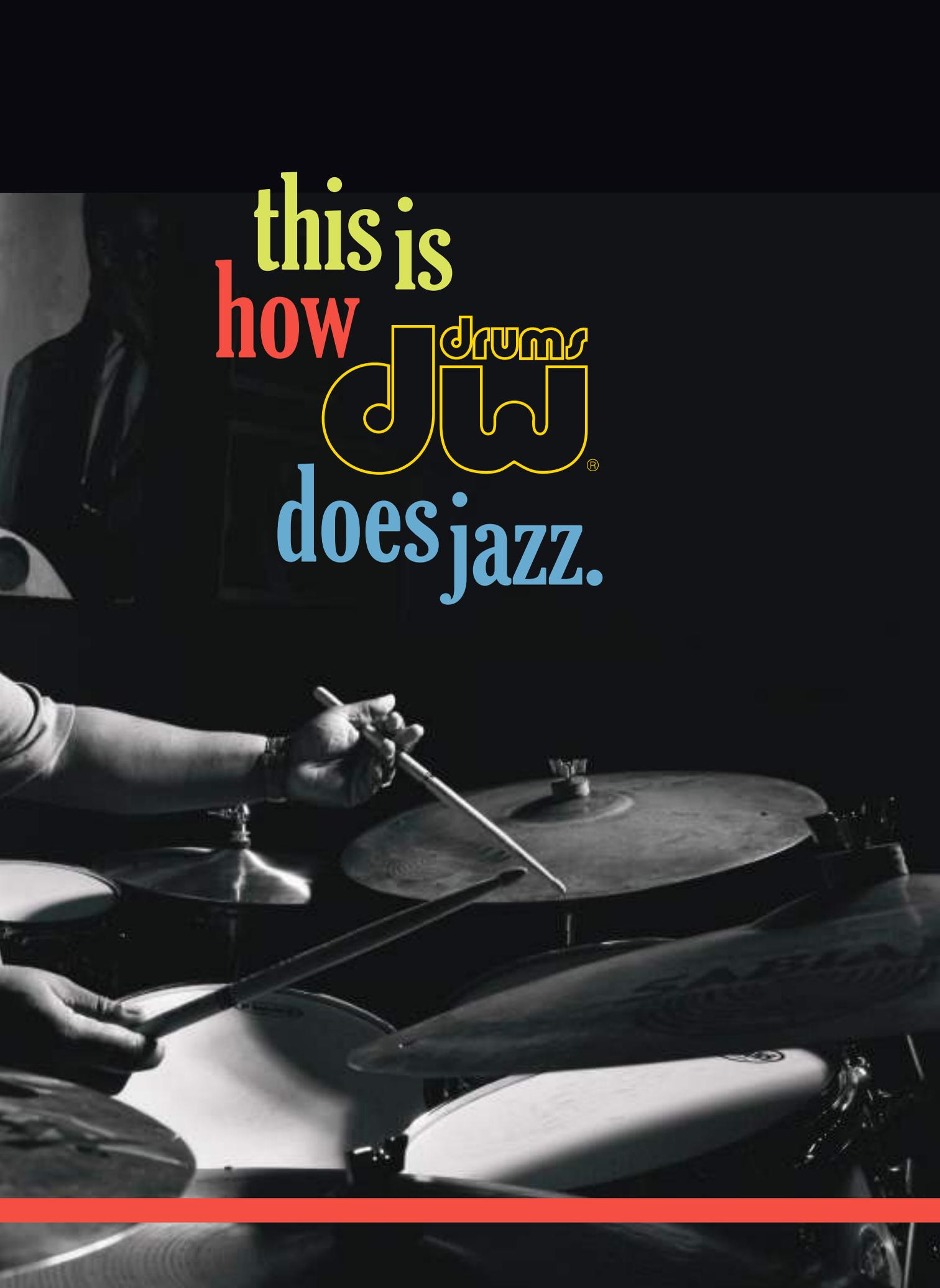
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Fathers & Sons



"All of the really good drummers had fathers who played drums." Believe it or not, that was the opinion I had back when I was in my teens. At the time, many of the hot local players I knew had dads who played. I remember how one fellow, a monstrous Buddy Rich-inspired player, told me that not only was his father a drummer, his *grandfather* was one too.

I felt like I was at a disadvantage—my dad didn't play drums. But looking back, it's obvious to me that he and my mother enormously influenced me in terms of igniting my passion for music—and continuously supporting me in all my drumming pursuits.

As an example, when I was just a kid, from age six on, my dad and I would regularly go downstairs after dinner, where my little gold sparkle kit was set up. I'd jump on that kit and play along to his favorite big band records—"One O' Clock Jump," "Flying Home," "Sing, Sing, Sing" ... I must have sounded horrible. But I can clearly remember my dad sitting in his chair, eyes closed, with a smile on his face. That's love.

The topic of father & son drummers was prompted by this month's cover story, Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham's son Jason, who is filling the legendary seat of his late dad in the recently reunited band. Bonzo obviously passed a love of drumming on to his son, too. Do you recall seeing a very young Jason performing for his dad in Led Zep's classic film, *The Song Remains The Same*? Pop had lit a fire, and you could see it right there.

A couple of coincidences popped up recently at the *MD* offices regarding fathers and sons. Associate editor Billy Amendola, once a pro session and touring drummer, today has a nineteen-year-old son, Matty, who is turning into a strong player. One of the several projects he's been doing recently is *Jump*, a big-time contemporary dance show. In fact, Matty just performed onstage at New York's fabled Radio City Music Hall with the group. Fantastic! (Billy was joking with me, moaning, "I never played there!")

Within a week of that performance, I was talking to my longtime friend and colleague, *MD*'s managing editor, Adam Budofsky, about his four-year-old son Hayden, who is already playing drums. Adam was surprised at how Hayden recently developed the coordination to play the beat to Primus' "My Name Is Mud." Amazing!

Obviously, these drummer fathers have inspired their sons.

I also have a son, Clifford (named after my dad), who is two years old. He's not drumming yet, but he and I go downstairs to my basement practice room after dinner, where I'll play time with brushes. He gets so excited. Cliff starts dancing, and then he grabs a stick and starts wailing on a cymbal or floor tom. Now he regularly comes up to me, asking, "Drums, drums?"

Looks like maybe I've lit a small fire right there. At least I hope so.

Bill Miller

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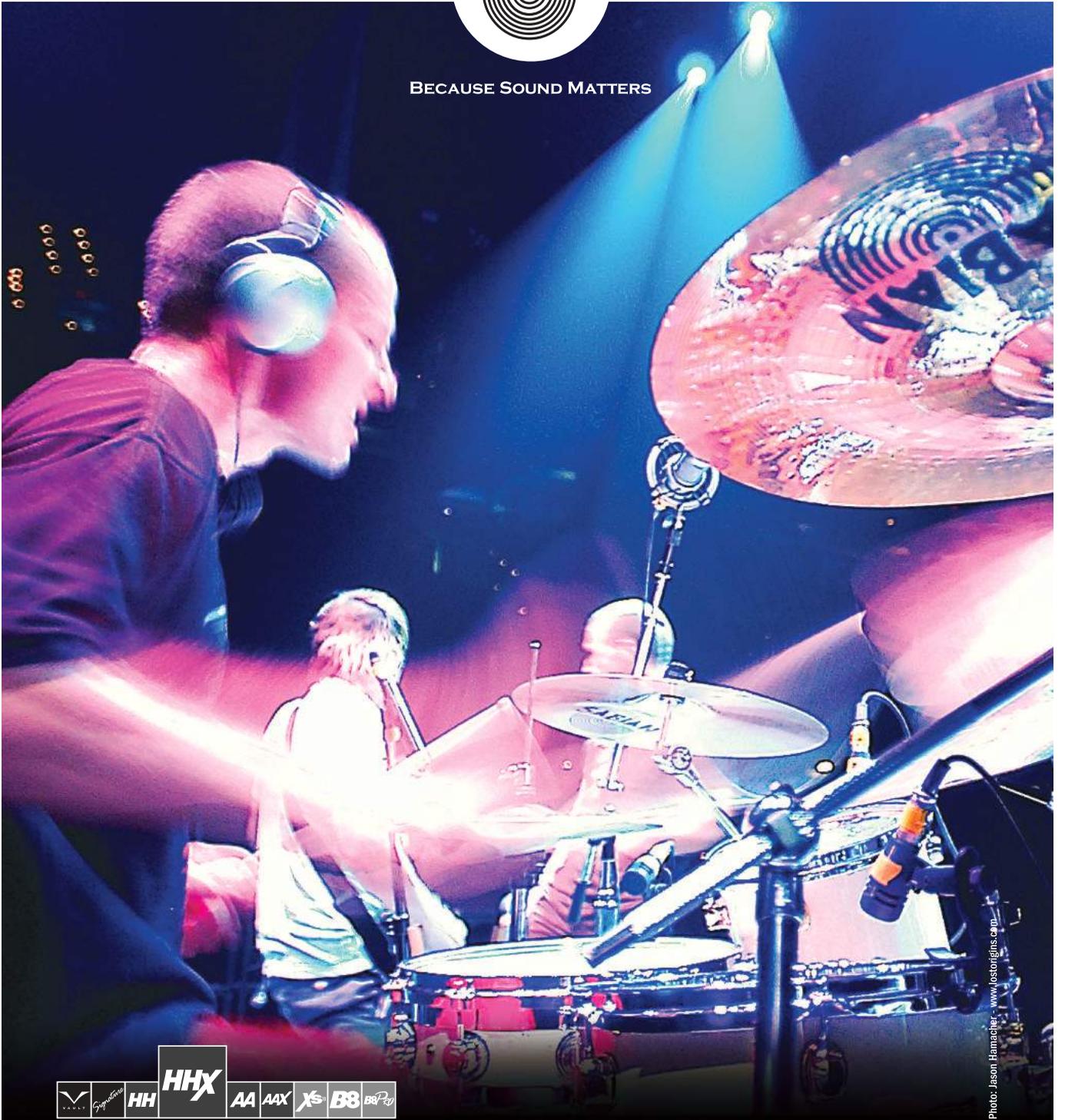


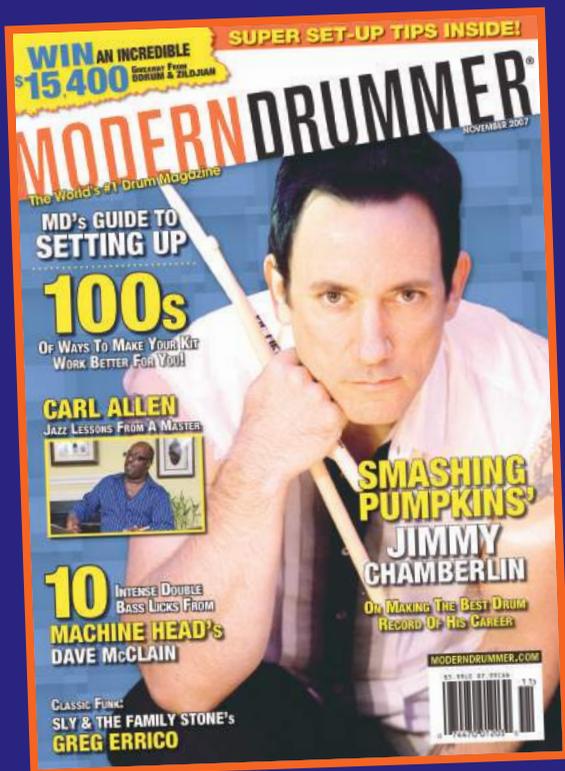
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Jimmy Chamberlin

God bless Jimmy Chamberlin for his refreshingly "drummer-centric" attitude. I loved his statements about not tuning to suit engineers, and not using Pro Tools or click tracks. I'm not a Smashing Pumpkins fan, but I can still appreciate a drummer who brings technique and talent to a project, and tells the producers to leave him alone! Thanks for a great interview.

Sam Fallkirk

Set-Up Issue

Thanks for all the terrific set-up tips offered by you and your contributing experts. I've had a variety of problems with getting the optimal setup over the years, and I found several solutions within the pages of your special feature. (I'm definitely going to pick up a WingKey!) It's great to get real-world workaday advice as valuable as this.

Alan Oxleiter

I'm a metal drummer, and my kit contains more pieces than those described by the drummers on your pro panel. So although the panel's suggestions were somewhat helpful to me, I didn't get the answers I was looking for. I'd like to get some insight on seat/drum heights, angles, positions, etc. from drummers who use larger setups with speed and finesse, like Mike Portnoy, Joey Jordison, Neil Peart, The Rev, or Chris Adler. I hope this might be addressed in a future issue.

Brian, aka Hammer

Carl Allen

I enjoyed your November '07 interview with Carl Allen. But I noticed an error in the drummer credit for an album in Carl's



"favorites" list. Noted Gospel drummer Jeremy Haynes played on most of the live tracks on Marvin Sapp's *Be Exalted* album. The listed drummer, Calvin Rodgers, played on only one song: "Perfect Peace."

Jonathan Oliver

Gregg Errico

Thanks for checking in with Gregg Errico! Your interview offered great insight into one of the most exciting bands in pop history. I never tire of listening to Sly & The Family Stone records, and Gregg's killer grooves are, of course, at the center of it all. I never finish a practice session with-

out playing some of Gregg's signature beats...they're too much fun! Please let us know when Gregg is back on tour, with or without Sly.

Marshall Grossman

More About Aynsley

I'm Billy Doherty, drummer of The Undertones. I really enjoyed reading the October '07 *MD*, which featured Aynsley



Dunbar in the *Playback* section.

Aynsley's drumming on Nils Lofgren's self-titled 1975 album was an inspiration to me.

So much so, in fact, that I "borrowed" his accented bass drum pattern/style and used it on an Undertones single called "Wednesday Week," which went Top 10 in the UK charts back in the early '80s.

Aynsley is a hugely underrated drummer with a unique style and groove. I

was delighted that *MD* recognized his creativity and his wonderful playing.

Billy Doherty

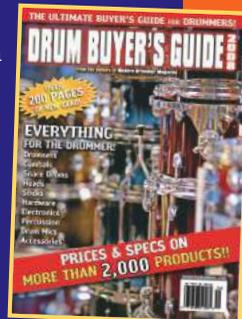
Drum Forums

Since you couldn't list every drum forum in existence in your November *Site Seeing* piece, I'd like to bring your attention to www.centerstagem.com. We're a Mapex owners' forum, and we're one of the most civil and family-like drum forums out there. We invite all *MD* readers to pay us a visit.

Ken At CSM

SPECIAL THANKS

Modern Drummer would like to thank Jim Rupp of Columbus Pro Percussion for his contribution toward the creation of the cover of *MD's Drum Buyer's Guide*. (Jim was very kind to allow us to photograph in his fine drumshop.) Thanks also to cover photographer/designer Christopher Otazo.



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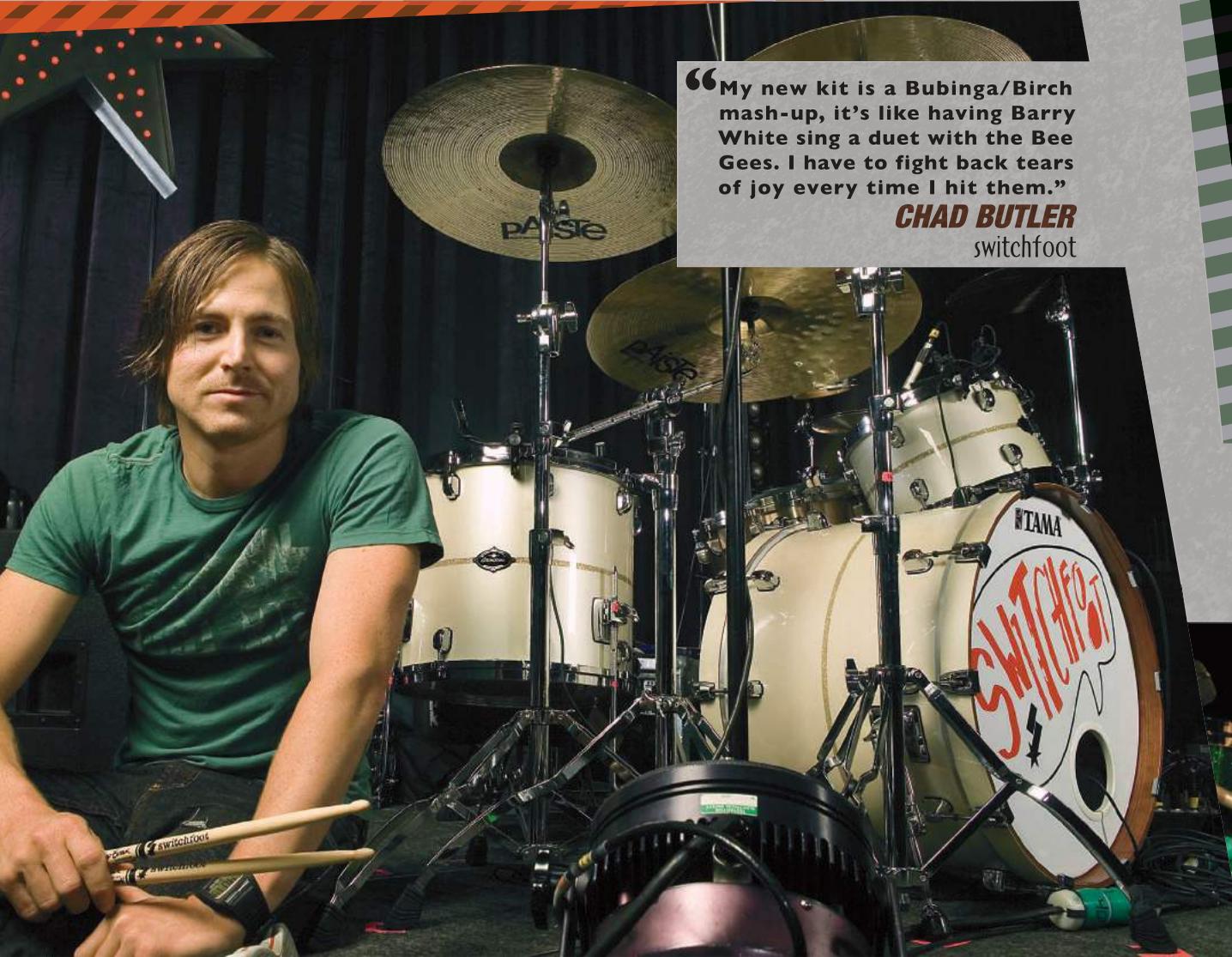
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steve vai

Joey Baron

On Song Structure And Soloing

I've been a big fan of your drumming for a long time. I'd like to ask for your help and advice concerning one of my favorite Masada songs, "Nevalah," from their album Vol. 6: Vav. I tried to figure out the metric changes throughout the theme and what I got was sixteen bars in the following sequence: 7/8, 4/4, 3/4, 7/8, 4/4, 4/4, 7/8, 7/8, 4/4, 3/4, 7/8, 4/4, 3/4, 5/4, 2/4, 4/4.

As far as I understood, your solo went according to all the metric changes. I'd like to ask your opinion about the approach a drummer should have when trying to play that solo. It feels like you played the melody of the song when I listen to your solo.

Igor, from Jerusalem

First of all, thanks for your inquiry. The bar-by-bar rhythmic structure of "Nevalah" is as follows: 7/8, 4/4, 3/4, 7/8, 4/4, 4/4, 7/8. The last 7/8 bar acts as a first ending. Repeat the phrase, but replace the last bar of 7/8 with the second ending, which is: 6/8, 3/8, 3/8, 3/8, 5/8, 4/4. That's the form of the song.

Regarding my approach to soloing, I'd say the best way is to really learn and memorize the melody. That's what I'm using as my main guide. Otherwise you're just doing math, which is not music. I try to play the form of the song. Sometimes you'll make it...sometimes you won't. But as long as you try your best and relate to the music, you'll learn a lot.

There are other approaches to soloing on this piece, such as just playing on the pulse—not using bar lines at all—and referencing the melody. Or you could completely break the tempo and play textures that work their way back to the piece. When I'm drumming with John Zorn, he prefers to have me play the form every time.

In any case, using your imagination *must* be part of the equation when making music...solo or otherwise. I hope this helps. Thanks again for your interest.

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Jim Riley

On The Nashville Number System

I do a lot of fill-in work, and I usually don't know all the songs. So I chart out simple guide sheets for myself. The Nashville Number System that you outlined in your July and September '07 *Drum Country* articles looks a bit easier and clearer. But I do have a question: What if I don't know the chord changes to the songs? Will the number system still work?

Steve Lord

That's a great question. And the answer is: Yes, the number system will work even if you don't know all the chord names. You can substitute an "X" for each of the numbers. That way you can still use the system to chart out the overall form of the song, as well as all of the kicks and stops. In fact, some of today's top session drummers use the "X" in place of the numbers, so you'll be in good company!

Gene Ambo



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QUICK BEATS

text and photo by Joe Perry

The Red Hot Chili Peppers' Chad Smith



- Place of birth:** St. Paul, Minnesota
Influences: John Bonham, Keith Moon, Bill Ward, Ian Paice, Roger Taylor, Ginger Baker
Hobbies/interests: Golf, motorcycles, my family
How I relax: Play with my kids, go to the beach
Favorite food: Sushi, Italian, steak
Favorite fast food: In 'N' Out Burger (California chain)
Favorite junk food: Pizza
Favorite drink: Red wine, beer
Favorite movie: *The Godfather Part 2*
Favorite TV show: *Curb Your Enthusiasm*
Favorite album: Any by Led Zeppelin
Vehicle I drive: 1965 Mustang Fastback
Other instruments I play: Guitar, piano
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: In jail!
Place I'd like to visit: China
I wish I'd played drums on: Any song by The Beatles
Musicians I'd like to work with: Brian May, Peter Gabriel, Jimmy Page
Next up & coming drummer: Dominic Howard (Muse)
Most prized possession: My wedding ring
Person I would like to talk to: My father, who passed away five years ago
Persons I admire: My brother, Brad, and my wife, Nancy
Most memorable performance: Playing the National Anthem at a Detroit Pistons game in 1989. I was very afraid.
Most embarrassing moment on stage: In England, in 1999. I trashed my kit onstage when a mic cord wrapped around my foot and I fell over.
Most unusual venue played: A Molson beer commercial in Newfoundland, Canada.
Biggest venue played: Woodstock 1994 and 1999, for 350,000 people

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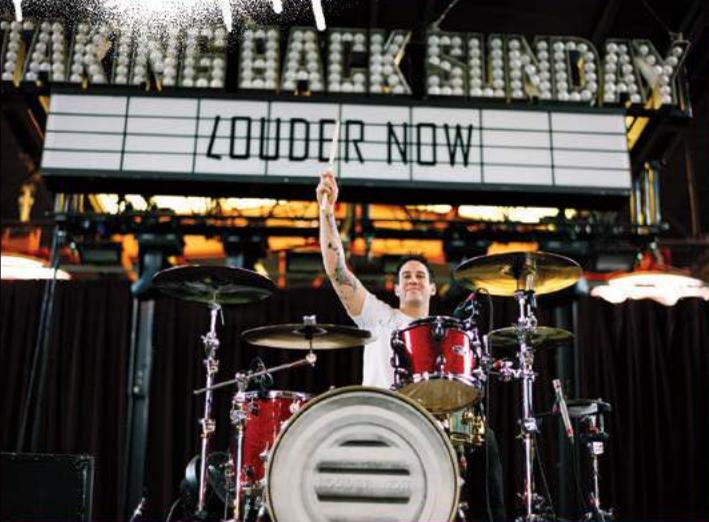
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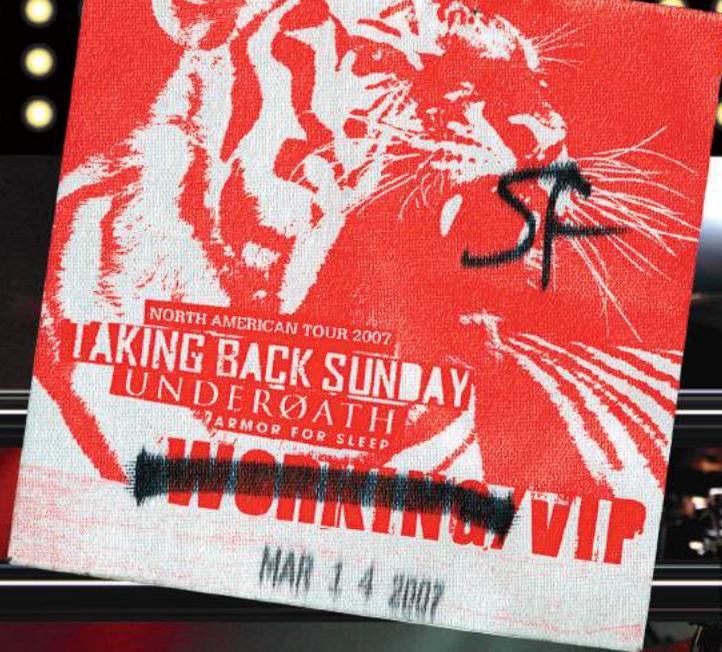


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AGAINST



pdp BY **dw**



MARK O'CONNELL

TAKING BACK SUNDAY

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Antonio SANCHEZ Musicality And Burn

Best known for his multi-limbral, multi-textural, orchestral jazz drumming with The Pat Metheny Group, Antonio Sanchez spreads his solo sticks wide for his debut as a leader, *Migration*. A whirling dervish of a record with guest spots (and material) from Metheny and Chick Corea, *Migration* relays an open-ended, hard-burn approach, start to finish.

"I didn't want people to say this is a drummer's album," Sanchez explains. "I wanted it to be something that could be from any instrumentalist. I thought in terms of music, not how many solos I got and if I blew enough chops or not. I wanted the music to be very melodic and accessible and with a lot of really good interplay. The new tunes that Chick and Pat wrote made it come together nicely; they're not my tunes but conceptually they're in the same realm."

Sanchez might not want to admit it, but *Migration* is a tour de force of drum performances, showcasing his astounding attention to fine detail, cross rhythmic expression, and dazzling independence. From foot pedal-executed clave patterns to blazingly fast and intricate drumset figures, Sanchez stuns.

"My sound is starting to be more recognizable now," he says, with typical modesty.

"Before I was doing a lot of things and trying to consolidate what I thought my sound could be. With this album especially, that comes across really well."

Sanchez recorded *Migration* in January 2007, playing a smaller Yamaha maple Absolute Nouveau kit than he does with The Pat Metheny Group: 5x14 snare, 8x12 tom, 14x14 floor, and 14x18 bass drum, with a 22" Zildjian K Constantinople medium-thin high ride, a 22" K Constantinople medium-thin low ride, a 22" A Zildjian prototype flat ride, an 18" prototype crash, and 13" 1950s K Zildjian hats.

Antonio has more recordings in the can, including releases from The Pat Metheny Trio (February '08), The Chick Corea Trio (Japanese import), and The Gary Burton Revisited Quartet (spring '08). An instructional DVD is also in the works, from Hudson Video.

"It will be a live clinic format," Antonio says, "really focused on musicality. I'll play to 'One For Antonio' and 'Challenge Within' (from *Migration*) and a couple Metheny tracks. I want to use two different sets to show the differences and versatility while still maintaining the same kind of sound and approach."

—Ken Micallef

Night Ranger's Kelly KEAGY Alive...And Well

Kelly Keagy is a busy man these days. Known for his powerful drumming with Night Ranger ("Sister Christian" was named one of the "Top Drum Tracks of the 1980s" in a recent *Modern Drummer* article), Keagy has a new solo album called *I'm Alive*, showcasing his drumming, singing, and songwriting. "It's an attempt to write a different kind of material from what I do with Night Ranger," says Keagy. Other projects include the band Scrapmetal with Mark Slaughter, Gunnar Nelson, and Eric Martin, and Meldiburpho, a group comprised of well-known Nashville songwriters. Kelly is also a reoccurring guest in Jim Peterik's World Stage shows.

Working with The Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy Camp gives Keagy an opportunity to share his knowledge.

"It's designed for adults who never had the chance to be in music. The goal is an end-of-camp performance at a place like The House Of Blues, where everybody gets up on stage and performs in front of an audience. It's really fun. The next one is in LA in February '08, and there's one slated for Nashville in '08 as well."

For Night Ranger fans, "We have a new album called *Hole In The Sun* coming out in January on VH1 Classic Records. It has both sides of Night Ranger—the hard-rockin', guitar-oriented side, along with good pop tunes. I wrote some songs for the album, and we'll be touring early in '08."

As for Kelly's acclaimed performance on "Sister Christian"? "We did so

many takes of that song that I remember being totally exhausted. After every take the producer would say, 'Let's try another one.' So on the last take I did that whole bit at the end, and I just threw my sticks and said, 'That's it, I'm done!' There was this long pause, and the producer goes, 'Okay, come on in, I love what you did at the end, man.' He plays it back, with that ramp up at the end, and I realized that I had done something special. It was totally off the cuff—who knew that it was going to go on to become what it did? Now of course I have to re-create those big build-ups and drum fills every time I play it!"

Ed Breckenfeld

Bobby PREVITE Wake Up, Everybody!

The liner notes from *The Coalition Of The Willing* raise a plea for consciousness: *Wake up, everybody!* If you were less familiar with his prolific output, you might peg Bobby Previte as some sort of quirky multi-instrumentalist agitator who plays some drums. Prepare for a shock. On the *Coalition Of The Willing* CD, Previte masterfully rips through styles ranging from grunge to rockabilly.

Bobby's aware of how he's perceived. "Listen, I'm a drumset player," he asserts proudly. "That's how I've made my living for twenty years. I've written pieces for everything from pedal steel to violin—but I don't play them. I'm a trap drummer who writes music. And maybe if I was less 'quirky' I'd have a lot more zeros in my bank account!"

Proof of Previte's command of drums, *Coalition* presents a spate of percussive sounds. On one track, he might be working a pair of loosely tensioned toms fitted with thuddy Pinstripes; on another, he's cranked up a set of his new-found coated, 1-ply batters from Evans, or even EC2s. Either way, the sounds are thunderous—almost metal at times.

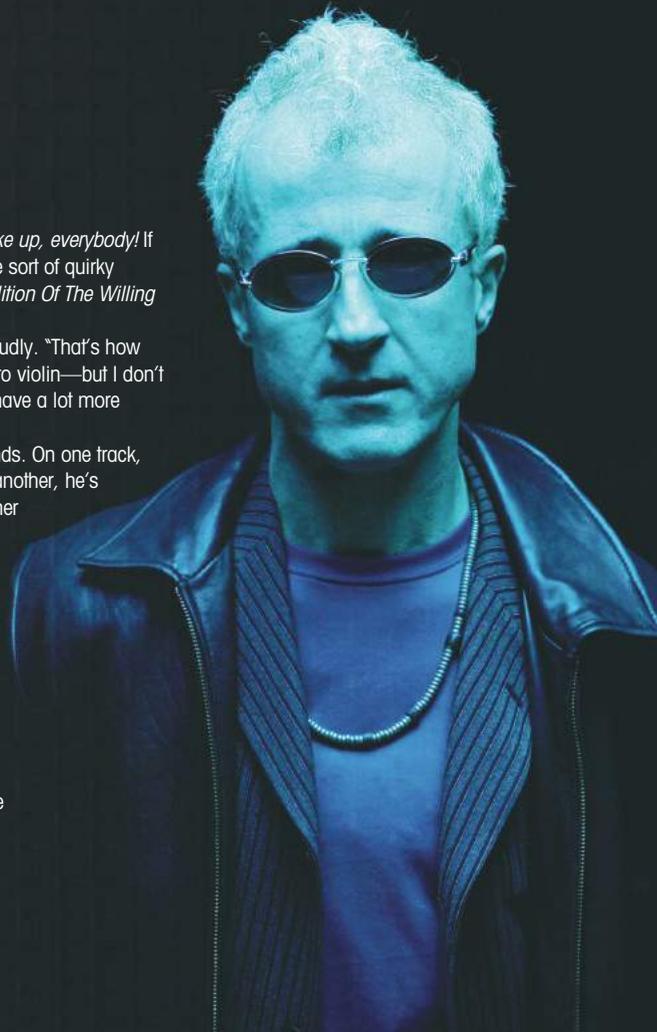
"I've been listening to a lot of metal right now," Bobby admits. "Lately I'm trying to get sounds and timbres that capture the emotional qualities I'm trying to express. On *Coalition* it's DW drums, but I also have an old Rogers kit from the '60s—they still sound good."

When Bobby hit it off with Stanton Moore, he brought him into *Coalition*. Bobby drafted a rough script, then structured the studio so both could face off and engage in call-and-response. In other instances, players get crazy. It's all about breaking the mold, discovering, and carving a niche in the competitive greater NYC area.

"Competition? All I know is that you've got to be yourself with a vengeance," Bobby says. "Who can compete with Bobby Previte? Nobody! The more you move through the world as *you* and only you, the less you're in competition. Abraham Lincoln once said he was able to keep on going 'because I had one great friend: myself.' Dig that."

For more on Bobby, including news about his upcoming releases, log onto www.bobbyprevite.com.

T. Bruce Wittet





Luis CONTE The Power Of 3

Percussion great Luis Conte's new album, *Marimbula*, is a trio disc featuring bassist Jimmy Johnson and guitarist Barry Coates. Conte describes the music as a unique mixture of ideas. "It's a marriage of traditional percussion in every style," he says. "Marimbula is an instrument—a bass kalimba. On the title track, I play the role of the bass with the marimbula while Jimmy Johnson plays the melody of the song. I sing on that particular song, too. It's a traditional form of music from Changui, Cuba."

One of the most in-demand percussionists in the world today, Conte has been fitting in the recording of *Marimbula* while doing his usual globetrotting and sessions with such artists as Beck and James Taylor, as well as playing on movie soundtracks such as *Hairspray*, *Transformers*, *Rush Hour 3*, and *Superbad*.

Since recording his last solo disc in 2001, Conte was inspired to do another, but couldn't come up with the right direction. Then he ran into an old friend. "Barry Coates and I were in a band twenty-something years ago," Conte says, "and I recently bumped into him. You usually run into someone and the rap is, 'Man, you sound great,' 'Yeah, so do you. We should get together and play.' But Barry meant it. I went over to his house, and it was, 'We should get a bass player.' So we invited Jimmy, and when we played, I *knew* I wanted to record this group."

"I have a studio in my house," Luis continues, "so we began working on ideas and collaborating on the music. Barry and I went through some stuff I had written, and he showed me things he had written, and we put these ideas together. Barry would sit behind the board and run Pro Tools and play electric guitar, and Jimmy Johnson would record direct. I played something live in the room—a shaker, a bongo, whatever. Then I had the studio to myself to add more percussion."

Besides the trio direction for *Marimbula*, there's one track on the record, "Philos Logos," that features all percussion. "I've been to Turkey two or three times," Luis says, "and I've been inspired by what I've seen and heard there. That comes out in this piece. Also, I play in a group in Europe with Bill Bruford, Chad Wackerman, and Doudou N'Diaye Rose called The World Drummers Ensemble. One of the pieces we perform in that group inspired me as well."

For more on Conte, check out his Web site, www.luisconte.com.

Robyn Flans

Ted Leo And The Pharmacists' Chris WILSON



"This is the first record where I don't really regret anything I played," says Ted Leo And The Pharmacists drummer Chris Wilson of the band's most recent album, *Living With The Living*.

A Philadelphia resident via Arkansas, Wilson drummed in a variety of bands before hooking up with Leo in 2001. Initially, he found Leo's heart-on-sleeve political pop-punk challenging. "Before that, I'd played in math-rock bands, a kind of Van Morrison band (The Holy Childhood with Leo's younger brother, Danny), and a shoe-gazey band called Ad Astra Per Aspera. This music, which should have been the closest to what I'd grown up playing, was the hardest. I had to re-learn a lot."

Joining The Pharmacists just weeks before a marathon tour for their second album, *Tyranny Of Distance*, Wilson had only three rehearsals to learn sixteen songs. Since then, they've released three more full-lengths and a handful of EPs, and put untold miles on their van.

Living With The Living is the Pharmacists album that best showcases Wilson's talents, thanks in large part to the band's choice of producer: Fugazi drummer Brendan Canty. One of the album's highlights is "The Unwanted Things," a reggae-pop tune reminiscent of The English Beat. When it came to recording the song, Wilson utilized lessons learned on a side gig with the Jai Alai Savant, a Philly-born, Chicago-based post-punk/dub group. "I played with them right before we went into the studio for *Shake The Sheets* [2004]. I've had a whole other approach to that stuff after playing with them."

The Pharmacists prepared for the *Living With The Living* sessions by doing what they do best: playing live. "For this one we were on tour for a week before we went into the studio, so that was the pre-production, and it really helped."

Ironically, two of the album's most exciting drum tracks—"Bomb. Repeat. Bomb" and "Annunciation Day/Born On Christmas Day"—were spur-of-the-moment, non-road tested affairs. "We learned those songs in the studio and recorded them the same day. Maybe that's how we should roll from now on."

Jon Wurster

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Hal Blaine (session great): 2/5/29

Mick Avory (The Kinks): 2/15/44

Harvey Mason (session giant): 2/22/47

Joe English (Wings): 2/7/49

Nigel Olsson (Elton John): 2/10/49

Jerry Shirley (Humble Pie): 2/4/52

Manny Elias (Tears For Fears/Julian Lennon): 2/21/53

Vinnie Colaiuta (drum giant): 2/5/56

Gregg Field (big band great): 2/21/56

Jerry Marotta (studio): 2/6/57

Simon Phillips (Toto): 2/6/57

Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters): 2/10/68

Pat Wilson (Weezer): 2/1/69

Teddy Campbell (*American Idol*/sessions): 2/24/75

UPDATE NEWS



Tyler Stewart is in the studio with Barenaked Ladies working on a few projects.

Jimmy DeGrasso will be hitting the road with industrial metal masters Ministry for their final tour, which is expected to kick off in early 2008.

Victor Indrizzo and **Michael J. Baker** share the drum chair on Colbie Caillat's CD *Coco*. **Luis Conte** is on percussion.

World percussionist **Tom Teasley**'s latest CD is called *Painting Time*. For more info visit www.tomteasley.com.

Nir Z has been in the studio with Wynonna Judd, Chris Cornell, Linda Eder, and John Cruz.

Robin Diaz is in the studio recording Theory Of A DeadMan's third album with producer Howard Benson.

After wrapping up a tour with Shakira, **Brendan Buckley** recently headed out with Damien Rice.

Paul "Deep Pocket" Allen has recorded new CDs with Keaton Simons, Tyler Hilton, and Taryn Manning, and he's on Josh Kelley's latest.

Roger Taylor is on the latest disc from Duran Duran, *Red Carpet Massacre*.

Tico Torres is on the road with Bon Jovi to promote their latest CD, *Lost Highway*.

Matt McDonough can be heard on Mudvayne's first ever fan-generated CD, *By The People, For The People*.

Ryan Yerdon is touring with Puddle Of Mudd to promote their latest CD, *Famous*. Besides Ryan, the disc also features **Kenny Aronoff**, **Josh Freese**, and **Abe Laboriel Jr.** on drums and **Lenny Castro** on percussion.

Buddy Rich's grandson **Nick Rich** is touring and recording with his band, Opium Alibi. For more on Nick visit www.myspace.com/nickdiesinthree.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Chick Webb was born on 2/10/09. **Baby Dodds** passed away on 2/14/59, **Karen Carpenter** on 2/4/83, **Tony Williams** on 2/23/97, Doobie Brother **Keith Knudsen** on 2/8/05, and percussion great **Ray Barretto** on 2/17/06.

2/18/69: Miles Davis records *In A Silent Way*, with **Tony Williams** on drums.

2/19/77: Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* is released (with **Mick Fleetwood** on drums). It will spend thirty-one weeks at number-one.

2/9/80: UK new wave pop group The Vapors (with **Howard Smith** on drums) climbs into the top-five on the US charts with their hit "Turning Japanese."

Nate Morton has been working with guitarist Don Felder (ex-The Eagles) and Richard Marx.

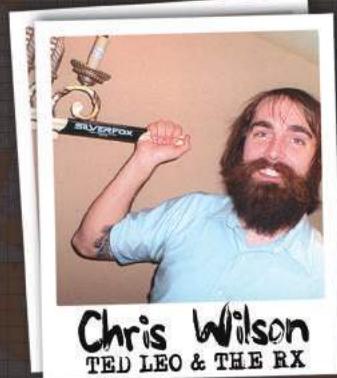
The new project featuring Sepultura founding members Max and **Igor Cavalera**, alongside bassist Joe Duplantier and guitarist Marc Rizzo, has tentatively changed its name to The Cavalera Conspiracy. The band is currently putting the finishing touches on its debut album in LA, with an early 2008 release expected.

Shauney Baby has been working with Will.I.Am.

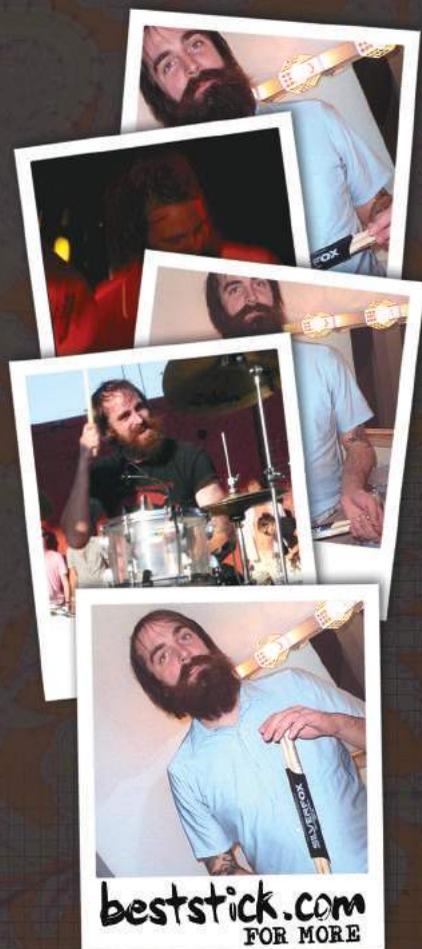
After four years with Alanis Morissette, **Blair Sinta** is now concentrating on LA studio work. He has recently recorded with Idina Menzel, Annie Lennox, Daniel Powter, Josh Groban, and others. You can also hear him playing on the TV show *Dirty Sexy Money*.

Congratulations to **Eddie Bayers Jr.** on winning the Academy Of Country Music's Drummer Of The Year award for the thirteenth time.

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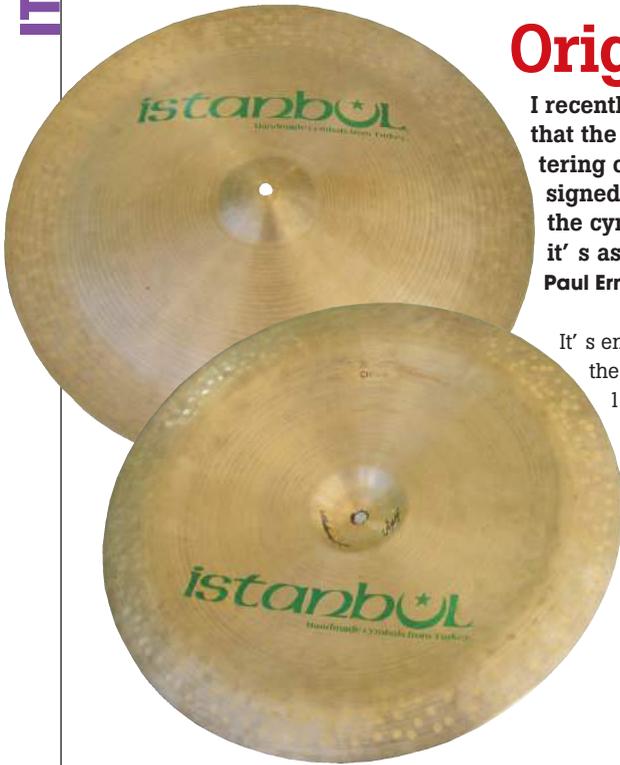


Original Istanbul Cymbal

I recently purchased a 20" Istanbul China cymbal. The seller claimed that the cymbal was stored for twenty years in a warehouse. The lettering on the cymbal is green in color, and the underside of the bell is signed "Mehmet" and "Agop" in black. For the \$129 that I paid for the cymbal I don't think I got hurt, but I'm curious as to whether it's as old as advertised.

Paul Ernst

It's entirely possible that your cymbal is twenty years old. It carries the logo of the original Istanbul cymbal company, which was established in the mid-1980s by partners Agop Tomurcuk and Mehmet Tamdeger. Following the death of Agop in 1996, the company was divided. Today, Agop's sons Arman and Sarkis Tomurcuk make cymbals that are branded Istanbul Agop. Mehmet Tamdeger makes cymbals branded Istanbul Mehmet.



How's Your Boogaloo?

I'm a long-time MD subscriber, and I've played and taught drums for thirty years. But when a question came up from one of my students, I realized that I don't know what the authentic "boogaloo" drum beat is. How embarrassing! Can you illustrate that beat?

Andrew Poling

As with most drum beats, there are dozens of variations to the boogaloo beat. But the fundamental beat will sound very familiar to you once you put it together, because it seems to be the first "funky" beat that every young drummer develops.

Here's a way to think of the beat if you're a non-reader. In two bars of 4/4, the bass drum would play the following boldface notes: **1** (& 2) **& 3** & (4) **&**. The snare drum would play the following boldface notes: (1 &) **2** (&) **ah** (3) **e** (&) **4** (&). The hi-hat would generally play straight 8th notes: **1** & **2** & **3** & **4** &.

When notated, the beat would look like this:



If you want to hear a classic version, try to find a tune called "Boogaloo Down Broadway," by a soul singer called The Fantastic Johnny C. It was a pop/R&B hit in 1968.

Floor Tom Pitch Problems

On a recent studio session the producer noted that the 14" floor tom on my kit had substantially more low end than the 16" floor tom did. I'd spent a considerable amount of time tuning the drums before we miked them up, and I thought they sounded great. The producer agreed with the quality of the drums' sound individually, but he didn't like the fact that the 14" was giving him so much more bottom. We experimented with some different tunings, but we didn't get an optimal response.

Does a 14x14 drum naturally possess more low end than a 16x16? Are there any tuning options that might even out the two drums?

Jay DeWitt

We've done a bit of checking among various manufacturers, various drum techs, and even a few artists. None has ever experienced the problem you describe. However, two techs and one artist made the same comment regarding your studio experience: Rather than worry about which size floor tom gave the lowest sound, why not just reverse the positions of the two drums?

The only theories that came up regarding why your 14" tom might sound lower than the 16" (assuming that the heads were the same and each drum was tuned to its maximum depth) had to do with the timbre of the shells themselves. In some cases, the natural resonating pitch of a shell will be higher or lower than "normal" for its size. It's possible that you have a 14" shell with a particularly low timbre, and a 16" shell with a particularly high timbre. These unusual timbres might not be noticeable individually, but they become apparent when the two drums are compared to each other.

If this is the case, there's very little you can do about it. But once again, why agonize over it? If the 14" is consistently lower than the 16", but each drum sounds good in and of itself, just reverse their position in your setup and enjoy the total sound of the kit.



Announcing...

Modern Drummer's 2008 READERS POLL

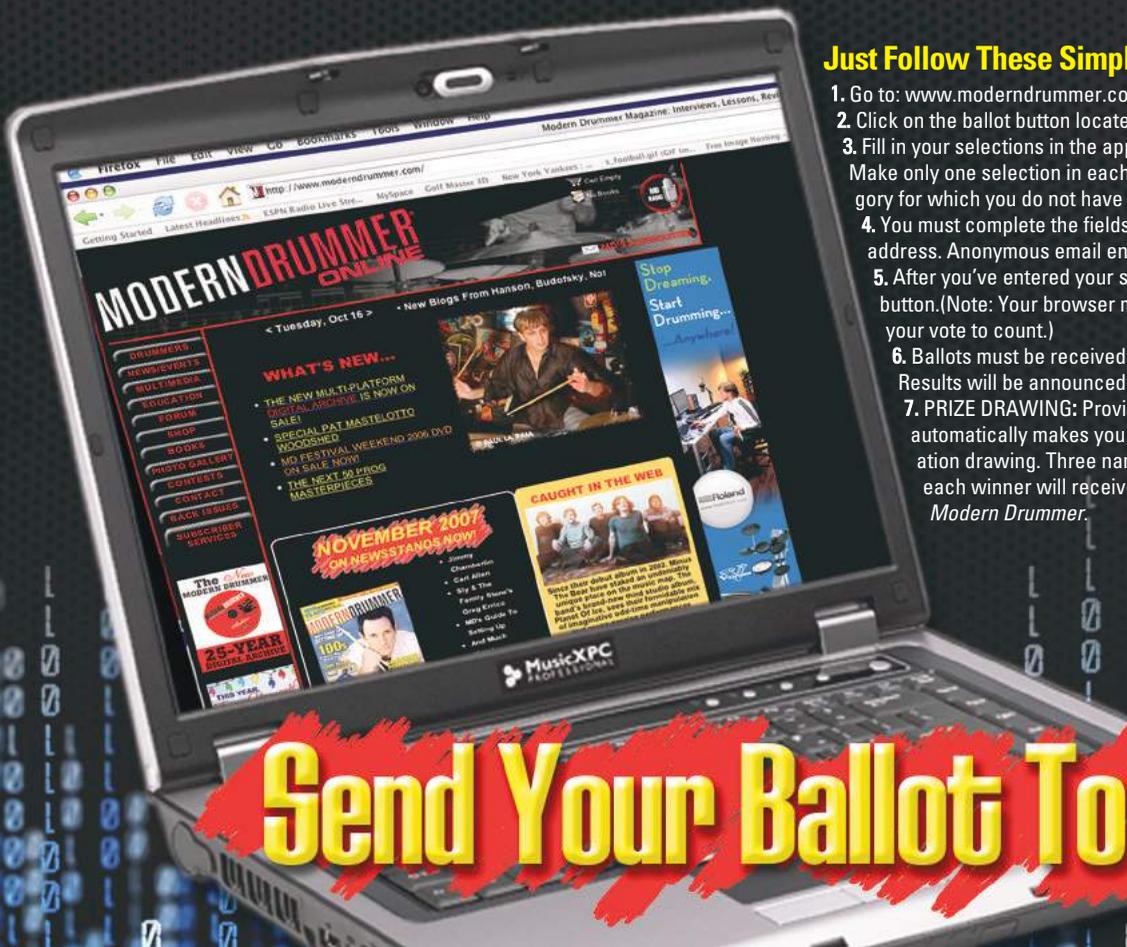
Cast Your Votes Online!

That's right...we've made it easier than ever before for you to express your support for your favorite drummers and percussionists. Now all it takes is a few moments of your time and a few clicks of your mouse to let the world know what artists, performances, and educational materials impressed and inspired you over the past twelve months.

Just Follow These Simple Instructions:

1. Go to: www.modrndrummer.com.
2. Click on the ballot button located on the home page.
3. Fill in your selections in the appropriate fields on the ballot. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
4. You must complete the fields for your name and mailing address. Anonymous email entries will be disqualified.
5. After you've entered your selections, press the "Submit" button. (Note: Your browser must accept cookies in order for your vote to count.)
6. Ballots must be received no later than **February 15, 2008**. Results will be announced in the July 2008 issue of *MD*.
7. **PRIZE DRAWING:** Providing your name and address automatically makes you eligible for *MD*'s voter-appreciation drawing. Three names will be chosen at random; each winner will receive a free one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer*.

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- **Gibraltar** Intruder Pedal and 8600 Series Hardware
- **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
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- **Modern Drummer** 25 + 1 Year Digital Archive



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- **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



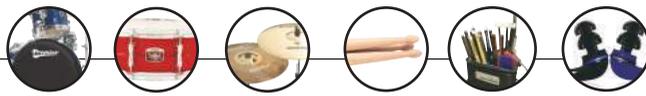
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To enter online, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Gretsch 125th Anniversary Contest button (one entry per email address) or send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, email address, and telephone 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 drum heads, 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.



Premier Cabria XPK Kit

>> **Redesigned And Ready To Rock**

by Martin Patmos



KEY NOTES

- Big-sounding kit at an attractive price
- Snare and toms are fitted with die-cast hoops
- Hardware features outstanding chrome plating

Back in 1998, Premier Drums launched a line of drums called the Cabria series. It was aimed at the entry- and mid-level markets, replacing the APK and XPK lines. Now, some ten years later, the Cabria line has been reintroduced with improvements that incorporate some of the latest design trends. The bass-wood Cabria PK Power Kit, the ash/maple Cabria APK Advanced Power Kit, and the all-maple Cabria XPK Extreme Power Kit all have features that should make them attractive additions to the more price-conscious end of the market.

Full disclosure time: Back in the 1990s I bought one of the original XPK kits, having been impressed with the crack and attack of their toms. Those drums were made of Philippine mahogany, and the kit featured power-size toms and the long lugs that were fashionable at the time. So it was with great curiosity that I opened the boxes containing the new Cabria XPK kit that Premier sent for review. Despite the similar moniker, these are very different drums.



Die-cast hoops are a rare feature on kits in this price range.



The Rok-Lok tom holder provides excellent positioning flexibility.

The Kit

The kit included an 18x22 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, 14x14 and 16 x16 floor toms, and a matching 5¹/₂x14 snare. The Atlantic Blue Lacquer finish (with shaded lines of wood grain peeking through) looked like it was taken right from a tropical bay. Its glossy sheen was set off by the immaculate chrome plating on the hardware—a feature that Premier has been justifiably known for since the 1960s. Quite a nice-looking set all around.

The 6-ply, 6 mm-thick maple tom shells were complemented by the 8-ply, 8 mm-thick snare and bass drum. The well-cut bearing edges were reasonably smooth, and they worked with Premier's newly designed Lo-Mass lugs to allow precise tuning. These small and functional lugs add a somewhat classic look to their no-nonsense design.

What impressed me most, however, were the die-cast hoops that came on the toms and the snare—something rather uncommon in a mid-level kit. These hoops were a nice asset to the kit—assisting the tone, offering a great surface for rimshots on the snare and toms, and providing a clean look. The bass drum, meanwhile, sported solid wood hoops that matched the finish of the kit.

The kit came outfitted with Remo UK series heads: clear single-ply heads on the toms, a coated snare batter, a Powerstroke-style bass drum batter, and a single-ply black logo resonant head. These heads are produced in China, which helps keep the cost of the kit down. But they're not up to the standards of other Remo heads. Still, after a fair amount of tweaking—especially on the toms—I was able to get them in tune, and after that they sounded fine. So the heads are at least serviceable, and they could be used until replaced with higher-quality models.

The Sound

Once I got the heads in tune, it was time to play. Boom...thwack... boom.... Wow. Deep-shelled bass drums have become popular in recent years, and the near sub-harmonic lows that emitted from this 18x22 drum show why. This drum had so much punch and low-end that at first I thought its sound would overpower and be out of bal-

ance with the rest of the kit. But when I lightly muffled the front head to keep it under control and tighten things up, the drum sounded great within the overall kit.

I wouldn't choose this bass drum for a jazz setting (Premier offers an 18x20 model for those seeking a smaller size), but for high-volume situations it would sound perfect. When armed with a big and powerful bass drum like this, a rock drummer should really be able to take care of business.

The 9x12 rack tom simply sang, while the two floor toms were full of resonance. As a group they sounded articulate and consistent. They also held their own in patterns with the bass drum, with rolling triplets between the floors and bass sounding especially effective.

The more I played the snare drum, the more it grew on me. When I tuned it loose it sounded fat, which worked well with the big bass drum sound—especially for slow, muddy grooves. My preference, though, was to crank it up tight to allow for crispy chatter. When it was tuned this way, the snare was responsive and dynamic, with a woody tone that complemented the deep bass nicely. The die-cast rims really came into play here, too, helping produce some great-sounding rimshots.

One feature on the snare drum worthy of note is a redesigned throw-off. It's unobtrusive but accessible, with a throw-off lever that moves away from the drum and operates smoothly.

Hardware

The Cabria XPK kit came with all the hardware needed to get going. This included two double-braced boom stands with long knurled boom arms that provide good range for cymbal positioning. The bass drum-mounted Rok-Lok tom holder features a ball-in-socket arm for excellent tom positioning, while the tom itself is cradled by a suspension ring. Solid knurled legs support each floor tom, while the fold-down bass drum spurs adjust for height.

I did have a problem with the snare stand, which didn't go high enough for me. I'm 6' tall, and I set my snare drum higher than many other drummers might. A few more inches on the snare

stand's center tube would have brought things to a more comfortable height for me. Otherwise, the double-braced stand proved solid and reliable.

On the other hand, the hi-hat stand won points with me because it could be set low-level with the snare drum, even. While it's unlikely that most drummers would set up this way, having the option is a plus. The stand operated smoothly and responded to my foot pressure appropriately. I was, however, concerned with the design of the clutch that holds the top hi-hat cymbal. Rather than

ing a smooth zone where the cymbal sits between the felts, the clutch's threading continues straight through. This didn't affect my cymbal during the relatively brief review period, but I'd be wary of the clutch's potential to grind against the cymbal hole over time.

The snappy, no-nonsense bass drum pedal features a solid base-plate, a chain drive system, and adjustable spring tension. It responded quickly and accurately, while always feeling firm and stable. The two-surface beater (hard felt and hard rubber) offers different attack options.

Conclusion

With its straightforward and attractive design, warm, classic maple tone, crackling woody snare, and killer bass drum, the Cabria XPK comes ready to rock. The few reservations I expressed here involve issues that can be dealt with easily and affordably—especially considering the kit's low list price. This is a strong contender in the entry-level drumkit field, and it's definitely worthy of consideration.



hav-

The XPK throw-off looks simple and clean, and it operates smoothly.

THE NUMBERS

Premier Cabria XPK Heavy Rock 22 kit \$1,295

Includes an 18x22 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, a 5 1/2x14 snare drum, and a complete hardware package.

www.premier-percussion.com



YAMAHA

5 1/2x14 KABUTO

HOW'S IT SOUND?

Even the most basic snare collection should consist of at least two all-purpose drums: one made of wood and one made of metal. For wood drums, most people recommend a maple shell, due to its warm and resonant characteristics. For metal, some people prefer brass or aluminum for their punchy and controlled tones, while others want something bright, loud, and cutting. That personality is best found in a steel-shelled drum. Yamaha's 5 1/2x14 Kabuto snare attempts to split the difference between those qualities. It's made of steel, so it has a lot of cut and power. But the high-end "bite" that's common with this shell type is tamed down a bit (most likely due to the sprayed-on finish), leaving behind a more balanced timbre.

To get a feel for how it compares with similar drums on the market, we played the Kabuto alongside two other popular metal drums within the same price range. One of those was a Ludwig Acrolite (a student-grade aluminum-shelled drum), and the other was Pearl's signature Chad Smith snare, which features a nickel-plated steel shell. Surprisingly, the Kabuto had much more in common with the slightly warm and controlled sound of the Acrolite than the loud and cutting "crack" of the Chad Smith drum. The Kabuto was just more professional sounding than its entry-level cousin. It was louder, with a fuller and more "EQ-ed" tone, and its snare response was as good as it gets.



No frills throw-off features a plastic thumbscrew.

Sprayed-on red finish helps control overtones.

WHAT'S IT COST? **\$319**

www.yamahadrum.com

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

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Thomas Lang

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Istanbul Mehmet Signature X-Jazz And X-Cast Flake Cymbals And Radiant Series Ping Ride

>> A Musical Mixed Bag

by Robin Tolleson



Clockwise from top: Radiant Ping ride, X-Jazz Mehmet Signature Dark ride, X-Jazz Mehmet Signature Dark Hats, and X-Cast Flake ride

KEY NOTES

- X-Jazz cymbals feature two thicknesses
- X-Jazz cymbals have dark, smoky sound to match charcoal-colored finish
- X-Cast cymbals combine crisp attack and old-world tone
- 20" Radiant Ping ride cuts through where bigger cymbals can't

Drummers know that "trashy" is not always a bad thing, especially when it comes to cymbals. That's why Istanbul Mehmet is onto something with their new X-Jazz Mehmet Signature and X-Cast Flake cymbals. They also have a heavyweight contender in a small package with their Radiant Ping ride. Let's check out each one.

20" X-Jazz Signature Dark Ride

The X-Jazz Mehmet Signature Dark ride cymbals are limited editions, with only 250 of each to be made. I'll bet they get snatched up quickly. These cymbals take the "dark" concept a step beyond the aural. They're visually dark, too—a lovely charcoal and rust color. Though named X-Jazz, these exotic-looking dishes need not be limited to jazz playing. Their dryness and distinguished wash sound would indeed make them terrific jazz cymbals, but they could fit just as easily into funk, electronica, pop, and world music.

The 20" X-Jazz Signature Dark ride offers a crisp, defined stick attack that's not overstated, with a relatively high pitch. That attack is distinctly higher than the wash sound that develops underneath while the cymbal is being played. The overtones are rich and provocative, just begging to support a sax or piano solo. The bell is on the small side—less than 4" across—but it can be struck hard and at many angles to produce the desired punctuation marks.

Istanbul is experimenting with different thicknesses on the same cymbal within the X-Jazz series. You can feel and see this by looking at the bottom side of the Dark ride. From the bell to



X-Jazz Mehmet Signature Dark Hats feature a bell-less bottom cymbal fitted with rivets.

about 8" out from the center, the cymbal is noticeably thicker than the outer 5". It's like a thick 15" crash with an extra-thin edge added onto it to make it into a 20". This process (along with the coating that gives the cymbal its dark color) probably adds to the cymbal's dryness, and might help with the overtone control. Tone-wise, there's no difference between playing on the thick and thinner parts of the ride.

14" X-Jazz Signature Dark Hats

The 14" X-Jazz Mehmet Signature Dark Hats have an appealing, organic, trashy sound to them. They deliver a groove-defining "chick" sound, but there's also a lot of earthy tone, providing body as well as bite. Like the X-Jazz ride, the bottom hi-hat cymbal is thicker in the middle and thinner on the outside band. It's also nearly flat (without a bell), and it has four holes drilled in it for air escape. In between each hole are two rivets that hang upside down, with the heavier "heads" underneath. Wailing on the hats slightly open (with the cymbals banging off each other) can activate the rivets for a little extra funkiness. Honestly, it was hard to tell if the rivets really did much of anything. All I know is, I liked the voice of these hats more each time I played them.

X-Cast Flake Rides

Okay, let's just move quickly past the funny name, and get into the specs of this model. The X-Cast Flake rides are rather light in weight, with a sort of hard, hammered finish. The bells, in contrast, are traditionally spun and polished. Istanbul is targeting the X-Cast rides at jazz and fusion drummers, who should especially like the 20" model. The company brags that the X-Cast cymbals have very low overtones, a claim which I found questionable. The 20" X-Cast Flake Ride is certainly dry, but one of its defining features is its exotic overtone sound. That's really what I noticed first about that ride. It had a more earthy sound than that of the 21" size, and it also produced a quicker and denser build-up of overtones. I liked the cymbal for precisely that personality.

The 21" X-Cast Flake ride is also on the dark side, and could be used in many jazz settings. But this cymbal is a bit crisper than the 20" size, and it gets more crisp—and more open—the louder you play it. It also has a controlled wash to go along with a well-defined, opened-up sound. This cymbal really breathes when bashed, and it has a 6" bell that provides a big target, a monster sound, and a lot of options. Accordingly, it would make an excellent rock ride.

20" Radiant Ping Ride

The 20" Radiant Series Ping Ride is about as different a ride as there could be from the dry X-Cast and X-Jazz Series cymbals. It's



the Anti-X. As opposed to being hammered or pre-aged, the Ping Ride is polished and buffed to where you can see yourself in it. As opposed to being "dry," it's dripping wet. And it hardly has to be touched to exude its brilliance.

If you're looking for the extreme when it comes to crisp, metallic tones, play the Radiant Ping with a nylon-tip stick. Even when played with a wood tip it was one of the brightest cymbals I've ever heard. I'd go confidently into any rock situation armed with the Radiant Ping. Even though at 20" it's not huge, it has excellent definition and tone, the power to cut through a mess of guitars, and a chorus of overtones that add to the wave and help provide the needed drive. The overtones rise, to be sure, but they never overpower the stick attack. And the cymbal's dome sounds like a railroad crossing bell.

Overall, the Radiant Ping has a sweet and true sound, and while it would serve admirably in rock situations, it shouldn't be ruled out of certain jazz settings either. For example, it would kick seriously in a big band. And as an additional benefit, the Radiant Ping is very reasonably priced for a professional-quality ride.

Summing Up

This new selection from Istanbul Mehmet gives drummers several choices in ride cymbals, with results ranging from a pre-aged dry sound to an ultra-polished brilliant ping. They've got some earthy new dark hats that should be checked out too. These are cymbals with personality, ready for drummers who are genuinely interested in the sounds of things.

THE NUMBERS

20" X-Jazz Series Mehmet Tamdeger Signature Ltd. Edition Dark ride . . .	\$520
14" X-Jazz Series Mehmet Tamdeger Signature Ltd. Edition Dark Hats . . .	\$530
20" X-Cast Flake ride	\$330
21" X-Cast Flake ride	\$360
20" Radiant Ping ride	\$280

www.istanbulmehmet.com

Quick Looks

3 DRUMSTICKS

by Chap Ostrander



Experienced drummers know that individual sticks of the same size and model can often vary widely in weight, pitch, and balance, owing to the organic nature of wood. As a result, grabbing any two sticks out of your stick bag can often result in a dramatically mismatched pair. 3 Drumsticks offers a solution to this problem.

When the folks at Drum Workshop (parent company of 3 Drumsticks) first decided to produce sticks, they naturally wanted to make those sticks straight, as well as consistent in weight. But they decided to go a step further by matching the sticks for pitch and balance as well. (All of these characteristics are what give sticks their “feel.”) They identified three weight categories (light, medium, and heavy), two aspects of balance (front-heavy and back-heavy), and three pitch types (bright, medium, and dark).

If you take all the possibilities, you get thirty-six different stick variations for any given model. So, as 3 sticks are processed, they’re computer-sorted into one of thirty-six bins. As a final step, information pertaining to each stick’s individual characteristics is printed right on it. So you can instantly see that the stick that feels best in your hand is, for example, a medium-weight, front-heavy model with a bright pitch response.

DW also wanted to make the sticks easy to hold. So they worked out a priming and lacquering process that seals the sticks and gives them a natural feel that strikes a balance between too tacky and raw. Finally, the company decided to add a third stick to the mix. If you’re going to get sticks that really suit you, why not have a spare on hand?

The sample sticks that we were sent were all perfectly straight. And the weight, balance, and pitch of each set—one can’t say “pairs” with these—were true to the data printed on the sticks. Out of each group of three sticks, whichever two I used felt like a matched pair. And since I’m not one to break sticks frequently, all three sticks wore evenly.

I think this manufacturing and marketing concept will be a boon to drummers. Not only will it be easier for them to identify sticks with a “feel” that works for them, they’ll also be able to find three of those sticks at a time—at prices that compare favorably to pairs of sticks from other brands. 3 Drumsticks are available in 7A, 5A, 5B, and 2B sizes. Each is offered with a choice of olive, acorn, and ball wood tips, as well as with olive nylon tips. List prices are \$15.98 for wood and \$16.98 for nylon. www.3drumsticks.com

REVOLUTION DRUMS STICK SILO AND FIREFLY by Russ Barbone

The Revolution Drums Stick Silo is a free-standing stick and accessory container that can also be mounted on a drum. Instead of being the familiar “flat” bag shape, the Silo has rigid 8" sides that create a triangular shape. It’s constructed with 1/2" closed-cell foam surrounded by ABS plastic for durability.

The Silo measures 17" high with the lid closed, and 12" high with its zippered removable lid off. It has ample room for sticks, mallets, brushes, and other percussive tools. The outside features two 8" pockets for small accessories; the inside features a sturdy removable divider to help organize the Silo’s contents for easy grasping on the fly. Adjustable nylon straps with hooks at the ends let you hang it from a drum.

To use the Silo as a free-standing container, you have to completely remove the top. Otherwise the bag tends to tip over. Whether or not the free-standing mode will prove convenient for you will depend on how high you sit and how long your arm reach is.

When I hung the Silo from my floor tom, its rigid triangular shape caused it to jut out into my playing area. This might not bother drummers whose kits are fairly spread out, but it made me feel cramped, and it limited my movements. For hanging on a floor tom, I’d prefer a more flexible bag that contours to the shape of the drum.

My feeling about the Stick Silo is that it’s best suited for protecting its contents while in transit, or for on-stage use in its free-standing mode. List price is \$39.95.

The Firefly is a quick-action drum-tuning device. It resembles a standard drumkey, but looks are deceiving. The ergonomic black handle in the middle of the Firefly covers a cam clutch bearing that permits precise ratcheting—without the annoying “clicks” and play of a standard ratcheting key. The ratchet pushes only in one direction; you loosen or tighten the tuning bolts simply by turning the key over. The ends of the key are knurled, making it easy to “spin” loosened bolts on or off the drum. (The handle acts as a “flywheel” to provide centrifugal force.)

The Firefly definitely makes changing heads a faster process than with a traditional drumkey. Tuning is also more precise, due to the extra-fine, supremely quiet, and almost imperceptible internal ratchet. Plus the device comes in a tough, see-through plastic case. What more could you ask for? List price is \$10.95.

www.revolutiondrum.com



FUTURE SONICS ATRIO SERIES MONITOR EARPHONES

by Rick Van Horn

At the risk of sounding egotistical, I can honestly say that I started using in-ear monitoring almost a decade before it became trendy. Back in the very early '80s I purchased a Gallien-Krueger personal monitor amplifier with two powerful 6" speakers. After those speakers blasted my left ear for over a year, it dawned on me that the darn thing had a headphone jack!

I didn't want to wear bulky headphones on stage, so I utilized a pair of audiophile-quality earphones built into what were essentially shooter-style conical earplugs. These devices gave me excellent sound in my ears, and at the same time they blocked out the onstage din around me.

While I've used those earphones satisfactorily ever since, I always felt that they didn't reproduce bass drum sounds as well as I'd like. In recent years I've heard this same complaint from drummers about their newer, even more sophisticated in-ear systems. Many of those drummers augment their in-ears with stage wedges to "push the air" of a kick drum's sound, or utilize "bass thumpers" attached to their thrones to replicate the physical "kick" of the drum.

Considering all this backstory, I was a little skeptical when we got a press release about Future Sonics' Atrio series earphones, claiming to produce dramatically improved bass response. The new series is designed to offer the manufacturer's professional-level TrueTimbre custom-earphone technology in a more affordable, universal-fit product, "with no electronic or comb filtering artifacts, no phase issues, and no crossover dropouts."

I have no idea what that means. What I do know is that when I put the Atrios into my ears, I was literally overwhelmed by the depth and power of the kick drum sound. (I had to reduce its level in my monitor mix by 50%!) Meanwhile, the rest of my kit—and everything else in my full-band mix—sounded clear and natural. To put things in a practical perspective, I



played an outdoor beach concert using the Atrios, and my monitor sound made me feel like I was in a top-notch studio.

Included with the earphones are three sizes of EarFills dual-flange silicon sleeves that allow the earpiece to fit snugly in any ear canal. Also included are two sizes of ComfortFit foam sleeves, which provide a more complete seal of the ear canal. The cables are relatively delicate—much more so than those on my previous earphones, for example—so you'd need to be careful while handling the Atrios. But heck, considering their low list price—\$199—you could probably carry a spare pair!

www.futuresonics.com



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Aviom Pro16 Personal Monitoring System

Control Your Mix From The Kit

by Michael Dawson



The label strip allows you to write in the name of each channel with a washable marker or grease pencil.

Control the mix of up to sixteen individual or grouped sounds by clicking the channel number and adjusting the volume, pan, and tone knobs.

Up to sixteen line-level signals can be connected to the back of the AN-16 Input Module, which then sends each channel to the Personal Mixer via a high-speed Category 5 network cable.

Nothing destroys the vibe of a gig or recording session more than a bad monitor mix. And when that mix is controlled by a sound technician or studio engineer who has to guess at what you need in your headphones or floor wedges to play your best, you never know what you're going to get. That's why the engineers at Aviom created the Pro16, a sixteen-channel personal monitoring system that allows you to control what gets pumped into your ears.

The Pro16 system is comprised of two parts: the AN/i Input Module and the A-16II Personal Mixer. The input module is the component that takes line-out signals from electronic instruments or the individual channels of a mixing board and sends them off to the A-16II, where you can fine-tune the balance of the mix. If your band has its own PA system, or if you have a home studio setup, the AN/i Input Module can be mounted in the same rack that houses whatever outboard gear you use (mic pre's, compressors, reverbs, etc.), so you can streamline your setup. If you're interested in using the system without using a mixing board (for low-volume rehearsal or MIDI-based recording), you can connect 1/4" cables from the output of your instruments (e-drums, guitar modules, keyboards, etc.) directly to the back of the unit. Up to sixteen channels or instruments can be connected, and each pair of channels can be linked as a stereo signal.

Once everything is wired into the input module, all of those signals are sent to the A-16II Personal Mixer through a high-speed Cat-5e network cable. The system is said to operate

smoothly with up to 500 feet of cable. So you should have no trouble using the mixer from your drumset, even if the Input Module is positioned across the room or at the back of the club. (The included network cable is only 30 feet long, so you will need to have one custom-made if you require more length.) An infinite number of personal mixers can be chained together, so that each member of your band can have the same control over his/her mix. For monitoring, you can attach headphones, in-ears, or a powered monitor speaker to the Line Out jack on the back of the Personal Mixer.

In use, the Aviom Personal Monitor mixing system works great. You can adjust the mix very easily by tapping a channel button and tweaking the volume, balance, and pan controls. You can also store up to sixteen separate mixes by holding the Recall and Group buttons and pressing one of the channel numbers. The *only* additional thing that I would like to see, aside from a more affordable price tag, would be the availability of a battery-powered personal mixer. That way, you wouldn't have to worry about finding an outlet somewhere near your drums. (Aviom does offer the A-16D Pro distributor, which provides power to up to nine personal mixers. But it costs over \$1,000.) Other than that...this thing's a champ.

Vital Stats

List price: A-16II Personal Mixer...\$603.53

AN-16/i Input Module...\$1,097.05

Size: A-16II Personal Mixer...10³/₄ x 5¹/₂ x 2¹/₄

AN-16/i Input Module...17 x 5³/₄ x 1³/₄ (one rack space)

Power supply: two 24-volt DC adapters (included)

www.aviom.com



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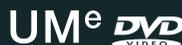
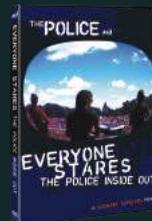
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EVERYONE STARES: THE POLICE INSIDE OUT

A STEWART COPELAND MOVIE

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

-STEWART COPELAND

2008 DATES OF THE POLICE WORLD TOUR

DATE	VENUE	CITY
17 Jan	Westpac Stadium, Wellington	New Zealand
19 Jan	Western Springs, Auckland	New Zealand
22 Jan	Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane	Australia
24 Jan	Telstra Stadium, Sydney	Australia
26 Jan	Cricket Ground, Melbourne	Australia
28 Jan	Entertainment Centre, Adelaide	Australia
29 Jan	Entertainment Centre, Adelaide	Australia
01 Feb	Members Equity Stadium, Perth	Australia
02 Feb	Members Equity Stadium, Perth	Australia
10 Feb	Kyocera Dome, Osaka	Japan
13 Feb	Tokyo Dome, Tokyo	Japan
14 Feb	Tokyo Dome, Tokyo	Japan
16 Feb	Blaisdell Center, Honolulu	USA
05 Jun	SAP Arena, Mannheim	Germany
08 Jun	LTU Arena, Dusseldorf	Germany
11 Jun	Valle Horvin, Oslo	Norway
15 Jun	Isle of Wight Festival, Newport	UK
17 Jun	MEN Arena, Manchester	UK
18 Jun	MEN Arena, Manchester	UK
28 Jun	Zentralstadion, Leipzig	Germany

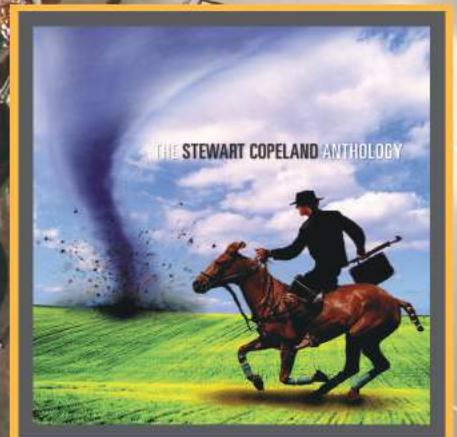
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>>NEW REMO WORLD PERCUSSION ITEMS

Remo's World Percussion line now includes Key-Tuned Djembes that combine Skyndeeep drumheads and Acousticon drumshells with matching graphic images. The four current finishes are: Camouflage, Adinkra graphics, Black Earth, and Fuego graphics.

New Percussion Shakers are available with unique graphic designs. MINI (2"-tall) shakers can be played singly or in pairs, with different sounds created by adding pressure to the ends with the fingers. FX shakers have a finish that depicts the endangered Corroboree frog from Australia. Playing the shaker while covering the open hole on one end creates a frog-like sound.

Bossa (4") and 6" Samba (6") shakers are utility instruments that can live in any percussionist's bag. Ginga shakers feature tambourine jingles. And the Didgeharp shaker blends sounds of the jaw harp and the Australian didgeridoo, as well as producing many other percussive sounds.

www.remo.com



>>OFF-SET DOUBLE-SINGLE PEDAL

Off-Set calls this pedal "The Big Boy" because the sound it generates is extremely big—due to the two beaters striking the bass drum head simultaneously. The beaters can each be adjusted 1" laterally to focus or spread the impact.

The Double-Single pedal has all the features of the Off-Set double bass drum pedal, including a bearing-loaded footboard with toe stop, Super Shackle spring shackles, two heavy-duty return springs, a radius-adjustable drive wheel, independently adjustable beater holders, a center mounting hoop clamp that's adjustable for hoop thickness, and a solid metal baseplate. List price is \$159.99.

www.off-set.net



>>LP GO-JO BAG

Latin Percussion and drummer/percussionist Stephen Perkins have collaborated to create the Go-Jo Bag, a deceptively simple percussion device with a surprisingly wide range of uses.

The tough sealed bag is filled with glass beads specially selected to suit a myriad of uses. The bag will fit most palms easily, and it's equipped with an adjustable strap so that it will stay with the hand through fancy maneuvers. The bag can be used alone (played shaker-style), as an additional sound (on the back of the hand) while playing congas or other hand drums, and in a variety of other methods. List price is \$10.

www.lpmusic.com



>>KACES "CUSTOM" DRUM BAG SETS AND GRAFIX DRUM PADS



Kaces lets drummers add their choice of seven different Grafix snare bag design options to four standard tom and bass drum bags, to create a "customized" set.

Four-piece bag sets (one kick, three toms) are available in fusion and standard configurations. The bags are made with durable nylon exteriors that protect drums against dirt, scratches, and dings. A four-piece bag sets list for \$159.95. Add-on Grafix snare bags list for \$34.95.

Kaces has also added Grafix patterns to 6" practice pads, so practicing need no longer be a drab affair. The line includes skulls, checkerboards, and a 45 RPM record. The pads are formulated to provide a natural drum rebound for better timing and precision. They can be used on a tabletop or mounted on a cymbal stand. List price is \$24.95.

www.kaces.com



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The PocketGroove Rhythm Organizer is a handy and portable way to instantly generate written grooves for practice, on-the-job quick reference, or computer/sequencer programming inspiration. By means of rotating the PocketGroove's two disks and combining their musical figures with those in a window

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www.pocketgroove.de



Drumstick Spinology Plus (DVD)

by Steve Stockmal

Musician, teacher, and author Steve Stockmal has taken his successful book/DVD *Drumstick Spinology* to a new level with the launch of this double DVD. *Drumstick Spinology Plus* includes the entire previous DVD (disc 1), plus sections on warm-ups, back sticking, stick clicking, new spins, and examples on the

drumset (disc 2). Also on disc 2 is the original *Drumstick Spinology* book in its entirety, in a downloadable/printable PDF format. List price is \$47.95.

www.drstix.com



Drums From The Big Room: The Mixes Loop Library

Sony Creative Software has distilled its professional-level box set of multitrack drum performances, *Drums From The Big Room*, into this two-disc 24-bit Premium Collection title containing stereo files performed by studio great Steve Ferrone and mixed by noted engineer/producer Greg Ladanyi. The new title features all the stereo files from the original box-set edition, as well as two multitrack bonus sessions

that provide users with the opportunity to try mixing Ferrone's performances within their workstations of choice. Formatted as ACIDized .wav, the library is ideal for use with any program that supports the .wav file format.

List price is \$99.95.

www.sonycreativesoftware.com

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The T2/HTS-8 is the first 8"-diameter tambourine in **GROVER's** Custom Dry line. The tambourines feature specially heat-treated jingles that provide an ultra-sensitive and dry sonority for orchestral works that require precise articulation.

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Dice Knobs offers aesthetically unusual accessories including Cymbal Topper Knobs that fit all popular 8 mm cymbal stands, Stick Weights (adjustable 1-oz. drumstick weights), and Dice-Grip drumkeys that feature a stainless-steel wrench end. A variety of colors and styles are offered to match virtually every drum setup.

www.diceknobs.com

The **SENSAPHONICS** 221 stereo earphone routes left and right stereo signals to two independent, drivers within a single silicone earpiece. The earphone was designed to enable music lovers with unilateral hearing loss to experience full reproduction in one ear, with all stereo information preserved. This feature should also let the 221 serve as a full-range in-ear monitor to performers who prefer to leave one ear open to the live stage sound.

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—Josh Freese
(September 2007)

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photo by Alex Solca



Tony DePhillips

Ludwig

LED ZEPPELIN'S

J-A-S-O-N BONHAM

SON OF THUNDER

The rumors started spreading months before the official press release went out: "Led Zeppelin is getting back together and they're going on tour." *MD*, like everyone else, was getting excited at the possibility. Was it true? We made calls and sent emails back and forth. And we tried to speak with Jason Bonham—son of famed Zep drummer John Bonham and likely heir to his throne—to find out the scoop. But frankly, it wasn't so easy, since every writer and magazine in the world was thinking the same thing.

After a few attempts, we finally hooked up with Jason. The plan to have him on the cover of *MD* asap to announce the reunion went into action. Unfortunately, jazz icon Max Roach passed away, and that plan had to change so *MD* could honor the legend in a timely, respectful way.

But details have a way of working themselves out, and here we are, getting the inside skinny on the most anticipated rock reunion—certainly of this young century, and perhaps of the past twenty years.

On December 10, all three surviving members of Led Zeppelin—Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, and John Paul Jones—were joined by Jason Bonham, a respected journeyman drummer in his own right, to play a tribute concert for Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun. As an indicator of just how huge an event this was, 90,000,000 people (!) tried to get tickets for a show at a concert hall that only holds 17,000.

by Billy Amendola

Jason Bonham was born on July 15, 1966, to parents Pat Phillips and John Henry Bonham. Most rock fans are familiar with the story of Jason's father and the gargantuan impact he made on music and on drumming. (If you're new to the Led Zeppelin story, get the music. All the hype will make perfect sense.) But many are unfamiliar with Jason's journey to rock stardom, from his early fascination with drums and dirtbikes, to his not-always-easy career in the music business.

By following his passion for the drums, Jason would forever be burdened with living up to his dad's legacy as "the greatest rock drummer ever." Of course, having a famous drummer for a father has had certain advantages. But the Bonham name also brought on more pressure than any other drummer would ever have to live up to.

Jason's career certainly had its ups and downs, but the passion he had for being the best drummer he could be would always burn in his heart. At seventeen he formed his first band, Air Race, and later joined Virginia Wolf (whose record was produced by Queen drummer Roger Taylor). In 1988, he joined Jimmy Page for his *Outrider* record and tour, and that same year he played for the first time as an "official" member of Led Zeppelin when the band reunited for Atlantic Records' Fortieth Anniversary concert at Madison Square Garden.

Jason's first solo album, *The Disregard Of Timekeeping*, was released in 1989 to critical acclaim. After his second solo album, *Mad Hatter*, Bonham concentrated on session work, including supporting Bad Co. singer Paul Rodgers on the Grammy-winning *Muddy Water Blues: A Tribute To Muddy Waters*. In 1994, Jason appeared at Woodstock II with Slash and Paul Rodgers. In 1995, the drummer represented his father when Led Zeppelin was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame, where he sat in for an unrehearsed reunion that featured Aerosmith's Joe Perry and Steven Tyler.

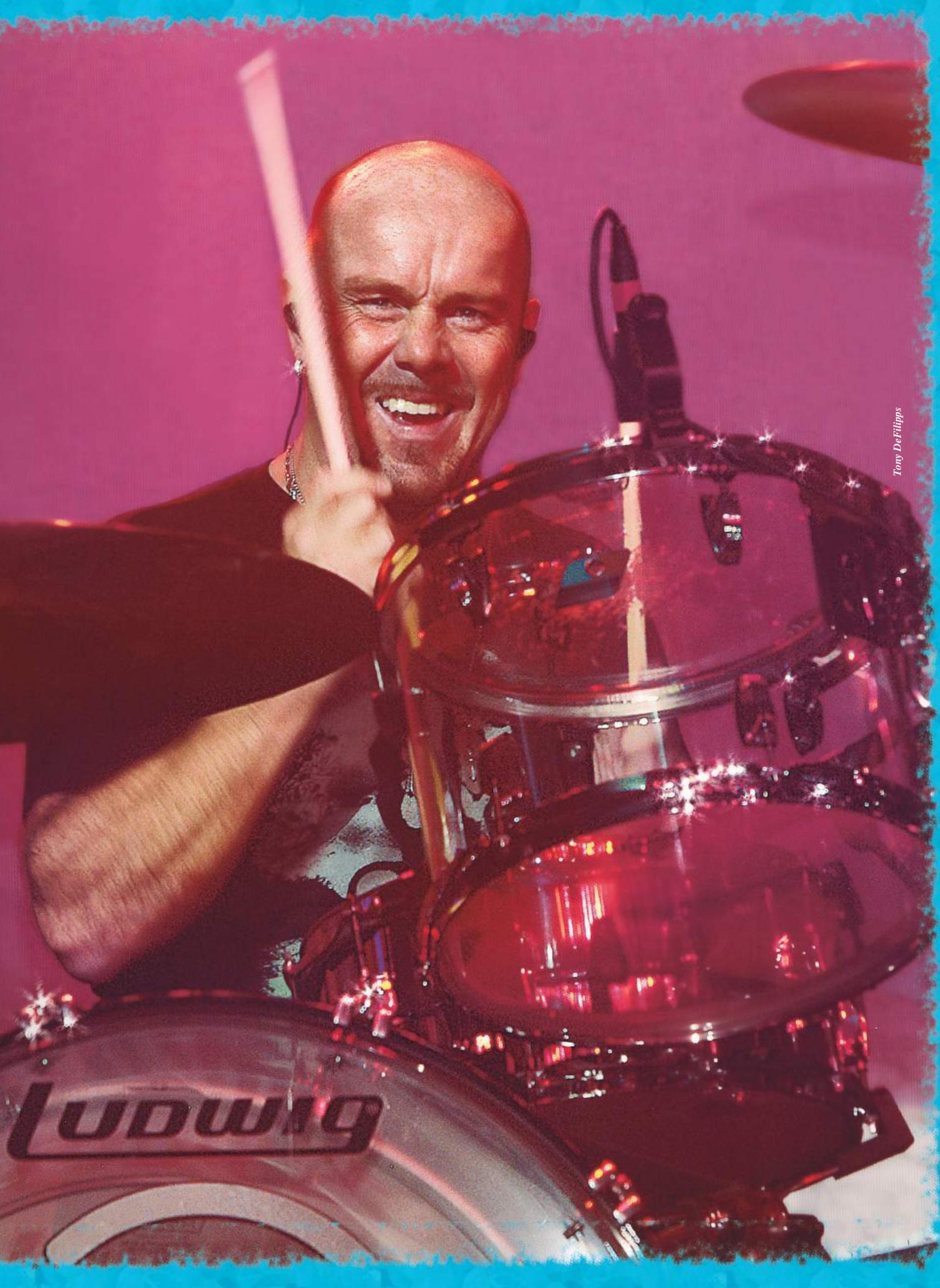
Soon after that, Jason put together another solo project, this time focusing on the songs of Led Zeppelin, titled *In The Name Of My Father*, with proceeds from the album going to charity. From 1999 to 2003, Jason drummed for Healing Sixes. In 2000, he appeared in the film *Rock Star*. And in 2006, Jason briefly became a TV star on VH1's reality show *Supergroup*.

Following an album and tour with his aunt Debbie, the younger sister of his dad, Jason joined the classic hard rock group UFO. Also in 2006, he recorded with guitar slinger Joe Bonamassa. And for the past few years, he's been touring constantly with Foreigner. Without question, Jason has had an impressive career.

So how is Jason preparing to play with Zeppelin—and how will that first show go? By the time you're reading this issue, you'll know the outcome of one of the most historical nights in the history of music. Pondering it a month before the show, Jason says, "By the time people read this, one of the greatest moments of my life will have taken place. History will have been made—we hope! That night will be one of the most emotional jobs I'll ever have to do, because controlling my emotions on that day will be a major part of the ability to do the gig. There's bound to be moments in the show where I'll feel myself getting choked up. So I'm thinking, Get it over and done with now, because there will be enough time for crying afterwards. And as Robert Plant said to me, 'There's nothing worse than seeing a forty-one-year-old bald man cry.'"

So finally, after dealing with secrecy, schedule conflicts, and three attempts to pin down an interview with Jason, the date was set. And by coincidence—or a blessing—it all came together on a very special day in late September.

**"IT WAS A
VERY EMOTIONAL
AND AMAZING
EXPERIENCE.
I WALKED
IN A BOY, BUT
THEY MADE
ME FEEL LIKE
A MAN WHEN
I WALKED OUT."**



Tony DeFilippo

MD: As you know, today is the twenty-seventh anniversary of your father's passing.

Jason: Yeah, I know. I didn't actually think about it until this morning, when I got up and said to my kids as they were squabbling on their way out of the door for school, "You know what day today is?" And they said, "Of course, it's Tuesday." [laughs] It's good we can talk about it all today. And with all the things that have been going on, it's pretty special.

MD: Speaking of which, when did you start rehearsals for the show?

Jason: We started back in June. Basically we got together to see if we were going to do something, to see how it would play out and how it would sound—and whether we would all get along. Our first get-together lasted three days, which was mainly two days of playing and one day of planning. And then I heard nothing from them for about a month and a half—nothing, not a phone call or anything. It was kind of

strange.

MD: And I'm sure that left you thinking: Did they like it or not?

Jason: Exactly! I'm like, were they kidding me in the room at the time when they were saying it was great? I thought, whatever it is, it's something they have to talk together about and be comfortable with. That's the main thing. This is not being done for money. It's purely because they wanted to play together again and because Ahmet meant so much to them.

MD: So how was it playing together?

Jason: It was a very emotional and amazing experience. I walked in a boy, but they made me feel like a man when I walked out. I felt all grown up. I felt taller. It felt like I could speak on the same terms and I didn't feel like that young sweet boy anymore. I had kind of grown up.

MD: So you felt you held your own.

Jason: Yes, and they were all very encouraging. You have to remember, for the past

fifteen, twenty years, people have always asked, "When are you guys going to get back together?" So to finally have it happen, it was a bit overwhelming at first, because I had kind of put it to rest in my mind. "This is not going to happen, move on." Of course, as soon as I moved on, it came back to bite me. That was actually a good thing, because once I stopped expecting that seat to be mine, instead of being cocky, I actually started to doubt myself, which all led to me being a different human being and a lot more honest with myself. It made me go back and really listen, instead of assuming that I knew it all and that I'm the rightful heir to that drum seat. Nonsense! You get the gig if you can play it. I had a foot in the door, but there's also more pressure on me than there might be on another drummer.

MD: But you've played with them over the years.

Jason: I look back at that performance and

DRUMS, CYMBALS, AND ZAK STARKEY

When asking Jason Bonham about his gear, several interesting topics came up—why he switched drum companies, his thoughts on his setup, and his relationship with another son of a drumming icon.

MD: You recently switched to Ludwig drums. Why?

Jason: I had been with DW for nineteen years, but I switched to Ludwig because I was inspired to play Vistalites. At the moment, Drum Workshop doesn't have acrylic kits. I spoke to Ludwig about playing their drums, and they were very enthusiastic to have me back. I really like playing the Vistalite drums. But I'm still a DW hardware endorser—it's all DW hardware and pedals.

My kit has been changing a lot recently. I don't stick to the same setup anymore like I used to. The last three years I've probably used a different setup every three months. As for cymbals, I've been with Zildjian since 1988.

MD: In a Zildjian ad there's a shot of you and Ringo's son Zak Starkey. Do you know each other?

Jason: Yes! Zak and I go way back to when he was eleven and I was ten. I have pictures of us together when our dads used to hang out. Last year I had the chance to see him play with The Who at the Hollywood Bowl, and it was fantastic to see him live. He actually pissed me off, really, and I was kind of bummed, because he was really good. And with The Who he had a great canvas to play chops because the music allowed the space. I remember when I mentioned this to my sister she said, "You can't have everyone's chops, and you can't have everyone's gig!" [laughs]

I remember opening up an issue of *Modern Drummer* and seeing a full-page Zildjian ad featuring Zak on the right side and a Ludwig ad featuring me on the left side. So the first two pages featured Zak and me. None of us knew way back when that the two sons would be playing drums in two of the biggest British bands ever!

think, Yes, I've played with them—badly. When I was younger, I was listening with blinders on, you know what I mean? It was tunnel vision listening. I kind of thought I knew what [Led Zeppelin music] was, but I really hadn't sat down and listened to it properly. So when I got this chance to do it again, I really sat and listened to everything again and again—live, recorded, alternate versions... I wanted to know everything, so if they went somewhere, I was going to know where they were going. Of course, the first song we started wasn't on the list, so I botched that completely. [laughs]

MD: Are there any songs you find particularly challenging to play?

Jason: I think they're all challenging in a certain way. That said, the most challenging Led Zeppelin song for me to play correctly is "Rock And Roll."

MD: I think everyone realized how deceiv-

ing that song was when the Led Zeppelin DVD came out, and we got to see exactly what your dad was playing.

Jason: Oh, yeah, because you can see his hands. The snare drum is going all the way through the whole song.

MD: That shuffle is hard to play with a relaxed feel.

Jason: You're telling me! [laughs] I almost want to play open-handed because I can do

it a lot better with my right than I can with my left.

MD: I had a conversation about playing "Rock And Roll" with the late Tony Thompson, who performed the song with Zeppelin at Live Aid. He mentioned that when he rehearsed with them, he thought he was prepared and that he knew every Zeppelin song inside out. But Jimmy would stop and say, "That's not how it's done."

continued on page 56

JASON'S ZEP KIT

Drums: Ludwig Vistalite (yellow) with black hardware (the photo below is Jason's Foreigner setup)

- A. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 chrome snare
- B. 10x14 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 16x18 floor tom
- E. 14x26 bass drum
- F. 26" timpani

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 15" A Custom Mastersound brilliant hi-hats
- 2. 20" A Custom brilliant crash
- 3. 24" K light ride
- 4. 20" A medium-thin crash

Hardware: DW, including 9000 series hi-hat and 5000 series double pedal with felt beaters (medium-light spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter (medium tension), Ambassador snare-side (very tight), clear CS (dot) on tom batters (medium tension), clear Ambassadors on bottoms (tensioned slightly tighter than top), clear CS (dot) on bass drum batter with clear Ambassador on front (medium tension)

Sticks: Pro-Mark Jason Bonham signature model (maple with wood tip)



Christopher Ouzo



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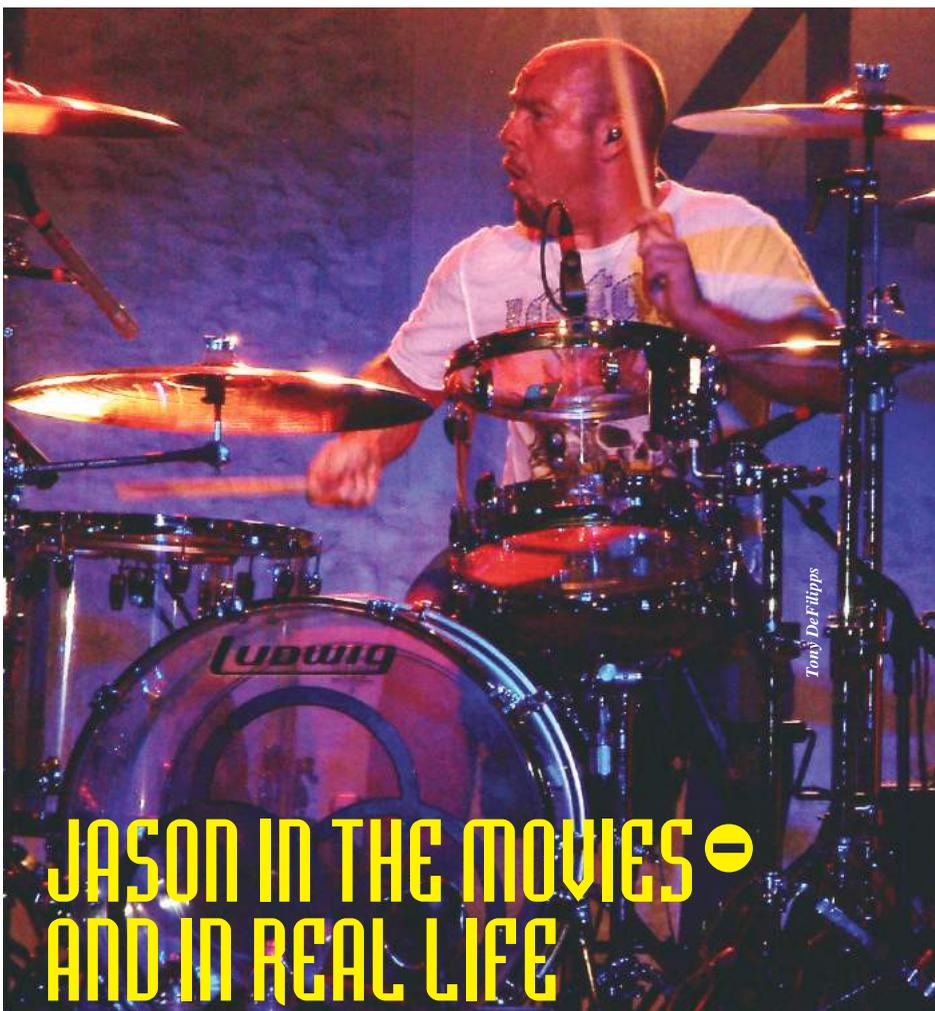
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JASON BONHAM



JASON IN THE MOVIES 
AND IN REAL LIFE

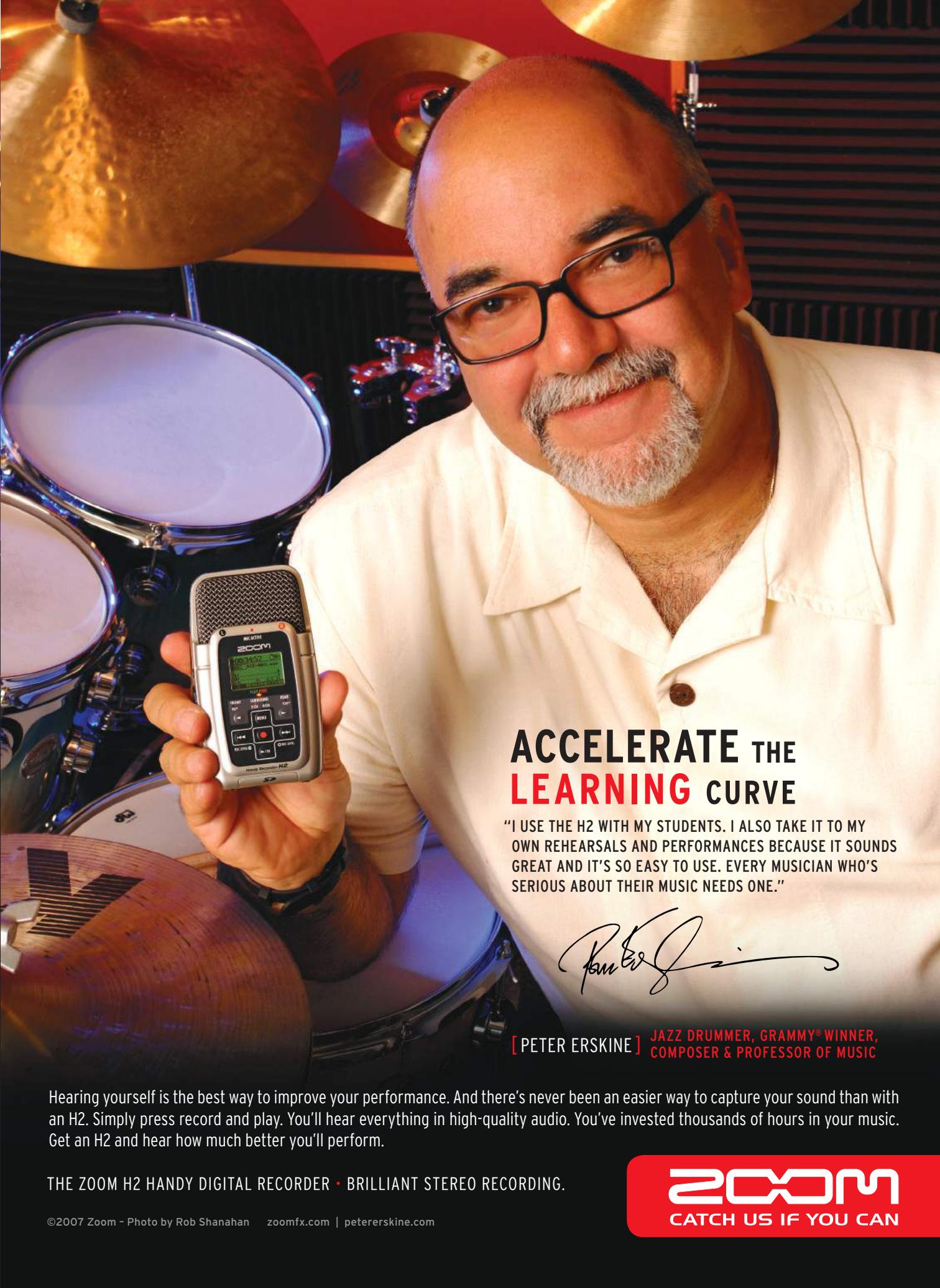
The experience of making the feature film *Rock Star* went from one extreme to another. That was the defining moment of me realizing, "Jesus, is that me? My God, I need to sober up." When we did that film, it was a lot of fun to do, the guys were great, and I got to hang out with movie stars. I really thought I was something special for a short period of my life. I started to think I would continue on as an actor. [laughs] I thought, Hey, I'm pretty good at this. Then you realize how many millions of people are trying to get acting jobs.

I remember asking the director, "Give me my character. Who am I playing?" And he said, "No, no, just be you." But I said, "Give me a bit more than *that*," and he said, "Okay, you're an alcoholic rock drummer." And little did I know, a year later, I'd be standing in an AA meeting, saying, "Hi, I'm Jason. I'm an alcoholic."

With everything in my life, I don't do anything half way. In my earlier days, I wanted to be the best drummer in the world. I wanted to be the best drinker in the world. I wanted to be the biggest partier in the world. I wanted everything to be larger than life.

You can live a very lonely life being a musician on the road. You portray a very friendly, fun-loving person and you meet and greet people, but as soon as they leave the room, you're back in your own head, and you're on your own. Life on the road, it's hard.

I could have been one of the unfortunate ones who have fallen by the wayside and not been alive today. But today I'm very thankful and appreciative of what I have—my family, my kids, my friends and neighbors. The planets aligned in my life to where things began to make sense—it was like somebody putting a headlight on.



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JASON BONHAM

This is how you do it." And he would explain it.

Jason: You have to lead with the snare. Jimmy also taught it to me. He had told me it was inspired by a Little Richard tune, "Keep A Knockin'." It's one of those things that I don't care how confident I'll be, if we do that song live, when it comes, it will be the one where I'm thinking, "Don't mess it up!"

Someone once said to me, "Isn't the ending of 'Rock And Roll' the most difficult bit?" I said, "No, no, no," because that bit changed every night for dad, so you can get away with just going around the kit doing the triplets or whatever. But most of the time, playing his stuff correctly is the hardest thing to do—it's the subtleties you miss.

Getting back to Tony Thompson, before I even knew who he was, I was digging his playing with Chic, Robert Palmer, Power Station, and David Bowie. Back in the day, both Tony and Omar Hakim were very inspirational to me. In fact, on Jimmy Page's *Outrider* album, I sampled the "Addicted To Love" snare sound. I got to speak to Tony about it and he said, "It's okay. On that track, the snare sound is from 'When The Levee Breaks'! So don't worry, you're doing a full circle. You're sampling your dad."

Tony and I used to hang out quite a bit. After I recorded with Paul Rodgers, I couldn't do the tour so Tony went out and did it. I loved his playing. He was a great drummer who had his own sound—and one of the few drummers to play with Led Zeppelin.

MD: Growing up, how often would you watch your dad play?

Jason: He didn't play at home. And if he did play he would just get on my kit. He wasn't one of those guys who sat down and practiced, which is amazing to me. I took that approach for many years, but I shouldn't have, because I find that I play better when I play in my room at home.

I practiced for the Zeppelin gig. I sat there with my iPod and headphones and just played along. I had one earpiece



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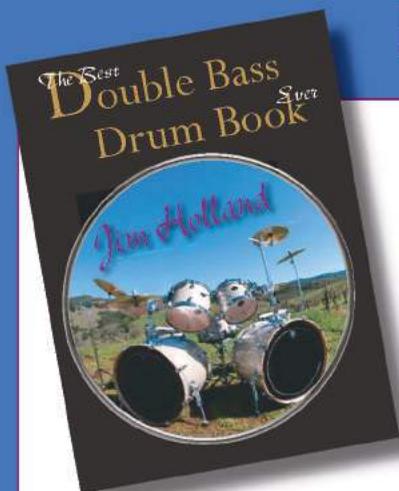
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JASON BONHAM

on and one off, and with my computer I recorded just me playing. Later I would listen back and try to figure out which song I was playing. That was kind of fun.

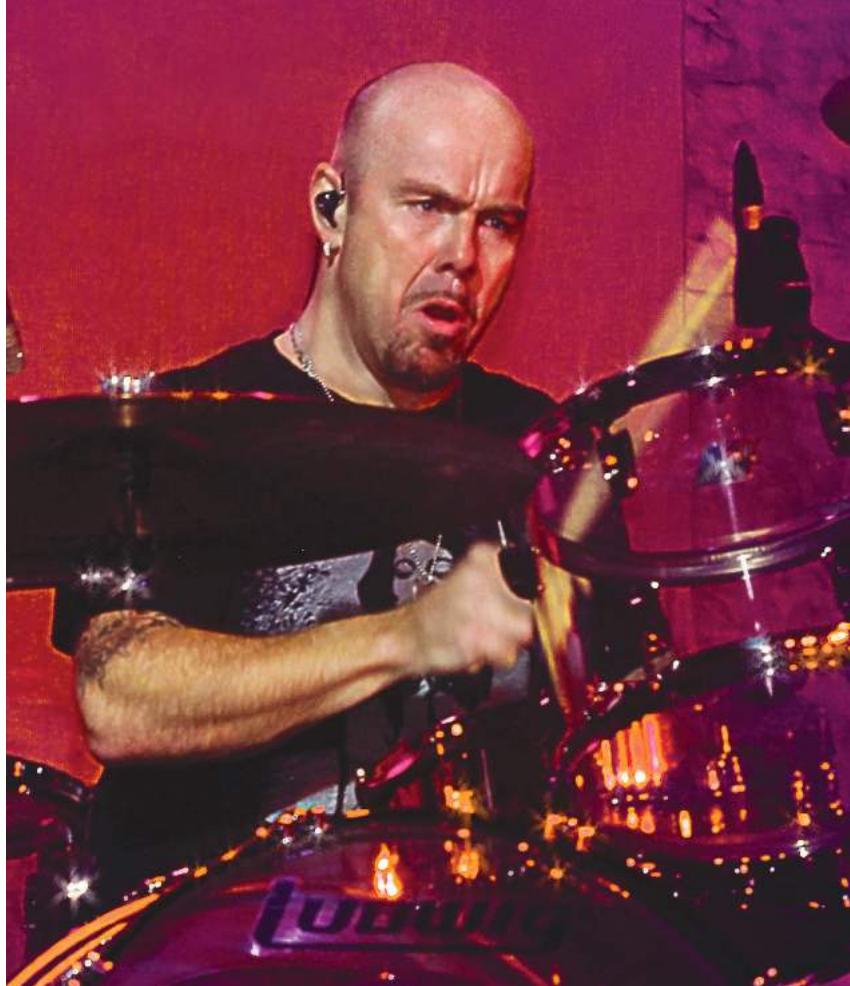
But again, dad very rarely would play at home. That's one thing I would have wanted to do. I never had a chance to play with him. Just before we boarded up his house in Worcestershire, where I grew up—and where I had a really cool drum room—I set up my son's drumkit opposite mine, and we played together. So at least I got to play with my son there.

MD: Do you remember the first song you played on the drums?

Jason: My mom recently sent me the footage from The Song Remains The Same—it was being digitally re-mastered for rerelease—and all the home footage now had sound. So the part where I'm in the movie playing drums, I can hear that I'm playing to Dr. John's "Right Place, Wrong Time."

MD: Will that be in the reissue?

Jason: No, I don't think it's in the DVD. But all of this footage from home. I'd never heard it before. You actually hear me talk. I remember dad said to me, "What song do you want to play to?" I said, "Dr. John. Put Dr. John on." And then he sat down and watched me play. Then you see him play the congas. But the great thing is you can actually hear that Vistalite kit and you hear me playing, so it's very cool. I'm going to put that clip up



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4 IS MORE





Tony DeFilippis

on my Web site soon.

The great thing about YouTube is that there's a lot of stuff that I'd never seen myself. There's some great Paul Rodgers clips with Steve Lukather and Neil Schon that are absolutely fantastic. YouTube has really helped me look back at my career and put it in perspective: "You know what, no matter what I thought, it was okay." There were some very cool moments.

MD: How long have you been with Foreigner now?

Jason: It will be three years.

MD: We're you a fan of the band growing up?

Jason: Oh yeah, very much so. The first band I was with in England when I was seventeen was called Air Race, and we were very influenced by Foreigner, Journey, and Toto. We wanted to have that kind of sound and look. And we all wanted that Mutt Lange drum sound. I was a fan of original Foreigner drummer Dennis Elliot's playing. He had the big 26" Ludwig double kicks, and he was a very cool player. The fill at the end of "Cold As Ice" is a great one. He has quite a few signature fills throughout the Foreigner catalog. And my mom was a huge Foreigner fan. So for her it was kind of a big thing when I joined the band. She was really pleased. "Waiting For A

Girl Like You" was my wedding song.

MD: Mick Jones wrote some amazing songs. In concert you get to play hit after hit.

Jason: And I love some of the album stuff that we do. "At War With The World" is a fantastic song for us to play live. The choice of songs is endless. Something drummers might be surprised to learn is that I actually find it harder to play in Foreigner than I do with Zeppelin.

MD: Really? How so?

Jason: It's not natural for me to play that way.

MD: Because you're playing less?

Jason: Yeah, and kind of more in a straightforward time. Less scat, you know what I mean? In Zeppelin it's a lot more free-flow and scat.

MD: When you say "scat," you mean where you can improvise a little more?

Jason: Yes. So it took me quite some time to feel comfortable with the Foreigner material. Funny thing is, when I got back from rehearsals with Zep, the guys in Foreigner were like, "Whoa, calm down." Drum fill after drum fill, it all sounded like Zeppelin. It was quite funny.

MD: Would your dad ever sit you down, play records for you, and say, "Hey, listen to this"?

Jason: Later on in life I remember the Bad Company records. The year that Desolation



JASON BONHAM

Angels came out, my dad made me practice the song "Welcome Home Fantasy," because we were going to have a party at the house and the band was coming over. I remember him saying, "Learn this, and when they come 'round, I want you to play it for them." Now that I think about it, that was really my first audition for Paul Rodgers. [laughs]

MD: How old were you at the time?

Jason: Around twelve. I remember Paul jokingly saying to Simon Kirke after I played, "You're fired." [laughs] But I must say, I look back at my years playing with Paul Rodgers with great pride, and I got to thank him recently, because I don't think I ever really thanked him. I look back on that time as a blessing. It was very, very cool. It's a fairy tale, really.

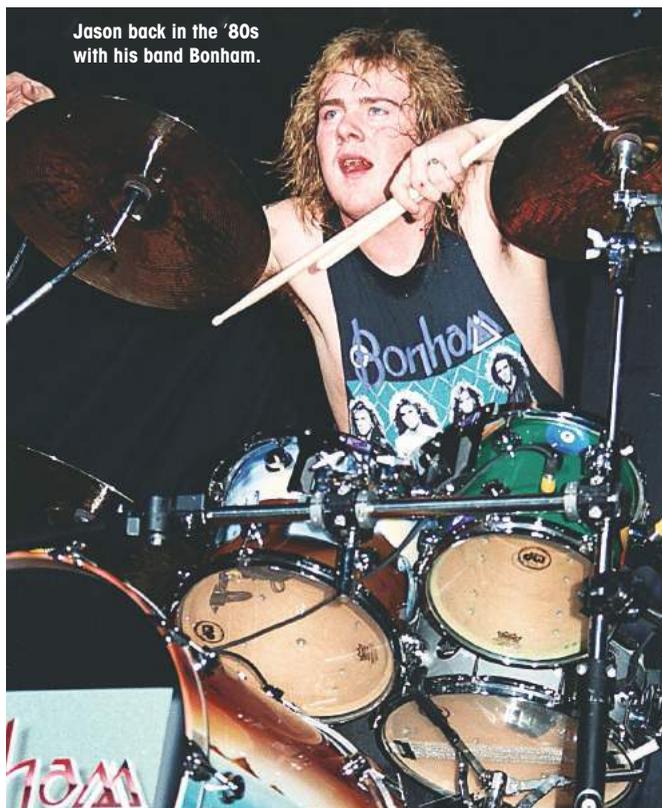
MD: Do you have a practice routine?

Jason: I don't practice anything in particular. I'll just put on whatever I'm digging musically at the time and just play along. And then if something hits me, I might think, "What was that?" I might go back and try a particular fill or a certain element of that song a few times. After I've got it, I'll put it in the memory banks to draw on at a later date. On tour, I was watching Todd Sucherman from Styx doing his pad warm-ups, and I was like, "I'd love to be able to do all that, but I just can't."

MD: What would you say are the important qualities that made your dad stand out among drummers?

Jason: Jimmy Page once said that it's like having a great product: If you haven't got the right way of launching that product, no one is ever going to know you have it. My dad had a great machine, which was called Led Zeppelin. It gave him the space to do what he did but also to showcase what he could do. That really does help as well, having that kind of showcase to be able to say, "This is me." Not taking away from his playing, but it was the greatest showcase for any drummer to have.

He played with such reserve and simplicity on so many of the albums, but when it came to live he could be so ferocious and aggressive and completely over the top. On



Jason back in the '80s with his band Bonham.

the DVD there's a version of "The Song Remains The Same" that's accessible from the menu screen, and the drumming is just ridiculous overplaying. It's like he's saying, "Listen to me," without any compromise. It was like he was thinking, I don't care if it throws off anybody in the band; this is the way I feel tonight." And it's just breathtaking. It's one of those things where you think, How did he do that and come back in on the "I" perfectly?

My dad understood simplicity, but he also had amazing technique. His main influence in his soloing, if you know him, is Buddy Rich. Buddy was without a doubt dad's hero, totally.

MD: Hypothetically speaking, if you weren't doing this gig, who do you think would fit the bill?

Jason: I'd love to blow my own horn and say that there isn't anyone other than me, but that wouldn't sound right. Somebody put it in a nutshell the other day: To play in Led Zeppelin you have to know the people. It's not just playing the songs. It's being part of their unit. It's being knowledgeable enough to know what they think, to kind of know where they're going to go, how they tick, what they expect. It's not about just playing what's on an album; it's way more than most people are aware of.

But if somebody asked me who I'd love to

see play with the band other than me, I think Dennis Chambers would be cool.

Dennis is just phenomenal. I would like to have seen Dennis play some of that. I still watch the Buddy Rich tribute DVD with Dennis, and I still play that to people and go, "Now that's a drummer." His speed and just everything is scary good. The real fans of dad would know that anyone playing in the band couldn't just be a meat & potatoes drummer or a bombastic rock guy. It would have to be somebody with great technique.

MD: After everything you've said, you sound like you genuinely feel blessed to be playing with Zeppelin now.

Jason: I just want to thank the three gentlemen that I'm going to be playing with for giving me the opportunity to play such

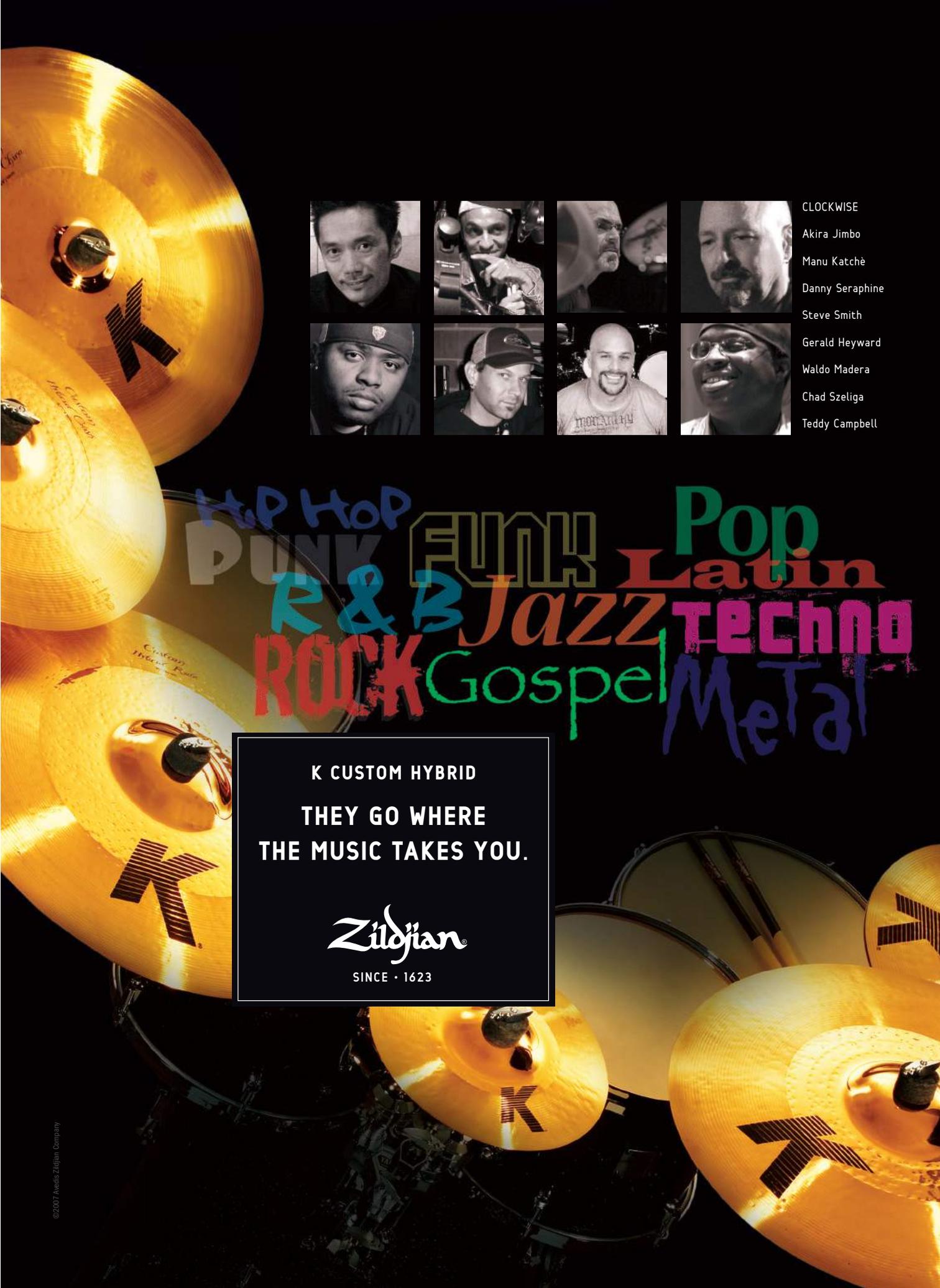
wonderful music, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with them on the world's stage—and be made accountable for a really important day in my life. To give me a chance at that, after all these years, I can't thank them enough. For me, if it all ended now, it would be a full circle in my life. I can say, "You know what, I've done it all." It's a total honor and a real privilege to play with them, and I really do appreciate it. One of the greatest moments for me was after we finished one of the songs in rehearsal. Robert turned to me and shouted, "Son Of Thunder!"

Speaking of thanking people, I'd like to add an extra special thanks to Mick Jones for giving me the time off to play with Zeppelin while in the middle of a tour with Foreigner. And thanks to my pal Brian Tichy for filling in for me with Foreigner so I could follow my dream.

MD: Of course, there are rumors of a full-blown Zeppelin tour. Do you think there's a possibility?

Jason: Honestly, I have no idea. If you had asked me six months ago if it was possible that we were going to play a gig together, I'd have said, "You've got to be kidding me." I just say to the fans, keep being positive, and if you want it bad enough, maybe it will come.





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The Art Of

Brush

The art of brush playing is a mysterious one.

Big band drummers can be seen in old black & white movies moving their arms in grand gestures, using the brushes like a snake charmer, drawing rich, lush, sweeping sounds out of their drums. Brush playing is also a romantic art, often associated with ballads, female singers, and rich brass lines. But in the right hands, the brushes can sound ferocious and fiery. Elvin Jones' performance on pianist Tommy Flanagan's *Overseas* is one such recording. Similarly, recordings that feature the work of Philly Joe Jones, Vernell Fournier, Papa Jo Jones, Chick Webb, Roy Haynes, Shelly Manne, Buddy Rich, Shadow Wilson, and Mickey Roker will typically feature these masters extracting a variety of brush strokes from the drums.

Though popular from the '20s to the '50s, with the advent of rock 'n' roll, brushes slowly lost their cache against the need for increasingly louder and more incendiary stick sounds. Today, brushes are so forgotten that the average drummer has no idea how to hold them, much less play them. Brush technique, which covers a wide range of styles, is a highly personal thing, but also a subject of much debate, as what works for me might be different than what works for you. And therein is the beauty of the brushes. It's a highly personal way to express yourself on the drums.



Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Paul La Raia

Playing

A Roundtable Featuring Steve Smith, Charlie Persip,
Ben Riley, Eddie Locke, Billy Hart, And Adam Nussbaum



In a valiant mission to shed light on this mysterious art, Steve Smith and Adam

Nussbaum joined to produce a new two-DVD set, *The Art Of Playing With Brushes* (Hudson). Acting as both interviewers and practitioners, Smith and Nussbaum interview a variety of master drummers on the subject of playing the brushes. Billy Hart, Eddie Locke, Joe Morello, Charlie Persip, and Ben Riley divulge secrets, tips, and techniques gleaned from decades of playing with the greatest musicians in jazz.

The DVD covers a variety of themes and approaches, with each drummer playing a basic swing pattern at four different tempos (accompanied by bassist Jay Anderson and guitarist Vic Juris), followed by examples of ballad and Latin expressions. What is quickly apparent is the individual nature of each man's approach: Ben Riley keeps his brushes taught and tight for a more articulate sound. Steve Smith occasionally turns over his left hand (in traditional grip) for a darker sound. Charlie Persip lays the brush into the head for a fatter sound, Billy Hart uses more of the tips of the brushes to achieve a lighter sound. Tips and technical information abound throughout *The Art Of Playing With Brushes*, such as Joe Morello's clear elucidation of "the fake pattern," and Billy Hart's unusual bossa nova approach.

The Art Of Playing With Brushes also features an excellent history of the brushes by drummer/author/historian Mark Griffith. Delving deep into the origins of the brushes, Griffith discusses the contributions of Baby Dodds, Sonny Greer, Max Roach, Cozy Cole, Zutty Singleton, Chick Webb, Lewis Nash, Kenny Washington, and Clayton Cameron, among others. A selected discography and biographies of the drummers that appear on the DVD are also included. Ed Thigpen and Louie Bellson are interviewed on the DVD as well, plus there's archival footage of the great brush masters, an essential listening guide, and PDF brush diagrams.

Yes, the DVD has a lot of information, but how about some personal thoughts on the art of brush playing from some living masters? That's where this roundtable comes in. Get six drummers in a room, and opinions and fireworks are bound to fly. Join *MD* in the eye of the storm for this unique roundtable discussion with Billy Hart, Eddie Locke, Adam Nussbaum, Charlie Persip, Ben Riley, and Steve Smith.

Reviving The Magic

MD: Adam and Steve, why did you decide to make this video now?

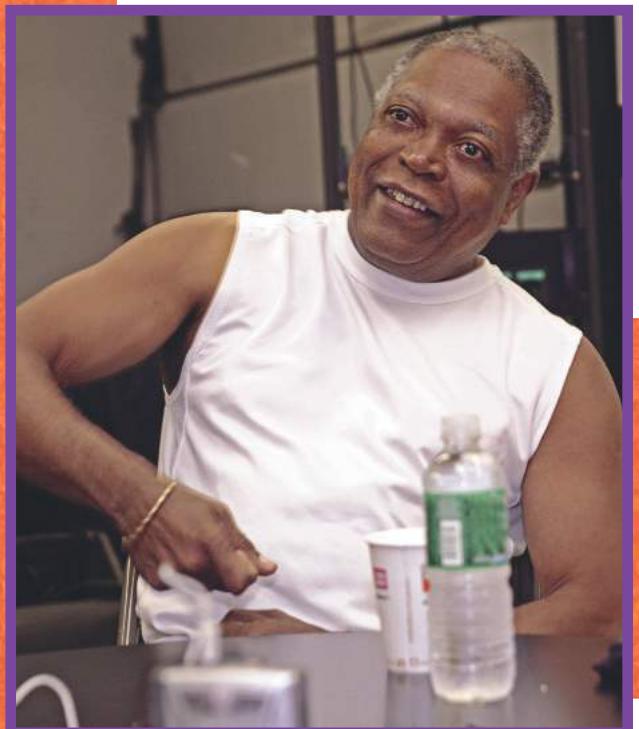
Adam: Having grown up near New York, from the time I was first interested in playing the drums and when I got to be a teenager, I would come to the city and be able to see many of the gentlemen around this table play, and a lot of others who have left us, and others who were not able to be part of this. I've been able to watch guys play, not just hear them. I could see how everyone who played with the brushes had their own personality and their own choreography—everybody was a little different. I was inspired by these gentlemen, as they were inspired by their elders. The kids who haven't grown up in a place where they have the opportunity I had should see this DVD. We need to get this documented while these gentlemen are still with us. You get to see these masters at work, and that will help you formulate your own approach. You need to see the brushes more than just hear them. They always say, "Brushes are a dying art," but there's no reason it should be dying. It should be alive and well.

MD: But Steve, is it a lost art at this point?

Steve: It's not. There's not that much application, of course, in most pop music, which is what we're hearing.

Ben: Unfortunately, a lot of young drummers don't even carry brushes in their stick bag.

Adam: I found that when I began investigating the brushes, it made me aware of the duration of the sound. With the brushes, you're not just playing the beats, you're playing the sound between the beats. It made me aware of that space, and that really helped my stick playing. I became more



aware of that duration of time. That space is something you play with the brushes. Playing brushes can enhance any drummer's ability.

Eddie: But I don't think you can learn to play the brushes that way.

Charlie: Brush technique is too personal. Everybody plays it their own way. You really

Billy: Tony Williams said, "I think whoever invented brushes didn't like drummers." [roundtable laughs]

MD: How is the basic brush rebound differ-



“A lot of drummers today don't know jack about traditional grip. You try to show it to them and they get totally spastic. But it is possible to play great brushes with matched.”—Charlie Persip

Charlie: I'm surprised that the electronics we have today wouldn't work well with the brushes. You can magnify the sound, and get the swish as loud as you want it, so you can do a lot of the bad stuff utilizing electronics with the brushes.

Steve: Some young drummers could incorporate this and inspire other younger drummers and revitalize the art.

Charlie: A lot of young drummers want to play like Tony Williams, which is okay. So they're all into the stick thing. But the technique of brushes is entirely different. You can play brushes like a stick, but if you're going to get the full effect of the brushes you have to deal with a whole different technique.

MD: It's a more mysterious technique, isn't it?

Eddie: There is the Philly Joe Jones book...

Billy: And the Clayton Cameron video.

can't document it out of a book.

Ben: I first started getting my brush technique together when I worked with Mary Lou Williams. All she would let me bring to the job was a snare drum and a sock cymbal. I had to develop a technique to make it interesting every night, because you'd be run out of town otherwise. And in those days we worked with a lot of singers, so I developed how to sing the song while I was playing. All of these drummers here would sing the song while playing.

Adam: You're trying to reinforce the lyrics and the changes, and you have to know how to shade appropriately for the song.

Ben: We only had one mic for the whole band. We had to learn dynamics.

Charlie: I didn't really want to play brushes at first. I had to develop the technique out of necessity.

ent from that of a stick?

Charlie: You can play the brushes like a stick—it's not a problem. And you'll get a similar bounce.

MD: Would you recommend learning to play the rudiments with the brushes?

Steve: Adam demonstrates a way of teaching the brushes in the DVD. The first step is making circles in time. Rather than thinking of up and down strokes, we have circular and oval-shaped strokes around the head. The whole motion itself needs to be in time to generate a time feel.

Charlie: All you need is two techniques for the brushes. You can use the swish, or single and double sticking. And the swish is either moving away from you on 1 or toward you on 1. Other than that, if you get into all the other rudiments, you're into stick technique. But what you're trying to do is get the swish of the brush. Any drummer who can play at all can use the brushes like a stick without any problem.

MD: Are you talking about using the rebound of the brush?

Adam: You're dealing with a horizontal motion in relation to a vertical motion.

Steve: Let's say it's a lateral motion.

Adam: The circularity is the primary thing to

“I began playing brushes with pianist Shirley Horn, and I rarely saw anyone play slower than her. That meant I had to find a way to make the sound longer.”—Billy Hart

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be addressed.

Steve: Another reason you don't want to work through the rudiments is because when using a stick approach, you hear all this ringing between every stroke. The main effect you're trying to create is a smooth pulse without that ringing.

Eddie: Denzil Best with George Shearing was just a sheet of sound. That's what it's all about.

Brushes Are Loud!

MD: Eddie, in the DVD you say that the brushes can be the loudest thing in the band.

Eddie: You can hear a brush. Drummers think people can't hear them, but a brush hitting a cymbal can be heard in a theater.

Charlie: Brushes can also be very theatrical. Some drummers do it to the max, and the way the body moves on the drums can be very provocative. But if it's forced, it's corny.

Adam: It's about using economy and efficiency of motion to produce a sound, getting the maximum effect with the least amount of effort. And that's true, whether with brushes or sticks.

Charlie: Another thing about brushes is you can't overdo it, 'cause you'll tire yourself out. The movement that is necessary doesn't

give you a rebound.

Adam: Some drummers play the right hand brush on the cymbal and they're insistent about it. But in some situations less can create a greater effect.

MD: Eddie, you also talk about the difference between playing full and playing loud.

Eddie: When you're playing full with the brushes it creates a sound. But you're not playing loud. You're just creating a sound.

Adam: The first thing you hear is sound, and you have to be aware of that which you create. Then you can become "of the beat" and all that. But what kind of sound do you get? You can't use a brush on a clear head; it won't give you any sound. You have to have a coated head. You need friction.

Ben: This plastic today? You don't get nothing. You get one sound out of that, and everybody gets that same sound.

Eddie: All the drummers I really admire, I liked their sound. All those drummers learned to play on calf heads, and that made you have a touch. When they got soggy, baby, it was all over.

MD: Charlie, you seem to lay more into the head, and you get a big lush sound, whereas Billy seems to play more with the tips of the brushes. What's the difference between laying the brushes into the head and playing



with the tips?

Ben: One is more of a swish, while the other gives you more of a beat.

Charlie: The tip gives you one sound, but when you press it down, the part of the brush near the end of the brush will hit the head and give a broader sound.

Steve: I would say when you're playing with the tips it will give you a lighter sound, and as you put more pressure a much thicker and lush sound will happen.

Adam: You're dealing with more surface, and that will create a different character of sound. And how much pressure you apply, and your speed, is all shading.

MD: Ben, you seemed to prefer pulling the wires back into the brushes. Is that for more clarity?

Ben: I don't want that mushy sound. I want to hear each beat. But it depends on how and who I'm working with.

Billy: Hearing Mr. Persip's analogy of it makes me realize why I do what I do. I began playing brushes with pianist Shirley Horn, and I rarely saw anyone play slower than her. That meant I had to find a way to make the sound longer. I got used to that sound. I play lighter because it's wider, and I can get more sound. I want to cover as much space as possible when I play slowly. Nothing sounds

worse than those holes.

Adam: You want to create that continuity of sound.

Steve: A legato sound.

Charlie: Brushes used to bug me when they got caught in the rim.

Billy: You don't want that to happen, and that's a whole 'nother technique.

Steve: Another aspect I've noticed is that if I have my left hand in the traditional grip holding the brush and I move around with my palm up, I tend to get a lighter sound. But if I

turn my hand over so the weight of it is over the brush, it's similar to a matched-grip idea. I can get a darker sound. That's why I have my left hand turned over, because you get a little more weight on the brush so you can get a thicker sound easily.

Adam: It's what works for you, and finding a technique that allows for choices.

Universal Technique

MD: But there must be techniques that everyone uses, right?



BRUSH PLAYING

All: Not with the brushes.

MD: What about the basic back-and-forth swish on the left hand and the typical ride cymbal pattern on the right?

Eddie: That's it.

MD: If you tell a kid he can do anything, that the options are wide open...

Eddie: In there somewhere is the basic swish pattern. That's the basic idea, your brush is sweeping. You can use that.

MD: A kid just starting needs the basics.

Charlie: We brought this point out, but it bears repeating: You can play brushes with

the matched grip. Don't make a kid feel like he has to play traditional. But if you're going to master this instrument, you have to deal with the history of the instrument, and that means knowing the traditional grip, the technique the brushes were developed with.

MD: Traditional gives you a much different feel with brushes from matched, doesn't it?

Charlie: I just want the kids to know you can play brushes with matched grip. A lot of drummers today don't know jack about traditional grip. You try to show it to them and they get totally spastic. But it is possible to

play great brushes with matched.

MD: What are the other things you can get from the brushes beyond the swish? Percussive effects? Ring on the cymbal? Mallet sounds?

Adam: On the bossa nova, you can use the side of the brush on the rim. I'll take the back of the brush and use the ring of the handle and move it like a guiro on the hi-hat. You have the grooves in the cymbal, the lathing, so you can do a guiro effect.

Billy: I remember when I had to play with Joao Gilberto...no matter what I did, I couldn't play soft enough. The brushes were so loud, it sounded like an airplane. So I began to try different ways of doing it. I had to play the brush on my leg at one point. And I used the back of the brush too, both the rubber and metal parts. Or I'd play the rim with the side of the brush.

MD: What else can you do with brushes?

Adam: You have to have these tools, and then just experiment. Art Blakey said, "Be a fool!" See what happens. Don't be afraid to try things.

Billy: There hasn't been an academic solution to playing the brushes.

MD: Maybe it should remain that way.

Charlie: I don't think there will ever be an academic approach to brush playing, because it's so personal. Everyone here plays the brushes differently, but the music comes out. It all comes down to making music.

Global Brushes

MD: Adam, when you and Steve conceived of having all the guys on the DVD, did you realize everyone would be so different?

Adam: My idea was to get a cross section of players. I would have loved to bring in some of the Brazilian cats, like Paulino Braga, Duduka Da Fonseca, Portinho—they have another way of doing it. Then you get other people who have their own choreography, like Jimmy Cobb, Louis Hayes, Jake Hanna, Joe LaBarbera, Lewis Nash, Kenny Washington, Jeff Hamilton—they all have something different.

Billy: Gregory Hutchinson is another drummer who plays great brushes. When I met him I said, "Man, how did you understand that?" He said, "I listened to Papa Jo Jones."

Steve: Bingo. The same thing that you guys did. You try to learn from the best. You try to go there.

Adam: As a kid I would listen to Vernell

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BRUSH PLAYING

Fournier and then go to New York to watch him play. Sitting in the Village Vanguard was so much of an education for me. That's where I saw all you guys play.

Eddie: Jo Jones always kept a drumset in his living room. I went to visit him, grabbed my brushes, and got on the drums while he was back in his kitchen. He said, "I heard you back there digging those potatoes." I had a lot of work to do. But he didn't say nothin' about how to do it.

Ben: His comment on someone trying to roll was, "You're doing dog paws." I would be

playing at Minton's Playhouse and he would be at the bar. I would go up afterwards to get my critique, and he would put a nickel on the bar, get up, and leave. He said, "Call me and I'll critique you tomorrow."

Bass Drum ' N' Brushes

MD: How does your bass drum technique change when you're playing brushes?

Charlie: A lot of times when you're playing brushes, you can almost leave the bass drum out. If the music is soft and light, you really don't need the bass drum. If you're dealing

with something that has some intensity to it, then play the bass drum.

Eddie: You gotta hit the pulse with the brushes.

MD: But everyone played the bass drum on the DVD.

Adam: It depends on the situation too.

Ben: That's about balance. It might be loud, but it will be just enough to make you feel.

Charlie: We learned to play the instrument from the bottom up.

Ben: It's like breathing.

MD: Would you practice the brushes with the bass drum on all fours?

Charlie: If you start from scratch, practice without the bass drum. When you get that, then you can add the bass drum, depending on the rhythmic situation.

Billy: My favorite rock ' n' roll drummer was Leo Morris [a.k.a. Idris Muhammad]. But a lot of what he did for me was the way he played the bolero on the snare drum. He used the bass drum and he was playing in a big band. But he wouldn't have gotten that sound from sticks—he used his brushes, with the bass drum. It cut through the big band.

Steve: To make another point about the bass drum, I would recommend younger students, set up the bass drum with the front head on and with no hole, and take the pillow out and put some felt strips on it. Learn how to play the bass drum like that. It doesn't mean you always have to play the bass drum, but at least learn how to play it that way. You need to learn how to touch the head and feather the drum. Also, you'll hear a little sustain, which is good. That will fill out the sound, and you'll develop more control. Just touch it with the felt beater, nice and soft, and you hear that warm, sustaining tone that's filling up the low end. Then you can play the kick as loudly as you want, but at least you have options and the ability to play quietly as well.

Charlie: Dizzy Gillespie said that if he taught the drums he wouldn't let a student play anything but bass drum for two years. He wanted them to learn the nuances of playing the bass drum. If you hear Chick Webb on the re-master of "Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie," he's playing a fast tempo and feathering the bass drum. He gets two sounds. And he didn't miss a beat.

MD: How does the bass drum change when you're playing really fast tempos?

Ben: When it's slower, you want that full feeling. When you're playing faster, it's still soft but you keep it going.

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“They always say, ‘Brushes are a dying art,’ but there’s no reason it should be dying. It should be alive and well.”

—Adam Nussbaum



Billy: There is 2 and 4 on the bass drum too.

Speed Vs. Sound

MD: What are some tips for playing fast patterns? Joe Morello talks about the fake, where the left hand plays the 2 and 4. Is that a valid way to play fast?

Adam: Anything works. If the band sounds good, you sound good.

Charlie: Practice for relaxation.

Adam: Concentration is even more important when it’s slower. You have to be mentally focused and physically relaxed. When you’re playing fast, as soon as any tension comes in, that will interfere with articulation. I

would play bpm = 120 for a while, then double it up, just playing any pattern. Or play 160 and double it up, and then go back and forth.

MD: Can you offer any tips for playing faster with the brushes?

Adam: Think of physics: faster tempo, less space, less time, less motion. You don’t have the time. Everything is brought into a smaller area.

Steve: To develop your uptempo playing, I wouldn’t separate the hands. It’s a package deal. Like anything, the more you do it, the easier it gets. So you wouldn’t just try to jump to playing 320, you have to work your

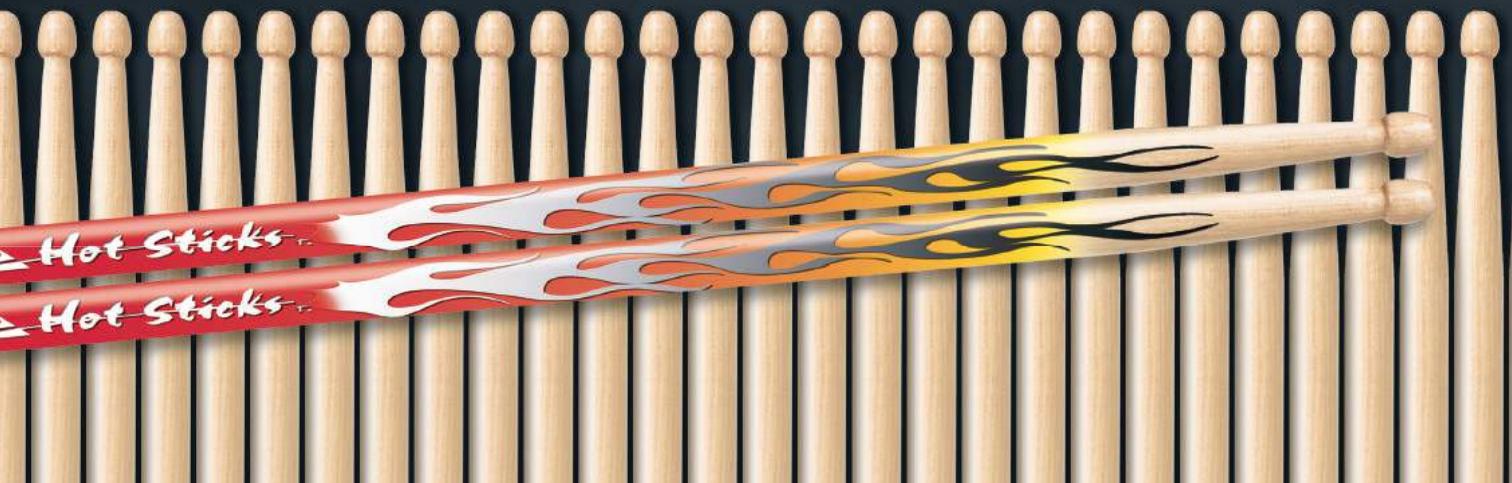
way up.

Charlie: Relaxation is paramount. Start with a tempo you can play relaxed, and then move it up just a hair. Play it a little faster each time, until you can play the next tempo relaxed. Don’t move to the next tempo until the previous one is relaxed.

MD: In the DVD, Steve uses the rubber part of the brush to get more of a rebound.

Steve: That’s one technique I used to use to play uptempo. I hold the brush all the way at the back, so that when I drop it on the head, it hits the end of the handle and gives me a rebound, like a stick rebound. Then I learned to control the pattern for dropping it and

STICK OUT FROM



feeling that rebound. It's just another option. Billy: And we're talking about getting a sound, too. It isn't just about technique, it's sound. What Steve is talking about is similar to a conga technique.

Charlie: Brushes are mysterious.

Eddie: The brushes are mysterious. That's why no one has ever written a comprehensive book about them, because you can't. It's so individual.

Adam: You'd go see Papa Jo Jones, and he would be moving one way, and on another tempo he would be playing another way. Where you put the "duh" in relation to the "ding" is different for everyone. Every cat here plays it differently, and puts the "duh" and the "ding" in a different spot. By seeing how different guys play the brushes, you can figure out your own way.

MD: Do you listen to the other musicians differently when you're using brushes or sticks?

Ben: You listen to the soloist and try to get out of his way.

Charlie: If you want to play this music correctly, you have to listen, period, no matter whether you're playing with brushes or sticks.

MD: Is there a typical place on the head the brushes should lay?

Charlie: There is no favorite spot on the head for brushes. You can try to use the entire head. You're trying to get a good swish. So a long sound would require the whole head. There is no best spot.

Adam: Where your hands fall on the head will be different from where mine do. Fast

tempo, smaller space; slower tempo, more area. There is no one way.

Charlie: That said, I would suggest you play more in the center of the drum. You get around the edge and the wire might get caught in the rim.

MD: And as far as playing clockwise, counterclockwise, figure eights...where should a kid start?

Charlie: I would work on getting the swish

you do it again.

Adam: The left hand needs to learn to move clockwise, the right hand needs to learn how to move counterclockwise, initially. Then when you learn how to move four beats in time you can get into all kinds of choreography. You need to learn how to make notes in time. A circular motion in time, first.

BRUSHES ON RECORD

The following list contains eight discs that feature great brush playing, all highly recommended by our roundtable.

Artist

Ahmad Jamal
Jo Jones
John Coltrane Quartet
Miles Davis
Bill Charlap Trio
Jeff Hamilton Trio
Lewis Nash
Tommy Flanagan

Album

Live At The Pershing
Jo Jones Trio [Everest]
Ballads
Milestones
Live At The Village Vanguard
From Studio 4
Stompin' At The Savoy
Overseas

Drummer

Vernell Fournier
Jo Jones
Elvin Jones
Philly Joe Jones
Kenny Washington
Jeff Hamilton
Lewis Nash
Elvin Jones



and getting the sound. Then you try to use your own imagination. Think about how to cut the swish—a short swish, a long one.

Adam: Make your swish and your circle in time. That's the basic starting point.

Steve: Let's describe that. You put your right hand on the right side of the drum, and you put your left hand on the left side of the drum. You move your right hand to the left side of the drum and at the same time you move your left hand to the right side of the drum. Then

John Bonham For Better Brushes?

MD: In general, how long per day should you practice the brushes?

Charlie: As long as you want to practice. If you force it, I don't think that's beneficial.

Ben: I would practice with different records and different tempos.

Adam: I played with Nat King Cole trio records. Practice on record jackets or on a newspaper. And Led Zeppelin II is good for practicing brushes to!



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BOBBY SANABRIA & ASCENSIÓN

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BRANN DAILOR
DAVE DICENSO

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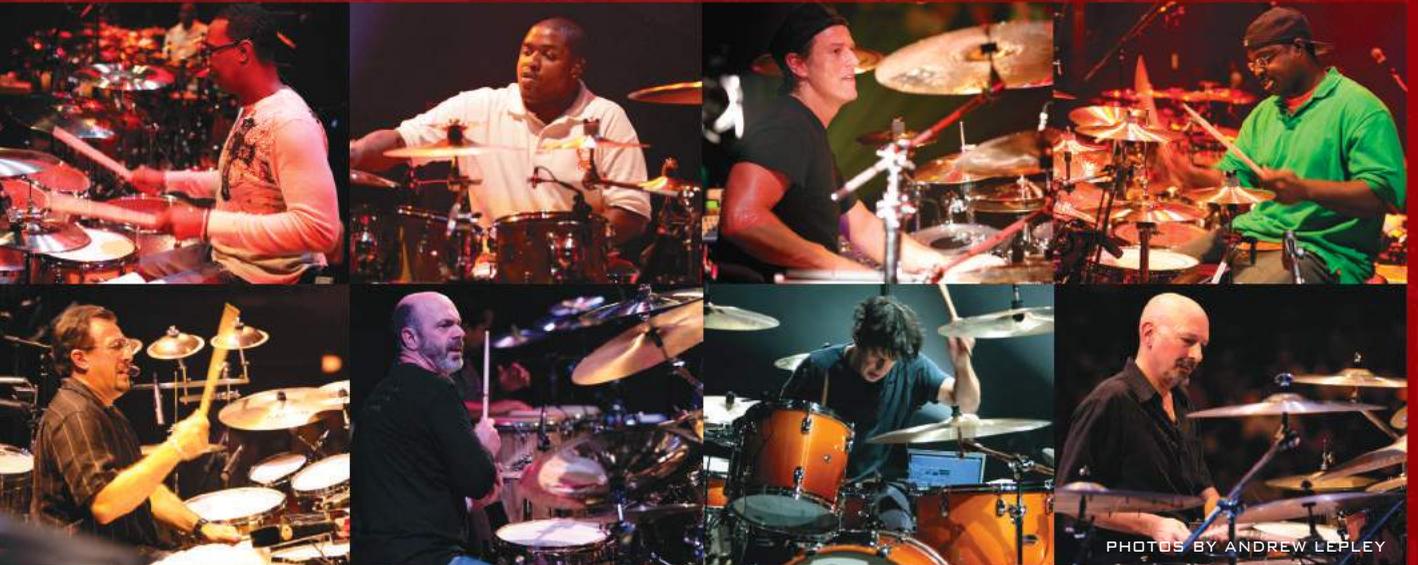


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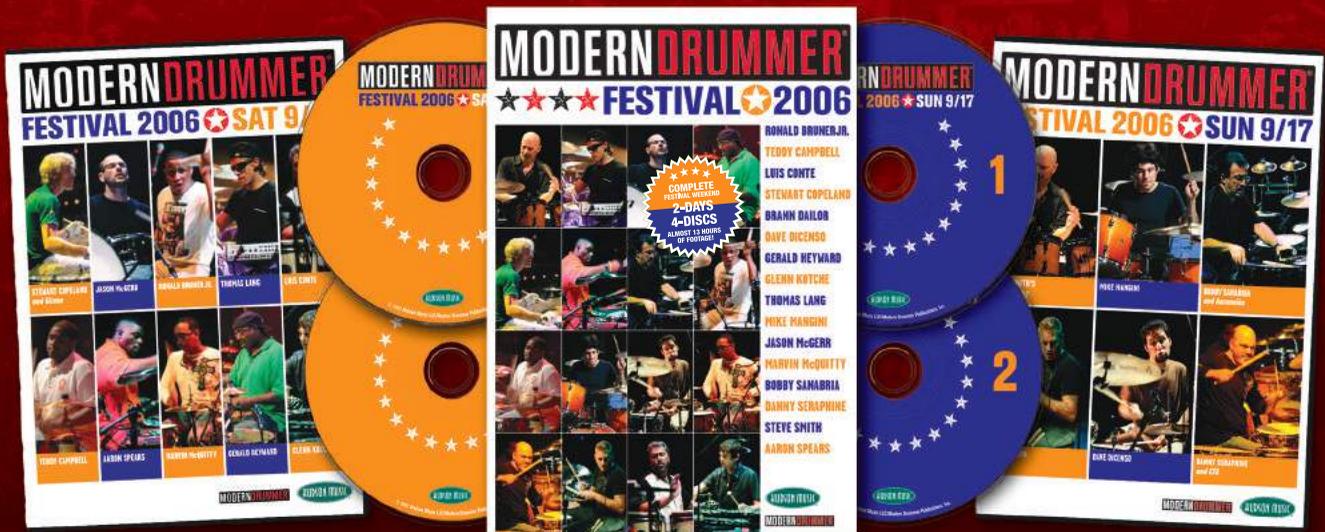


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Basic Brush Maps

Tools To Improve Your Brush Playing

by Jason Edwards

I had been drumming professionally for three years when I was first asked to use brushes on a gig. I was playing old standards like "Take The 'A' Train" at a wedding with a jazz quartet. At that point I knew a few basic swing patterns, but not much more. So when the bandleader called up a bossa nova tune and said, "Play brushes on this one," I was caught off-guard. With my feet to the fire, I did what any drummer would do: I improvised.

Improvising got me through that gig, but I knew I needed to develop better brush skills in order to get hired again. I began working through books, listening to recordings, attending lessons and clinics, and practicing for many hours to get a handle on the essential techniques. What follows is a breakdown of some of the best resources I've used to improve my brush playing.

Put In The Time

In order to improve, you must make brush playing a regular part of your practice routine. Practice individually, with a bass player, or with several other musicians. When you're playing with others, run through different styles at various tempos. Try trading two-, four-, eight-, and twelve-bar solos, or take a few solo choruses. Record your sessions so you can see and hear what needs more practice.

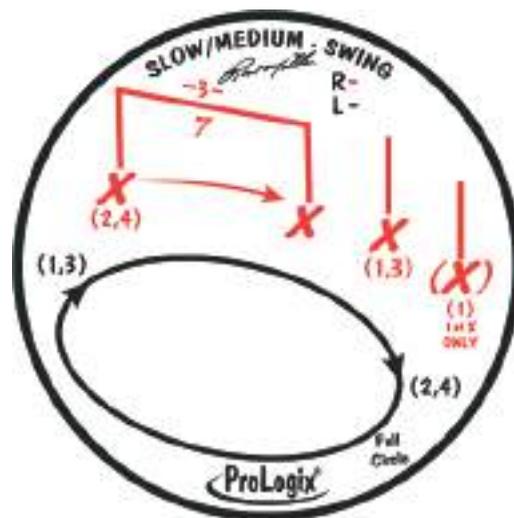
One of the best ways to practice by yourself is to play along with classic brush recordings or play-along CDs, such as Turn It Up & Lay It Down, Volume 4. To keep your focus on improving your brush skills, set up a dedicated brush area in your practice space. This could be something as simple as a snare drum and a pair of brushes. Or you could pick up something like the ProLogix Signature Brush Maps. These maps are the size of a snare drum head, and they have brush patterns printed right on them.

Some Brush Maps

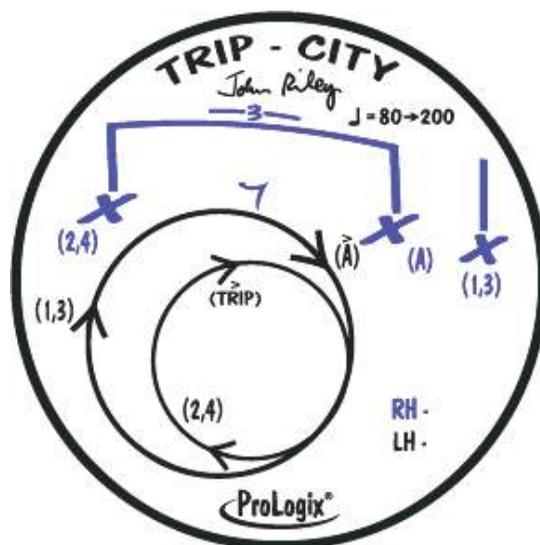
The following brush-map lessons come from three contemporary brush masters. LA session great Russ Miller's pattern is perfect for slow and medium-tempo swing feels, while NYC jazz great John Riley's map adds an extra texture in the left hand. Our last brush map is a fun samba pattern from big band specialist Steve Fidyk.

Our first groove, Russ Miller's "Slow/Medium Swing," represents one of the most common brush beats. The left hand plays legato half notes from the ten o'clock to the four o'clock positions on the drumhead. The movement should be oval, not circular. The motion also gets smaller as the tempo increases. Try to get as

much of the brush surface on the head as you can, to give you a bigger sound. The right hand plays a basic swing pattern between the eleven o'clock and two o'clock positions. The slower the tempo, the more legato the quarter notes should be. Again, try to make a circular movement throughout this pattern; it swings harder. This pattern works great between 70 and 120 bpm.



Once you have that groove down, try John Riley's "Trip City," for a more advanced feel. In this pattern, the left hand adds an accent on the "ah" of beats 2 and 4 beneath the right-hand swing pattern. You can play this pattern for an entire song, during a section of a song, or as a variation/fill within a more basic feel. All of the action is towards the center of the drum, so be careful not to rush the larger left-hand circles.





MCDONOUGH
MATT McDONOUGH

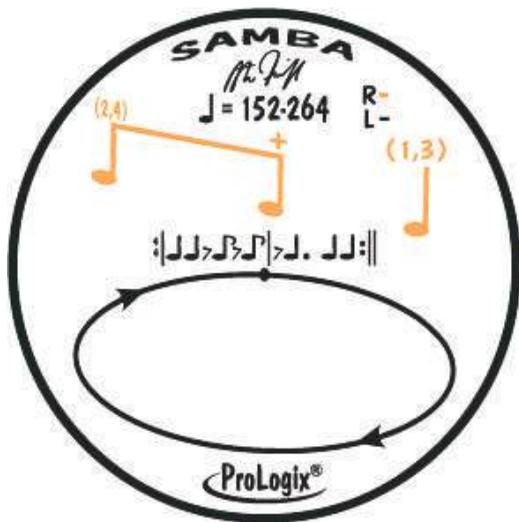


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Our final brush map is a samba beat from Steve Fidyk that features a common Brazilian rhythm in the left hand. As you sweep the left-hand brush, your fingers should close into the palm to bring out the notes in the two-measure pattern. The dot at the top of the left-hand diagram is the point where the brush crosses the head as it accents the samba rhythm.



Do Some Research

There are a lot of great resources on brush playing, from instructional books and magazine articles to DVDs, CDs, and drumming Web sites. So start building up a brush-playing library. One particularly good resource is the Modern Drummer Digital Archive, which allows you to search through every article printed in the magazine between 1977 and 2002.

It's also important to study recordings, books, and videos featuring brush masters so you can gain a sense of where the techniques originated. Two highly recommended drummers to check out are Philly Joe Jones and Ed Thigpen. Their brush playing helped define the art form. Each of them, as well as other jazz legends, had his own techniques, which helped produce their unique identities.

The Internet is full of great information. Simply type in keywords like "jazz brushes" or "brush playing" to get a sense of what's out there. Or set up a YouTube account so that you can search and save videos. You can also use MySpace to check out other drummers who play brushes. And register with an online drum forum. Almost every drum company has one, and forums are a great place to post questions. Plus you'll often find professional drummers offering advice on these forums.

Take Some Lessons

One of the best ways to develop your drumming skills is to take some lessons from a professional teacher. Visit your local drum shop or music college to find out who's available. You might discover that one of your favorite drummers offers one-on-one instruction. When you find someone you'd like to study with, send him or her an email to see if you can set up a lesson time.

You should also go to as many live performances as you can. Nothing is more instructive than listening, watching, and feeling music in person. Brushes are a visual instrument, and no two drummers play them exactly the same way.

Jason Edwards is the owner of ProLogix Percussion. For more information visit www.prologixpercussion.com.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Here are various brush resources for you to check out.

Books/DVDs/Videos

Brushworks (book and DVD) and *The Living Art Of Brushes* (VHS) by Clayton Cameron

Mastering The Art Of Brushes by Jon Hazilla (book)

The Art Of Bop Drumming by John Riley (book)

The Sound Of Brushes (book) and *The Essence Of Brushes* (DVD) by Ed Thigpen

Different Brush Beats by Phil Zamino

The Art Of Playing With Brushes (DVD)

Recordings

Ballads:

"Infant Eyes" from Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil* (Elvin Jones)
Wolfgang Muthspiel, Marc Johnson, and Brian Blade's album *Real Book Stories* (Brian Blade)

Medium Swing:

"What Can I Say (After I Say I'm Sorry)?" from the Red Garland Trio's *Groovy* (Arthur Taylor)

"Eternal Triangle" from Jon Hazilla and Sazabone's *Form And Function* (Jon Hazilla)

Up Tempo:

"Have You Met Miss Jones?" from McCoy Tyner's *Reaching Forth* (Roy Haynes)

"Apple Honey" from the Jeff Hamilton Trio's *Live!* (Jeff Hamilton)

Brush Masters

Ed Thigpen, Philly Joe Jones, Papa Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson, Jimmy Cobb, Jack DeJohnette, Shelly Manne, Mel Lewis, Clayton Cameron, John Riley, Steve Fidyk, Ed Soph, Steve Gadd, Russ Miller, Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Joey Baron, Bill Stewart, Joe Morello, Matt Wilson, Adam Nussbaum, Billy Ward, Carl Allen, Ferenc Nemeth, Jeff Ballard, Brian Blade, Ari Hoenig, Jeff Hamilton, Jon Hazilla, Jorge Rossy, and many more.



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ALLISON MILLER

Freedom Jazz-Folk-Pop-Rock Dance

Okay, let's be honest. We musicians are obsessed with the concept of freedom. Artistic freedom—to express ourselves the way we want to. Social freedom—to live our lives free from the structures of mainstream society. Economic freedom—to get paid enough for our creative efforts that we can afford a decent apartment or rehearsal space.

But freedom is a tricky thing. It self-regulates. Sure, go ahead and “express yourself” with a thirty-seven-minute drum solo. But if your goal is to grow your bank account, you're better off learning the Mariah Carey songbook.

Allison Miller is among a group of musicians who approach this freedom thing with a healthy, exciting, and successful attitude. Since moving to New York in 1996 all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, looking to add her own unique voice to the most profound cultural scene America has ever known, Alli has thrived by refusing to acknowledge musical borders. But rather than using her artistic license to be some sort of working-class avant-garde drumming hero, Alli has allowed her sincere love of pop and rock music to ground her jazz playing—and her passion for jazz to elevate her pop prowess. Whether playing 4/4 with folk-rock singers like Natalie Merchant, supporting jazz maestros Marty Ehrlich and Doctor Lonnie Smith, or taking it way out with the startlingly inventive collectives Shakers N' Bakers and Agrazing Maze, Alli betrays a modern vibe and a well-studied appreciation of the masters.

Alli's ears are fast. Her solos tell real stories. Her vibe is generous. Her attitude is positive. Her sound is her own. And her music—including her own wonderful compositions—simply makes you think, Yeah, musical freedom is good...once you figure out how to deal with it.

Alli's been dealing pretty darned well these days, tracking and touring with guitar-slinger-songwriter Ani DiFranco, including re-recording some of her songs for a best-of CD, plus tracks for an upcoming studio album. She also works steadily with the acclaimed singer Erin McKeown. (On the day of Alli's *MD* photo shoot, the charming Miss McKeown traded in her guitar for an eyeliner pencil, acting as our trusty makeup pro—Alli was, sweetly, just a bit uncomfortable playing the role of diva.)

Go to Alli's myspace page on any given week, and you'll likely see that “upcoming shows” box filled to the brim with gigs in New York, Toronto, Europe...and at least one of those shows will be with someone the drummer just recently made a musical connection with. We visited with Alli at her Brooklyn stomping grounds, in-between tours with Ani DiFranco, and right before a heavy couple-day run gigging and recording with her and McKeown's band Emma—yet another intriguing platform for the drummer's non-stop musical dance.

MD: How is your playing schedule divided now?

Allison: Right now I'm dividing my time between Ani DiFranco and Erin McKeown, and then everything else is either a project that I'm working on with my own music, or bands like Shakers N' Bakers and Hipmotism. Then I do recording and teaching.

MD: It sounds like scheduling is a constant balancing act.

Allison: Totally. Sometimes I wish I was just in one band, but then I might not be fulfilled musically. I've definitely made some mistakes in my past with trying to balance gigs.

MD: "Mistake" in what sense?

Allison: Burning a bridge...not taking a tour with one person and then basically losing

the option to ever play with that person again. In a perfect world, if I say yes to a gig, then I commit to that, and nothing will come in the way of me doing it. But that's just not how it always works.

Sometimes you get called for a tour and you're like, Okay, I just have to take that. For instance, twice I was asked to tour with one of my favorite bass players in the world, Ray Drummond, who I've played with in other situations, including my first record. I would love to have done a whole tour with him. But one time I had to turn it down because I was already in another band, another time because I got a call for a four-month tour in Europe that was a great experience as well, and also very lucrative. You're constantly caught in that type of

situation.

Sometimes things work out great, like this past spring. I was supposed to leave for a European tour that was from April to October, but they cancelled on me two weeks before the tour was supposed to start. I had turned down a ton of work, so I was pretty much in a pickle. But then I ended up getting the Ani DiFranco gig.

MD: Which you might not have been able to say yes to.

Allison: I always say, I wish they had a course in music school for scheduling.

MD: So have you developed on-the-job scheduling chops?

Allison: It's called iCalendar. [laughs] And I have a manager, which helps a lot. And I have other priorities as well: I want to play

“Allison is a refreshingly honest player. She plays as she is, which is great because she is such a openhearted, humble, graceful person.”
—Ani DiFranco



with people whose music I respect and who I get along with. That's a real important issue for me, because when you're on the road and you're in a vehicle together 24/7, it's really great to get along. I've been very lucky; most of my career I've been surrounded by wonderful, nice people.

MD: How about the issue of money?

Allison: That's also one of the reasons I have a manager. She usually takes care of that for me. The music business has changed so much, I don't think there's a set scale for different things. I might work for one artist whose manager immediately tells me, "We're paying union scale for recording this record," and I kind of know what that is. And then I'll work for someone else who's like, "Well...this is what we can do." And then I do something like the Shakers N' Bakers tour, where we're basically playing in old meeting houses, not making much money, and I understand that. So I'll say, "Pay me what you can."

I've had the experience of leading my own band, so I understand how difficult it is, especially when you take a band on tour and you have to factor in hotels and transportation. So I definitely think that it can be an uncomfortable situation, but it's totally a sliding scale. I don't have a set fee.

When I was in my early twenties, I was pretty cocky, and I remember this one singer's manager called me and wanted me to play a concert at this festival. I was already playing the same festival, and I knew how much all the other shows paid, and he was offering me lower money. I was like, "I need this much money to play this gig," and he said "Sorry" and got someone

else. I said, "Damn, I finally stood up for myself, but I did it in too arrogant a way." And it would have been great to work with that singer. So I had to find my way and learn my lessons.

It gets easier the longer you're in the

they're closing themselves off from other experiences.

MD: What's the biggest musical challenge playing different styles and in different bands?

Allison: Finding where to place the beat. I



business. As time goes on you just naturally get more respect. You can decide, "I'm not going to do gigs for so-and-so amount of money anymore, I'm always going to quote myself at a little bit of a higher rate." I know a few people who have a certain fee they won't go below, but I think sometimes

can play with one band and quickly realize, after listening back to recordings, that I need to play more on top of the beat.

MD: Do you mean just the snare drum, or everything that you're doing?

Allison: Everything I'm doing is leaning forward. I do sometimes make a conscious effort



“Hey, Teach, I Got A Problem...”

Besides being an incredibly busy player, Allison Miller is a proud and active drum instructor and mentor, teaching both privately and at the college level. To get a taste of the kind of wisdom Alli might impart to her students, MD managing editor Adam Budofsky pretended [ahem] to have a couple specific drumming issues of his own that he needed a little professional help with.

Adam: I just got a new instructional book with some patterns that are just above my playing ability. How long do you shed a new pattern before you begin to try variations?

Allison: I shed new patterns at a very slow tempo, over many practice sessions, and then let the variations happen naturally, over time.

Adam: I'd also like to work on freeing up my limbs—being able to play unusual accents with the hi-hat foot, that sort of thing. But unless I'm playing a pretty straight groove, I start to feel unbalanced at the kit.

Alli's Drums

Note: the setup in the photo is not an exact representation of either of Alli's normal setups, but rather an example of what she might assemble for a shedding session.

for the snare drum to be a little ahead, but generally it's everything. But then I could play with another band where I need to play either more on the beat or behind, because everything else is ahead, and by doing that it kind of settles things in.

MD: Mind over matter.

Allison: I think it's very mental. I also find that if I'm going through some issue in my life it affects my drumming.

MD: The vibe you're putting across, or how well you're playing?

Allison: More in terms of where I'm putting my energy. If I'm feeling down I might not play as light and bouncy as I would like to.

It's not necessarily better or worse, just different. It's probably so minute that I'm the only one who notices it, though.

MD: It makes sense that the events in your life filter through.

Allison: And I think as musicians, especially if

we've done it for a long time, we get so detailed about certain things. I can go through a period where I notice if I hit my cymbal an inch from the previous place I hit it, I can hear all these tiny details that no one else would notice.

MD: You moved to "the big city" at a pretty young age. What lessons did you learn early on?

ROCK SETUP

Drums: Yamaha Birch Custom Absolute

- A. 16x22 bass drum
- B. 9x10 tom
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 14x14 floor tom
- E. 16x16 floor tom
- F. 6x14 Yamaha Paul Leim Platinum Series snare
- G. 5x14 Slingerland wood student model snare, detuned

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" K Custom Mastersound hi-hats
- 2. 12" old crash (muffled, brand unknown)
- 3. 18" Constantinople crash
- 4. 16" A Vintage crash
- 5. 22" K Custom Dark ride
- 6. 20" Constantinople with rivets

Hardware: Yamaha

Sticks: Vic Firth 85A

Percussion: LP

Electronics: Roland

- AA. SPD-20
- BB. V-Drum kick
- CC. Dr. Sampler 303

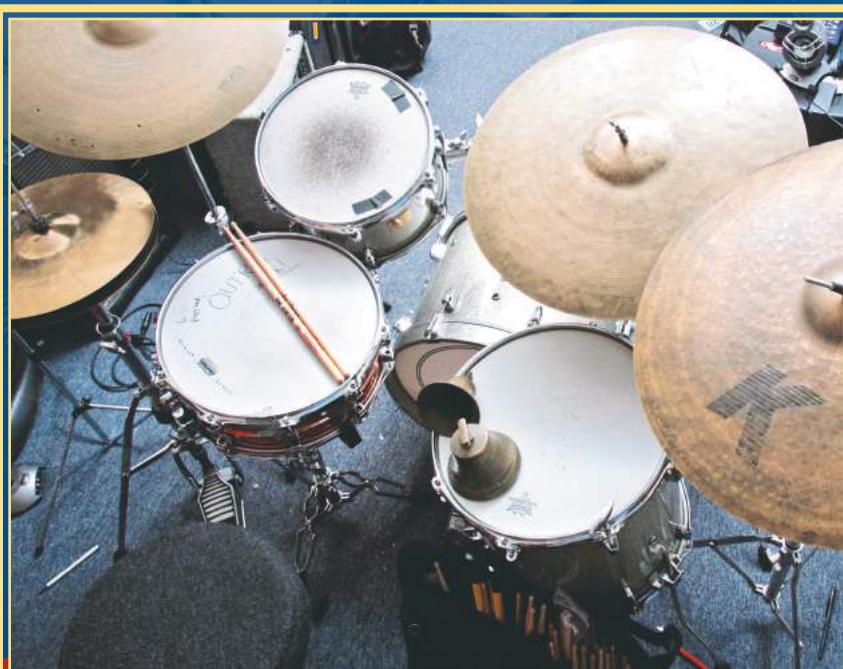
JAZZ SETUP

Drums: Yamaha Birch Custom Absolute

- A. 16x18 bass drum
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 5 1/2x14 Roy Haynes Signature snare or 6x14 Gretsch wood snare

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" hi-hats (top: Constantinople, bottom: K Custom Dark)
- 2. 22" Constantinople ride
- 3. 18" Constantinople crash
- 4. 20" old A



What do you suggest I do so that I can feel more centered?

Allison: First of all, work on good posture. When you practice, make sure you sit up straight and breathe normally. Practice playing every different combination of paradiddle you can think of—combos between your hands, your feet, your hands and feet, playing an ostinato while doing paradiddles with the other two limbs, paradiddles valued as triplets.... Also, buy Ted Reed's book *Syncopation* and come up with as many variations as possible to work through it.

Adam: I'm playing in a new band where the tempos are really fast, and there are South American rhythms. Now, my parents are from Iceland, and my favorite band is Pink Floyd, so this is all new to me. I'm feeling nervous about being able to cut it. How do I fake it until I get my act together?

Allison: Own it! Convince yourself that you know what you're doing. Confidence, confidence, confidence is half the battle. And then go home, buy as many South American albums as possible, and shed your ass off!

Adam: I just bought some new brushes. Honestly, though, I have no clue what to do with them. What records should I check out to steal some ideas?

Allison: All great jazz drummers are great brush players. But I would recommend listening to any record with Philly Joe Jones; Paul Motian with The Bill Evans Trio; Roy Haynes—especially *We Three*; Ben Riley on *Live At The It*

Club by Thelonious Monk; Tony Williams on his album *Spring*, on Herbie Hancock's *Empyrean Isles*, or on Miles Davis's *ESP*; Elvin Jones on his own albums *Elvin!* and *Dear John C.* or on Wayne Shorter's *JuJu*; any Max Roach—especially with Clifford Brown; and any Ed Thigpen.

Adam: I also picked up some mallets while I was at the drum shop.

Allison: One of the first records I ever fell in love with was *John Coltrane Plays Chim Chim Cheree*. Elvin Jones plays on this record, and his mallet playing is stellar—breathtaking! More recent: I love the way Tom Rainey incorporates mallets with sticks on Mark Helia's Open Loose records.

Adam: I've never worked on my grip, and the only way I feel like I'm securely holding the stick is to use a really big marching stick. But my 7A—using jazz buddies all make fun of me. What should I do?

Allison: First of all, tell your buddies to mind their own damned business! [laughs] Who cares what sticks you use, as long as you're getting the sound you want. But if you want to learn how to play with lighter sticks, you must learn how to practice quietly. Practice playing all of your rudiments as quietly as possible. Also, play your rudiments with brushes. Practice jamming on the kit as quietly as possible too.



ALLISON MILLER

Allison: People are always excited to hear about a new player. So your phone is going to ring once people start hearing about you. But for longevity as a side musician, there are some simple things you can do. Of course, being the best you can be on your instrument. Being yourself. Being easy-going on the road. Keeping your life together enough so that you're not messing things up—because it's easy to get sucked into drugs or whatever. Being on time: When they say, "Be ready to go at noon," don't show up at noon. Especially if it's a union thing, be there at 11:30 to make sure your gear is set up and you're comfortable.

MD: Do you recall a moment when you realized, "Hey, people are beginning to talk about me"?

Allison: There was definitely a point when I would meet people and they no longer asked me what instrument I played. My teacher at the time, Michael Carvin, put it right out on the table. He said, "You'll go through a period where people will refer to you as 'Allison the drummer.' Then there

will be a period where you're being talked about a lot. Then you've got a five-year grace period where you'll get lots of calls for records, tours, interviews, things like that. But then as you're kind of into your career, you'll have peaks and lulls. And then the next thing to do is become a master drummer. You have to pass on the tradition."

As I get older, I'm more fulfilled by teaching and passing it on. Especially with jazz music, there's a tradition that newcomers would mentor with the old guys, and that's how the music has been carried on. And I think that's one of the reasons jazz is a dying musical form: People aren't mentoring as much as they used to. There aren't as many gigs, there aren't enough touring bands, and young musicians aren't getting as much opportunity to learn from the masters.

MD: There still seems to be a lot of great music being made, though.

Allison: Well, I think it depends on what you're listening to. If you turn on a commercial radio station, you're

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ALLISON MILLER

not going to hear a lot of the great music that's out there. I'm involved with this whole scene in Brooklyn where we're all really trained musicians but we're kind of broken away from that. And because of technology and because of the day we're living in, we're combining all different types of music, mixing with indie rock bands.... So in that sense, I think the quality is improving.

MD: Who have been your biggest inspirations over the years?

Allison: When I first started playing, I wasn't into any particular drummer, but I was super into Prince. So obviously Sheila E was an influence. I used to watch the Sign "O" The Times movie over and over again. Then I was really into this music from DC called go-go, and I was into early hip-hop and rap. That's kind of what I listened to in high school.

When I got to college I started checking out a lot of jazz. The first jazz record that blew me away and that made me say, I want to play jazz drums, was Miles Smiles with Tony Williams. All through college I was obsessed with Tony and with Jack DeJohnette and a lot of the modern players. Then when I got to New York I realized there

was this whole heritage of jazz drumming that I hadn't really checked out: Art Blakey, Papa Jo, Philly Joe, Kenny Clarke. And in New York there was a way that I saw drummers play that I was like, "Oh, I'm not doing that."

MD: What was that?

Allison: A certain kind of a forward motion with the ride cymbal. Michael Carvin calls it "your dance." It was about your ride cymbal being the foundation, and everything else working around it. Everybody's ride cymbal was so strong in New York, so that's when I really started checking out Philly Joe and Art Blakey, and then I got super into Ed Blackwell. I think Ed Blackwell and Roy Haynes are probably my biggest influences. I love Ed Blackwell.

MD: Can you identify any particular aspects of his playing that drew you in?

Allison: There's a certain joy and crispness to his playing, and in Roy Haynes' playing too, that I really connect with. A lightness. A lot of Ed Blackwell's soloing is very much based on the drums. I love when a drummer takes a solo and they just play the drums, without playing the cymbals. I'm a real fan of all those early Ornette Coleman records;

the way Ed Blackwell swung was just so light and happy and joyous. Same with Billy Higgins.

MD: What about non-drummer influences?

Allison: I've always connected to Wayne Shorter's music. First of all, the way he composes is brilliant. And I always loved the bands he put together and the sound of those old Blue Note records, whether it was Elvin Jones or Joe Chambers or Tony Williams on drums. I love the sound of the drums, the whole combination of the band.

MD: As a bandleader putting together a group of musicians, you can kind of imagine how players are going to get along personally-wise. But can you control what they're going to sound like together?

Allison: The first reaction of a bandleader is often to tell people what to do too much. After a while I decided that I'm just going to hire people and let them do what they do, and hope that we find the right chemistry. As a side musician, when I've been hired by a person and they start to tell me what to do too much, I kind of close off, and I end up not playing like me. There's an art to being a leader and allowing people's creative energies to flow.

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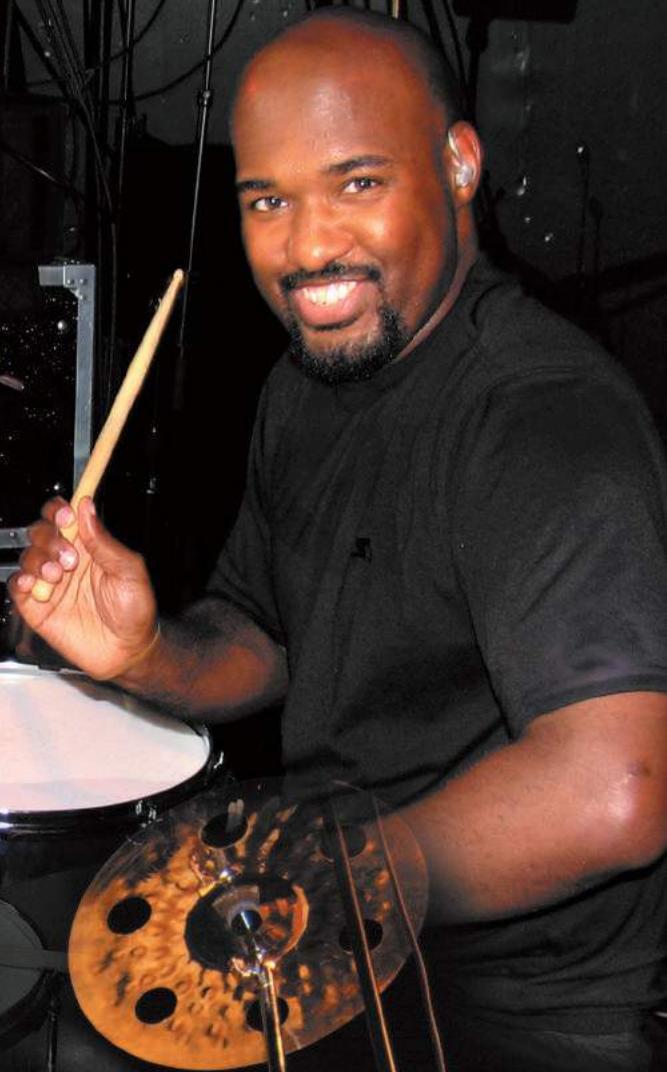
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ALLISON MILLER

MD: Are there particular drummer/bandleaders you've looked up to?

Allison: One is Leon Parker. The way he brought musicians together was brilliant. Same with Art Blakey. John McEntire from Tortoise, too, and I really appreciate Joey Baron.

MD: What was it like for you when you released your first album as a leader?

Allison: I didn't think about the future when I did my first record. I did it because there was this period in my life when I wrote a lot of songs on the piano—which I learned to

play before I started on drums—and I felt like I needed to have some sort of "photo album" of this time in my life. After I recorded it I said, Okay, now what do I do? I guess I'll try to market this. I did all the publicity myself, and I got some bites. Then I was able to put together a little tour and play some festivals. I thought, Wait, now I have to make sure everybody's happy, and then play and be creative? It was a real challenge.

MD: So how do you keep yourself and all your players happy?

Allison: One way to keep people happy is to

pay them well. I make sure the musicians know how much they're getting paid before they walk on stage. I've been on gigs where I don't know how much I'm getting paid before I go on stage, and I don't know why, but it kind of bothers me. Even better yet, actually pay them before they go on stage. Musicians really love that. And musicians love to eat. Never go on stage hungry—or too full. And put them in a nice hotel room. And obviously make sure the music is happening.

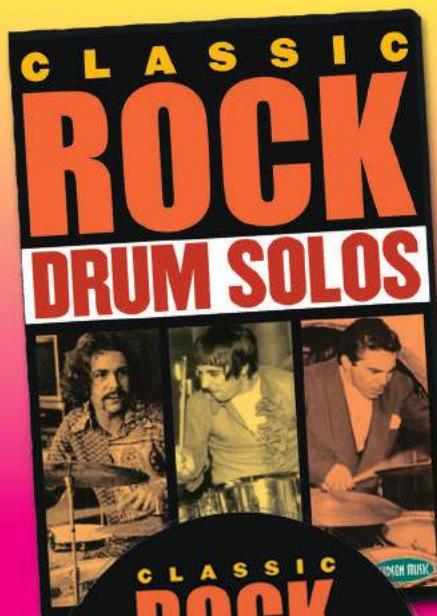
MD: Let's talk a bit about your sound. Do you concern yourself with having your own particular sound, especially considering that you play in lots of different musical settings? Or do you try to be some sort of sonic chameleon?

Allison: I think there's a way to fit into different musical situations while still keeping your sound. When I was younger, I really obsessed over my sound. I was like, I've got to have this as my sound, and I was forcing it. Finally I realized, What am I doing? If I just be myself, I'm going to have a sound. Now I definitely know if it's me when I hear a record, even if I forgot I recorded it. And it doesn't matter what drums I'm playing. I know some drummers are really adamant about playing their own drums. But I think you can take one drumkit and have ten different drummers sit at it, and they would all still sound like themselves.

Because I play so many different styles, I just try to serve the music. Obviously I'm not going to show up on Erin's gig and have my drums cranked up high like I would on a straight-ahead jazz gig. Sometimes artists will ask me to do certain things. When I was going out with Dr. Lonnie Smith, he didn't want the drums tuned too high, which was interesting from a jazz player because usually they like them higher. He said sometimes if your snare drum is too high it conflicts with the frequencies from the organ. I know some bandleaders who make their drummers play cymbals that they have. Erin doesn't like a rack tom on the gig. So everybody has a different thing.

Also, it's the circumstances you find yourself in. When I was in my early twenties, I was doing almost all jazz, but then I went out on tour with Natalie Merchant. When I got back to New York and started calling people for jazz gigs—because in New York if you're not around, people stop calling—I had to refocus, because I had come off a year and a half of making huge strokes all the time. My

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Solos, Duos, And Big-Time Inspirations

From the list below, readers won't be surprised to learn that Allison Miller describes herself as "one crazy music nut." Alli is particularly knocked out by some great drum solo and duet albums, so we're listing them here first.

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nuances were gone. So I had to get into the shed and figure that out.

MD: Different kinds of rooms produce different kinds of drum sounds too, right? How might you compensate for that?

Allison: Well, we can't control the room. All we can do is tweak the drums' tuning, increase or decrease the muffling in the bass

drum, or lightly tape up the heads or the underside of the cymbals. Some people are against using tape, but I think whatever needs to be done to get the drum sound to your liking, should be done.

Drums are like babies, or a spouse. Sometimes they're in a bad mood and don't want to cooperate. [laughs] Sometimes they

don't want to stick around for the party. They might be too cold or too hot. But this is the beauty of playing a natural instrument. It moves and changes just like life does. You just have to go with the flow and treat your drums as well as you would treat yourself.

MD: Earlier today, when you pulled out the snare drum that you used on the Ani sessions, I noticed it had tape all over it. I thought that was awesome, because jazz-snobs are always talking about, I don't use any muffling...that cliché thing.

Allison: I used to be that way too. It's funny, I feel like the longer I play music the less of a snob I'm becoming. There was a period in my life, in my mid-twenties, when you could have mentioned the top ten people on the Billboard charts and I would have had no idea what you were talking about. I was such a jazz head, and I only listened to records recorded before 1970. I think sometimes to really dig deep into a musical style you have to do that. But now I'm fascinated when I hear a drummer play a rock beat and it really feels good. When I think about the greats throughout the history of music—Wayne Shorter, Jimi Hendrix,

The Beatles, Miles, John Coltrane—they were all really open-minded and into different kinds of music. I think you need to be that way.

MD: I read an interview where you were talking about playing melodically, which is usually talked about in a jazz context. But is that something that also can be applied in a rock context?

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Allison: Definitely. The way I would think in terms of playing melodically in rock or pop music involves learning how to sing the song while you're playing, and trying to work minimal fills around the phrasing of the melody. Just being in tune with the melody and being in tune with what the bass player is playing, and kind of wrapping your kick drum around what the bass player is playing.

MD: When you say "in tune," are you talking about the tone of the drum?

Allison: Both the rhythm and the tone. Because you can have your bass drum tuned in a way that's not jiving with the song, or your snare could be projecting just enough of a pitch that it sounds like it's not in the right key of the tune.

You know, half the kids I teach just want to play rock. But I make them learn melodies, like Monk tunes, because I know it's going to help them become better musicians, which in turn is going to make them play more musically in a band. Even if it's a punk band. Since I started singing I feel like I've become a much better drummer.

MD: When did you start singing?

Allison: I grew up singing, but for some reason once I got to college and got really into jazz, I stopped. When I joined Erin's band, I started singing back-up, and then last year I made a record where I sang lead on a few things. Now I'm singing in our band Emma, and I'm singing back-ups with Ani. I love playing drums and singing. If I'm just playing drums, sometimes I'm not thinking enough about the music, and I start to think, Let me try that little double paradiddle thing that I

was practicing. But if I'm singing, I'm not thinking about any of the drummy stuff. My fills are musically applicable. I make my students sing too, and they're mortified. [laughs] I would have hated it too at their age.

MD: When Levon Helm is singing with The Band in the movie *The Last Waltz*, he just attacks the vocals, almost like the drums aren't there.

Allison: And that's why his drumming is the way it is. Same with Roy Haynes. I think he plays really melodically, and he's an amazing singer. I heard that when he was playing with Sarah Vaughan, if she forgot lyrics, she would turn to Roy and he would mouth them to her. Supposedly Roy knows the lyrics to more standards than most singers. He's really in touch with that.

I also like singing when I'm soloing. I've always needed a melody to latch onto when I solo, even if it's something I make up—something to build from.

MD: You mentioned earlier how Erin preferred it when you didn't use a rack tom. I mistakenly left mine home one night, and I enjoyed the gig so much that night that I decided to not use it with that band anymore.

Allison: I think the fewer options the better, for everyone on stage. I like having less to hit. It also breaks you away from patterns.

MD: When Bernard Purdie played the Modern Drummer Festival, it was striking how, even when he played an extremely simple fill on one floor tom, it was hugely powerful, simply because he was doing it with such intent and clarity. Maybe with jazz it's different,

because you have to prompt solos so many different ways on any given night.

Allison: Yeah, but even with jazz, the intention behind something is so important. I remember the first time I heard Elvin, he hit his cymbal once and the intention behind that one hit could knock the whole audience over. It was amazing. Or I love it when drummers take a solo and they hit one drum and then they don't play anything. Anybody could do that, but it's the musicality and the intention behind it that matters. I've noticed that when I play with Erin and I do a solo, on nights where I play simpler, with fewer notes—more melodically, more to the point—the audience can follow it. And nights where I play stuff that would maybe impress a drummer, they don't love it as much.

MD: Let's talk specifically about some of the records you've played on. The track that really jumps out at me on the Shakers N' Bakers record is "From The Moon." There's so much energy there.

Allison: With the Shakers N' Bakers album, everybody in that band was carefully chosen for the way they interact with the other musicians. Jeff Lederer, who started the band, said, If you hear something, go for it. Don't hold back.

MD: There's a section on "From The Moon" where you wail on a crash cymbal ten or twelve times in a row. That moment is very emotional.

Allison: Every track we did was emotionally charged. It's not always like that in the studio, and I think that's one reason I really like that record. The people involved are

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ALLISON MILLER

very improvisatory musicians who are coming from a jazz vein but who've kind of broken away. Jamie Saft, who plays all the crazy keyboards on that record, has been playing with John Zorn for years. But then I was in the car with him recently and he told me, "Every time Z.Z. Top comes to town I go to every show."

MD: When you're in an improvisational situation, how far in advance are you thinking? Are the best players the ones who think the fastest?

Allison: I stay right in the moment and let the music guide me. When I start to think in advance, I just get in my own way. It limits

the possibilities of where the music can go. The best players are the ones who listen and develop a musical idea with a natural arch, without controlling the situation.

MD: In our Max Roach tribute issue, Kenny Washington noted how there was thought behind everything Max played. You seem to display that trait as well. I'm thinking specifically about your solo on the title track of your album *5am Stroll*. It doesn't necessarily sound like it's completely planned, but your ideas are very clear. And even when the licks aren't overly complex, they're still compelling.

Allison: I'm soloing over the form of the

song, and the whole time I'm singing the melody in my head. Of course I have licks and things that just come out, but on that song, especially since I wrote it and it's got a funny form—it's fifteen measures and then twelve measures—I was really focusing on that.

One of the perks of having Lenny White produce *5am Stroll* was that he encouraged me to use one of his drumsets. So I used this old Gretsch of his. I think it might have been one of the kits he used back in the Bitches Brew days. It was a five-piece, and I hadn't played a five-piece in a long time. Sometimes I'll use an extra snare to my left, but I usually use a four-piece. But I was pretty young, and it was Lenny White, so I was like, "Whatever you say..." So we used those drums and I tuned them in a melodic way. And because I was using a five-piece, it kind of stopped me from relying on any kind of muscle memory. And the sweet spot of those drums really came out that day, so that's where I got some of my inspiration for that solo.

MD: Was it planned ahead of time to use Lenny's drums?

Allison: Yes, we had talked a lot about the production of that record. He and I are both huge fans of records like Herbie Hancock's *Empyrean Isles* and Miles Davis's *Nefertiti*, and we wanted to go for that older sound. We also wanted most of the drums to be mixed to the left of stereo. When we got to the studio the engineer started setting up the drums in this small drum room, and Lenny was like, "Ah, we want the drums in the main room with the piano and the bass," which was a little bit of a bone of contention because the studio was not huge and the engineer wanted more isolation. But it ended up working out great.

Getting back to your original question about the solo, I think soloing really reflects people's personalities. I never have a million ideas coming at me at once. When I do, it's disaster in my life. [laughs] If an idea comes to me, instead of playing that idea and then breaking away from it, I try to develop it for a while. I like to think like a classical composer. The idea is the motif or melody. I then expound on it using different contrapuntal techniques. Let me build it, turn it upside down, elongate it, squish it together, subtract snippets... Or, Okay, I just played that in my hands, now let me play that in my feet... now let me play a combination. I usually do this with an ostinato going in one or two limbs.

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ALLISON MILLER

I've always been drawn to a solo that the listener can follow and go along for the ride. When I hear a drum solo and it's a million things at once for five minutes, I get bored pretty quickly.

I always like to say to my students, "Space is the place." When you start a solo, you don't have to start with a million notes. Start with a couple measures of rest. Don't play anything, and I swear that will get everybody's attention in the bar, because they're always expecting noise. It gives you a little break to kind of start fresh.

I think drummers can be afraid to use space; it's much easier to play a lot. It used to be that if I left a silence in my playing, it seemed like an eternity, but if I listened back to the tape of that gig, I'd think, "Oh my gosh, that was like half a second." I think it's just a matter of feeling comfortable with controlling that space and not letting it get away from you.

MD: Many drummers don't think about taking things away to improve their playing; they're always trying to add something.

Allison: Totally. I feel that however you approach the world kind of comes out in your art. I mean, certain sides of my life are cluttered, like my closet. [laughs] But in general I'm attracted to things that are spacious. I've never really been into dense music, no matter what style. It's the same way with visual art. Three of my favorite artists are Mark Rothko, who is totally spacious, and then Georgia O'Keefe and Edward Hopper.

For a long time I had this quote on the wall in my apartment. I used to live on the Upper West Side, years ago, and I was in this "mode." It was a little weird, but I was real young and I was practicing ten hours a day, and I had these index cards all over my apartment, with quotes on them—whatever inspired me. I was studying pretty heavy at the time with Michael Carvin, so I had quotes from him everywhere. For a long time I had this one Georgia O'Keefe quote that became my motto. It's even in the liner notes of the *Agrazing Maze* album. It says, "It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis that we get to the real meaning of things." She basically picked a subject, eliminated everything that wasn't needed, and then emphasized the one or two things that she thought were the most important objects in that portrait.

MD: The Dr. Lonnie Smith album, *Jungle Soul*, features the Marvin Gaye song "Trouble

Man," which I'd like to use as an excuse to talk about shuffles. Shuffles are so full of mystery and ambiguity for drummers.

Allison: For years I said to myself, What is the way to play a shuffle? Eventually I realized there is no set way to play a shuffle. Sometimes if I'm playing a shuffle with a group, I really have to pull it back, like really relaxed. And then sometimes I have to push it forward. It just depends on who I'm playing with.

Sometimes it feels good to play a shuffle on the hi-hat. And I'm a fan of the left hand playing all the 8th notes, with the accent on 2 and 4. Art Blakey did that a lot, and so did the drummer who played with Stevie Ray Vaughan, Chris Layton. Then when I hear Levon play it, it's a completely other thing. He plays most of his shuffles with both hands on the snare. Sometimes he'll go up to his ride and it's super loose.

The big thing that gets me is the bass drum. Sometimes it feels best to play four on the floor. But it can also feel real good to play a triplet thing.

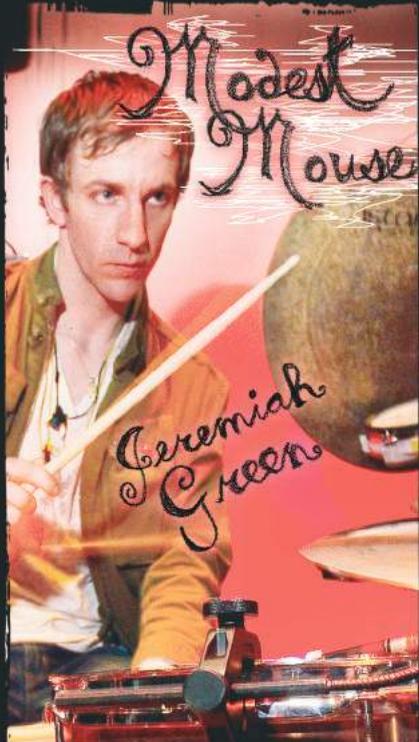
MD: It can ruin things if the bass drum's too heavy.

Allison: Yeah, and your bass drum varies greatly depending on whether you're playing with an upright bass player or an electric bass player. A lot of times an electric player is going to play more staccato, so you can kind of work your bass drum pattern around that. But often with an upright player, the notes are rounder and warmer and there's more space around them, so you can approach your bass drum in a completely different way.

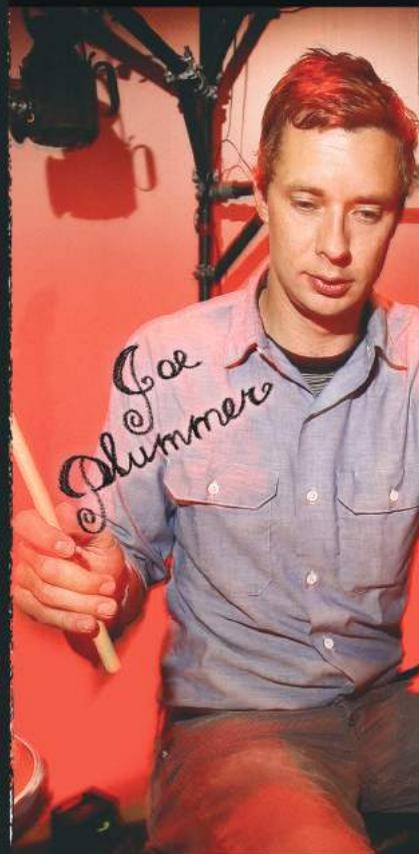
MD: You mentioned to me earlier that you have an upright bass.

Allison: I really want to take bass lessons. Learning other instruments is a big thing for me now. My first drum teacher, Walter Salb, passed away last year, and he left me all his musical instruments, including his grand piano, which is now in my house. I'm hardly ever home, but when I am I try to work on my piano playing. And I really love to play marimba. Drumming-wise, the thing I'm into now when I practice is playing along with other drummers, like Tony Allen, Bernard Purdie, and this New Orleans drummer, Smokey Johnson.

For most of my career I've said to myself, I want to do this, I want to accomplish that... But now I'm more just digging what's happening. As long as I'm making some time to do my own music, I'm happy.



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ZAPPA PLAYS ZAPPA'S JOE TRIVERS THE VAULTMEISTER

Joe Travers believes in destiny. He was born into a family of drummers. His grandfather, father, uncle, and cousins all played. His drumming DNA was set in motion at an early age when his father bought him his first kit at age four. It wasn't until his early teens that he began taking drumming more seriously.

Travers began listening to rock artists like Alice Cooper, KISS, and David Bowie, and then got into more progressive artists like Rush, while at the same time venturing into metal bands like Mötley Crüe and Iron Maiden. But the music that most influenced his drumming was Frank Zappa. This was the music he felt destined to play.

While living in Erie, Pennsylvania, Travers felt the need to leave home and find his way into the drumming world on a larger scale. With financial help from his family, the budding pro enrolled in the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Besides helping to take his playing to a higher level, Berklee allowed Travers the opportunity to establish valuable relationships with other up & coming musicians, which would eventually resurface and help establish his career. He stuck it out and graduated in 1992.

From there, Travers chose Los Angeles as his next destination because, A) he could transfer from the Tower Records store where he was working in Boston, to the store on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, B) the weather, and C) he wanted to pursue his goal of being involved with the Zappa family.



Story by Mike Haid
Photos by Ed Kannon



Once in Los Angeles, Travers' destiny began to unfold quickly. Within a few short months he was called to audition for the band Z, which featured Frank Zappa's sons Dweezil and Ahmet. He got the gig, and his predestined relationship with the Zappa family had begun. Little did he know that this gig would also lead to his amazing longtime role as the Zappa Family Trust Vaultmeister.

There might not be another drummer alive who knows more about the music and drummers of Frank Zappa than Travers. In fact, his knowledge and love for all-things-Zappa landed him the gig as caretaker and handler of restoration for the sacred Zappa family vault. The vault contains over thirty years' worth of priceless Frank Zappa performances, rehearsals, interviews, and ephemera on video and audio tape, of every imaginable type and format, located in a temperature-controlled room below the Zappa home in Los Angeles. Travers is celebrating his twelfth year as the Vaultmeister, and with so much archived footage to be restored and released, Travers' job seems secure for many years to come.

As his destiny continues to unfold, Travers now occupies the drum chair with his dream gig, playing Frank Zappa's music with Dweezil (not to mention former Zappa alumni Ray White, Steve Vai, Napoleon Murphy Brock, and Terry Bozzio) in the Zappa Plays Zappa project. ZPZ has been several years in the making, and is Dweezil's vision. The

project is an attempt to bring his father's music to a new generation, with authenticity and reverence for the original compositions. And, in Dweezil's mind, no drummer is more qualified for the gig than Travers.

With the successful ZPZ tour now in its second year, Travers continues to perform the classic Zappa catalog with a masterful groove that effortlessly floats over the complicated material as though it was all in common 4/4 time. Joe's many years of studying these complex, odd-meter-filled arrangements have paid off with high dividends, as he has now become a distinguished member of the great drummers of Zappa, an honor bestowed on only a select few of the most talented drummers of our time: Aynsley Dunbar, Ralph Humphrey, Chester Thompson, Terry Bozzio, Chad Wackerman, and Vinnie Colaiuta.

Travers has fulfilled his destiny through hard work, perseverance, and a deep love for the music of Frank Zappa. Of course, having the extreme talent to convincingly play this music doesn't hurt Travers' career either. He's also performed and recorded with Zappa alumni like guitarist Mike Keneally and his former Berklee classmate, bassist Bryan Beller (Steve Vai, Z).

Let's dig deeper into the fascinating, everything-Zappa life and times of the Vaultmeister, Joe Travers.





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- G. 16x16 floor tom (X shell)
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Cymbals: Zildjian

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- 2. 14" K hi-hats
- 3. 14" K Custom Fast crash
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- 5. 6" Zil-Bel
- 6. 10" K splash
- 7. 20" K ride
- 8. 19" K Dark thin crash
- 9. 16" Oriental China Trash

Heads: Remo coated CS (dot) on snare batter, clear CS (dot) on tom batters, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter

Sticks: Vater Los Angeles 5A model, Wire-Tap (heavy wire brush)

MD: How familiar were you with Frank Zappa's music when you arrived at Berklee?

Joe: I was a huge Zappa fan from an early age. I was self-taught and I knew that I wasn't playing the drum parts correctly. A lot of the advanced polyrhythmic stuff went right over my head. I was able to figure out the odd-meter stuff well enough to play it. But I knew that it would help my career immensely if I attended school and acquired the skills necessary to play things correctly. I could play "The Black Page" from a rhythmical aspect, but I wasn't exe-

players, which helped develop my musical vocabulary and drumming skills dramatically.

MD: How did going to Berklee help you connect with the Zappa family?

Joe: I was working at the Tower Records store in Boston in 1990 while attending Berklee, and Dweezil Zappa did an in-store promotion for his album in our store. I introduced myself to him and gave him a videotape of a show that I had put together of me playing Frank's music, in hopes that he would pass it along to Frank. I also befriended Dweezil's guitarist, Mike

supposed to attend the show, but was too ill at that point. I met Dweezil there again, and he told me that he had watched the video but hadn't had a chance to show it to Frank.

MD: How did you end up finally working with Dweezil?

Joe: Once I moved to Los Angeles, I immediately started hanging out with Mike Keneally, and we became good friends. Within the first few months, Mike called to let me know that they were auditioning drummers for the band Z, which also featured Dweezil and Ahmet Zappa, along

"There are quintessential versions of Zappa songs that are **imbedded in my skull**. I have to play certain fills just like the record because **they mean that much to me.**"

cutting the intricate melodic aspects of the piece.

Berklee helped expose me to a lot of jazz, which I wasn't familiar with because I grew up listening to rock. I really got into all the Chick Corea stuff and the heavy jazz

Keneally, who had played in Frank Zappa's band.

Mike Keneally and I stayed in touch, and we met up again a year later at a concert in New York City that featured Frank Zappa's music, called Zappa's Universe. Frank was

with Frank Zappa alumnus Scott Thunes. I passed the audition and stayed in that band for several years.

MD: How did this lead to your position as the Vaultmeister for the Zappa Family Trust?

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JOE TRAVERS

Joe: The Vaultmeister gig happened in 1995, while I was in Z. I was invited down into the vault one day, because I had been dying to see it for a long time. When I started checking out all the tapes on the shelves, I saw that I was very familiar with the music and the players that were on them. Just from looking at the titles on the spines, I knew I was more knowledgeable about their contents than anyone already working in the vault—even more than anyone in the Zappa family. So Frank's wife, Gail, said, "Great, you're now the Vaultmeister." Z ended in 1996, but I've stayed on as the

Frank's entire career. Even though the older tapes have been stored properly, they'll only survive for so long. There are precautions that need to take place before I put them on the tape machines, in order to ensure the tape quality before I digitize them.

MD: Can you describe the preservation process?

Joe: I have to heat-treat the older tapes before I put them on the machines, otherwise the oxide goes away from the back of the tape, which could ruin it forever. Once a tape is treated, I can only get a couple of

"Terry Bozzio put his arm around me and said, 'Joe, you're my favorite Zappa drummer. You're the Steve Gadd of the Zappa world.' I was speechless."



Vaultmeister. I've also done several recording projects with Dweezil over the years, which has now led to the Zappa Plays Zappa project.

MD: Describe the Vaultmeister gig.

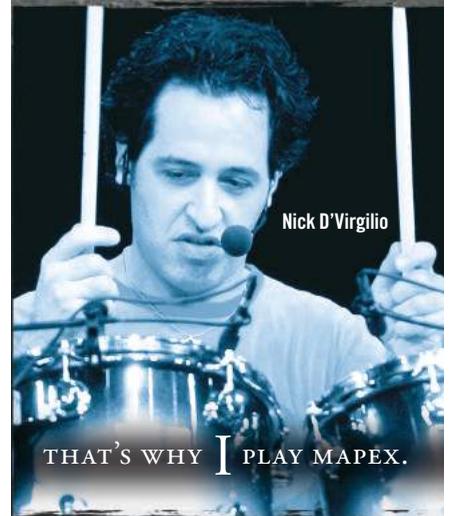
Joe: I absolutely love this job. But there's a lot of responsibility to it. I'm the one responsible for preserving the entire vault of Frank Zappa tapes, making sure that they live on. There's every type of audio and video format that you can imagine, spanning

plays out of it before the quality starts deteriorating. Then I document each tape and find out what's already been released from it. From the remaining unreleased material, I help compile music for future releases for the Zappa Family Trust.

MD: How did you learn the skills to treat and preserve the tapes?

Joe: It was basically on-the-job training. I was fortunate to meet Frank before he passed away. I sat with him and watched

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JOE TRAVERS

him do some digital editing on an album called Trance-Fusion, which is now available. I also watched his engineer, Spence Christlu, who took over after Frank passed away. He was using a Sonic Solutions system, and after watching him work for a while, I knew that I could do the job. From splicing tape to digital editing, I learned everything that I needed to know to get the job done. I've been doing this now since 1995, and I believe I'll have this job for a long time.

MD: Tell us about how the Zappa Plays Zappa project came about.

Joe: Dweezil had wanted to do the ZPZ project for several years. Finally, in 2005, it was put into motion, and Dweezil warned me ahead of time that when it was time to do the project, I would be the drummer. Unfortunately it was postponed until 2006. But when it finally came together, it was worth the wait, because we were privileged to have Steve Vai, Napoleon Murphy Brock, and Terry Bozzio, all Frank Zappa alumni, do the tour with us.

MD: Was this your dream gig come true?

Joe: Totally! I've been listening to Frank Zappa's music since I was ten years old. Having the opportunity to officially play it with Zappa family and friends is a dream come true. And having Terry Bozzio playing right next to me is something I would never have imagined in my wildest dreams. Playing "The Black Page" together with Terry, and trading licks back and forth, was completely unbelievable for me. The last two shows of the tour were filmed for DVD release, and it will feature Terry and me doing "The Black Page."

MD: Talk about your approach to re-creating the drum parts for the Zappa material.

Joe: There are quintessential versions of Zappa songs that are imbedded in my skull. I have to play certain fills just like the record because they mean that much to me. But I don't want it to be the same every single night either. I respect the music and the players that created it so much that I can't deny their influences when I play this music.

There are strong traits to every drummer who originally played this music, and each of them has impacted my playing in some way. Ralph Humphrey was so intricate and creative in utilizing drum parts. Chester Thompson had an amazing groove. Aynsley Dunbar was a powerhouse jazz/rock player.

Jimmy Carl Black was a solid groove player, and I really loved his side-stick playing. Chad Wackerman was unbelievably musical. Terry Bozzio brought the relentless rock to Frank's music. He was a complete animal behind the kit. His double bass technique is etched in my playing. And then there's Vinnie Colaiuta. There was no other drummer who could relate to Frank in a rhythmic sense as well as Vinnie. The places that Frank and Vinnie would go during improvisational sections were from another planet.

It's so inspiring to listen to Frank and Vinnie stretch out. It reminds me of the places that Miles Davis and his famous quintet would go. When Frank and Vinnie played together, the rest of the band would watch and listen in amazement. Ed Mann, the percussionist, would hold up a sign that said, "Where's 1?" Ray White told me that when the guys would ask Vinnie about where the 1 was, Vinnie would answer, "Hey man, 1 is relative!" [laughs] So I try to take a little from each of these incredible players when I approach Frank's music, and give it the respect it deserves.

There are lots of written parts that Frank designed specifically for the drummers, and I always stick to those. Plus being the Vaultmeister allows me the opportunity to hear all of these drummers play the material in various configurations, and I have access to all of the original charts.

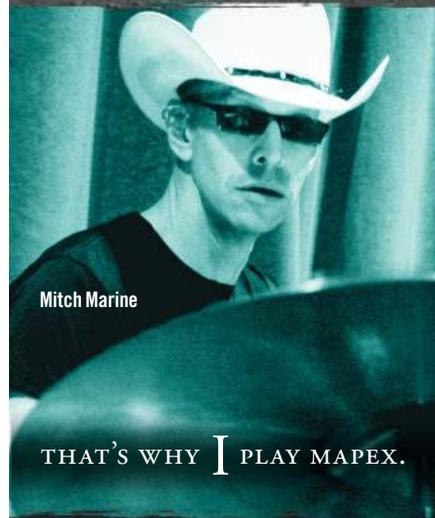
MD: How do you feel about being a part of the Zappa drumming family after all your years of hard work and dedication toward reaching this lifelong goal?

Joe: I was sitting on the tour bus last year with Terry Bozzio, telling him how much of an honor it was to be playing this music with him. He put his arm around me and said, "Joe, you're my favorite Zappa drummer." Then he said, "You're the Steve Gadd of the Zappa world." I was speechless. That was the highest compliment that I could ever imagine coming from one of the greatest Zappa drummers of all time.

MD: I can understand what Terry meant, because when I saw you play, you had such a relaxed, comfortable, yet commanding feel for this highly complex material. You made it look easy, and it felt so relaxed and in the pocket.

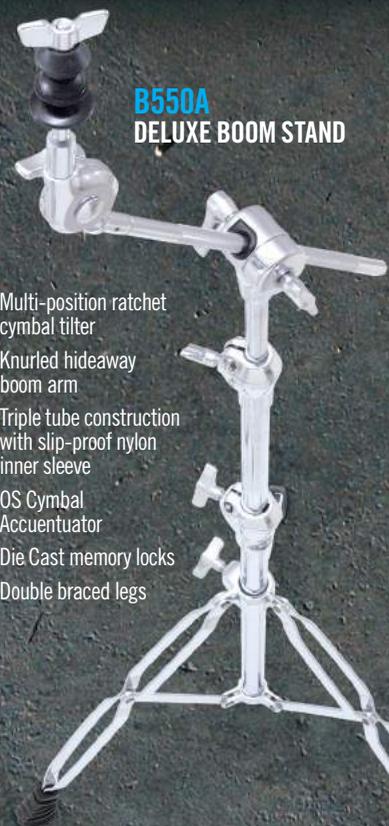
Joe: One of the reasons I've learned to relax and get comfortable with the music is that these shows are three hours long, and I have to pace myself and conserve my energy to

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JOE TRAVERS

be able to get through the night.

MD: But you've also developed your technique to the point where even the most complex pieces don't look that challenging for you to play. Are there any songs or drum parts that you found almost impossible to duplicate or recreate because of its physical or technical nature?

Joe: Oh, yeah. The parts that are most challenging for me are the heavily composed sections that have completely written drum parts. There's a section in the song "Wild Love," from the Sheik Yerbouti album, which

is taken from another piece of music, "Sinister Footwear." It is loaded with complicated rhythms. There are also a couple of different versions; one features Terry Bozzio playing quarter-note ride cymbal through the section, but there's also a later version with Chad Wackerman playing the entire melody on the drumkit. So I tried to do both versions during the tour on different nights. There were a couple of shows where I really butchered it by trying to play the melody on the kit. Those are the things that I have to practice.

MD: Have you had to modify your drumkit in order to perform some of this material?

Joe: Yes. There have been so many different drummers with completely different kits throughout the various Zappa bands. Aynsley Dunbar and Jimmy Carl Black played small four-piece kits. But later in his career, Frank wrote parts for large drumkits. The most obvious of these was "The Black Page," for which Frank wrote a section based on Terry's large melodic drumkit. So I needed to create a kit that could cover all the bases.

My setup is close to what Terry had, which is three rack toms and two floor toms, but with a single bass drum and a double pedal. I have used a set of bongos and a set of Alpine cowbells that belonged to Frank, and they're the same bells that Ruth Underwood and Ralph Humphrey used in the Zappa bands of the '70s. So when I play them in the songs on which they were originally heard, it's just like you're listening to the record. It's very cool!

This year on the tour I replaced the bongos with 6" and 8" RotoToms, because Chad and Vinnie both used RotoToms a lot in their setups with Frank. I also added a 14" timbale under my hi-hat, just for fun.

DW is making me a kit using their new X Shell technology, which is a cross-laminate shell that delivers a deeper, warmer fundamental note. I'm also using their new 23" bass drum, which gives you a bigger sound than a 22" but without having to push as much air as you would with a 24".

MD: Which of the Zappa drummers do you feel are the most influential to your drumming style?

Joe: Actually, I would have to say that John Bonham is my favorite drummer of all time. When I'm asked who my favorite drummers are, I have to say that they are John Bonham, and then all of Frank Zappa's drummers.

I've been influenced by all the greats, but my favorite drumming has to have feel and grease, and it's got to swing. I feel that Bonham had all of that. Most of Frank's drummers had that too. There are lots of amazing drummers out today that can play things that I could never play. But for me, it's all about making the music feel good and bringing some emotion to the music. All of Frank's drummers had something special to bring to the table.



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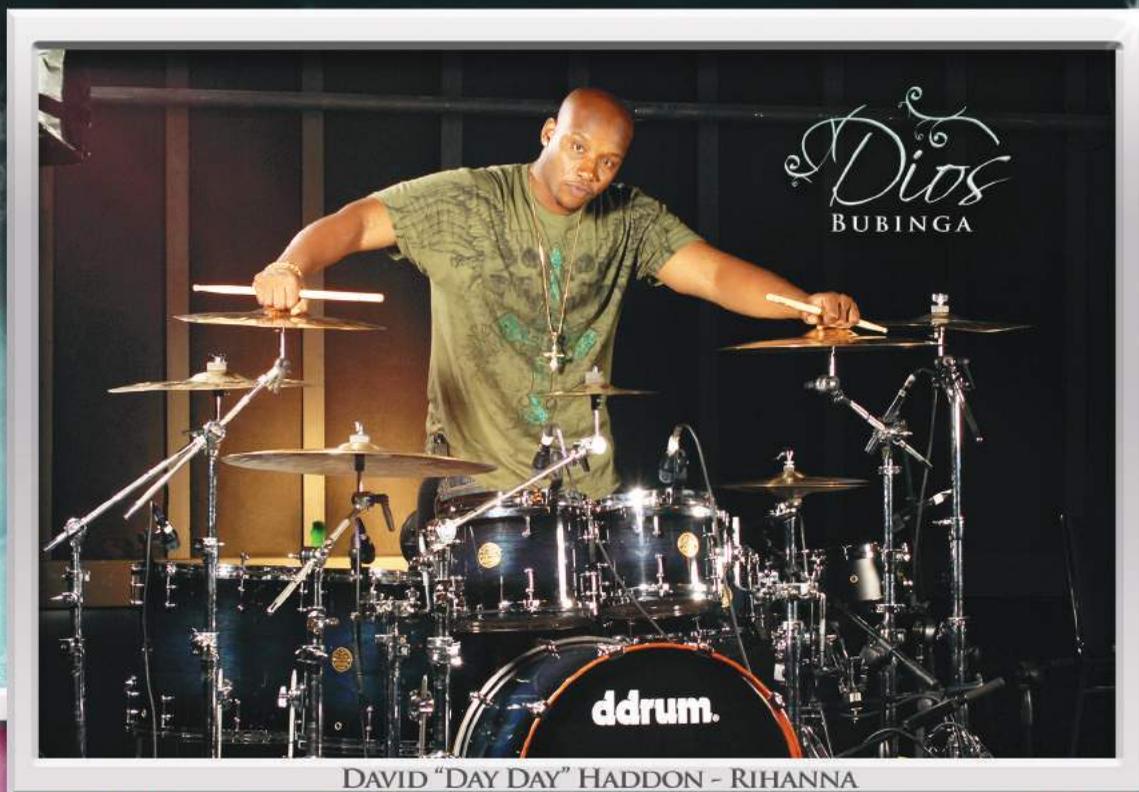
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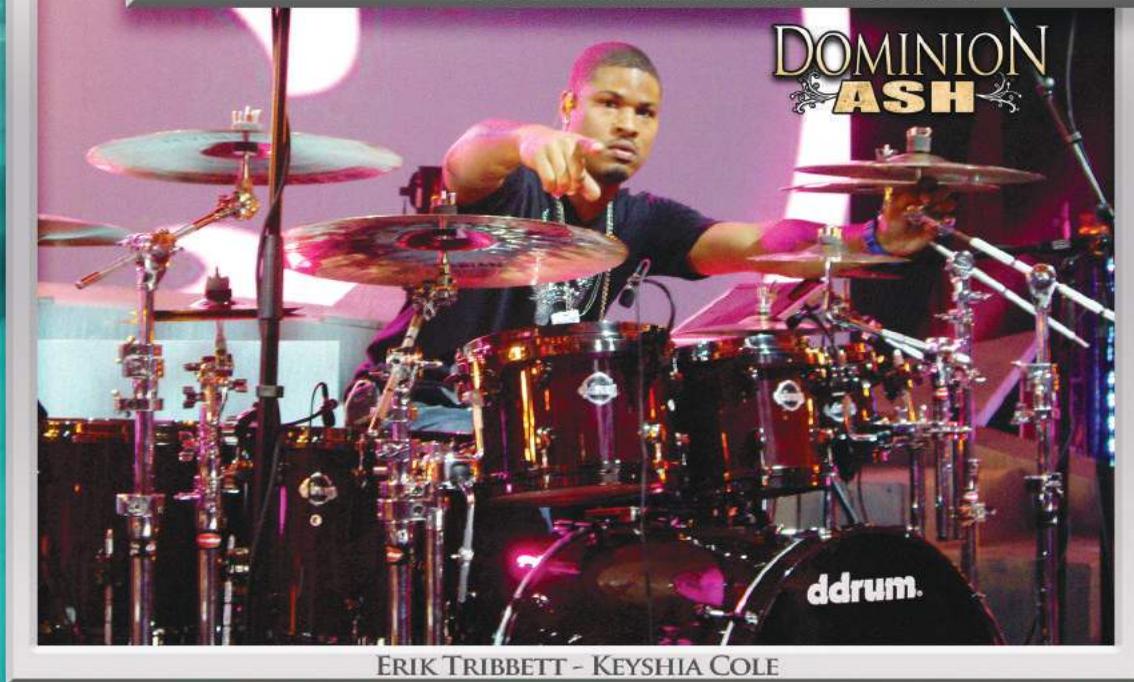
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Creative Jazz Giant Hamid Drake A Place To Come To

story by Michael Dawson
photos by Gene Ambo

If the amount of time you spend away from your practice space is any indication of career accomplishment, then improvising drummer/percussionist Hamid Drake deserves a Nobel Prize. "I just got back from New Orleans for an evening, and then I went to Montreal for a festival," Drake explains during a little bit of downtime at his house in the north side of Chicago. "I'll be home for a few days, and then I leave for some gigs in Italy and Sardinia. Then I come back to the States to play a week-long festival in New York."

Maintaining such a grueling travel schedule has been a way of life for Drake since he first began touring and making records over thirty years ago with his long-time collaborator, saxophonist Fred Anderson. Since those early days, Hamid has become one of the most acclaimed and accomplished improvising musicians on the planet, racking up over 150 recording credits with a vast assortment of creative jazz artists like Anderson, bassist William Parker, saxophonists David Murray, David Ware, and Peter Brötzmann, and guitarist Bill Laswell. This past year, Drake

appeared on a handful of albums, including two duet recordings with William Parker (First Communion/Piercing The Veil and Volume 2: Summer Snow) and Anderson's incredible release From The River To The Ocean, which was recorded at fellow Chicago drummer John McEntire's Soma Studios.

"For the last record with Fred," the drummer recalls, "he basically said, Hey, Hamid, you go ahead and decide what we're going to do.' So I wanted to use this record to feature a couple of Fred's compositions that haven't been recorded for a long time or have never been recorded. And I wanted to give the other musicians a chance to feature some compositions."

In one of Anderson's tunes, "Strut Time," Hamid shifts from a strong Blakey-style shuffle into a double-time Latin groove, reflecting the drummer's rich background in various ethnic styles. "When I was younger, I spent quite a bit of time studying Afro-Cuban conga drumming and other percussion instruments," Drake explains. "So a lot of what I do on the drums comes through hand percussion—congas, doumbek, frame drum, and stuff like that. After studying congas for a few years, I found that I naturally began to play some of that language on the drumset.



But I don't want to play something that sounds exactly like the traditional patterns. I want to use them as a reference point."

Peppered throughout Drake's living-room practice space are a few of those ethnic percussion instruments that have helped shape the drummer's deep rhythmic voice, from Latin American congas and cajons, to Middle Eastern frame drums, to African/Afro-Cuban bata. At the center of this multi-cultural percussion melting pot sits a mismatched drumset made up of a combination of vintage and modern gear. "I have my 'raggedy' drumset at home," Drake jokes. "But it sounds great. It's an old Gretsch 20" bass drum with old 12" and 16" Slingerland toms. Maybe it's because the wood has aged, but I really love the sound of those drums."

For the snare, Hamid relies on a small Pearl piccolo. "I've been using that for the past few

years now," the drummer affirms. "I went through a period where I was playing a lot of R&B, funk, and reggae, so I used a much deeper snare. But when I went back to playing more jazz, that drum didn't work. So I started checking out piccolos to give me a different sound."

When it comes to selecting cymbals, Drake not only checks out the instruments' sound but also their feel. "I have a bunch of old Zildjian As and Ks, and they sound great. And I've been enjoying this Istanbul," says the drummer referring to his ride cymbal. "But the sound is just one part of it. I also look for how the stick bounces off the cymbal. When I listen to some of the old stuff that Max Roach and Ed Blackwell recorded, there was always the sound of the stick on the cymbal. And when they played, the stick seemed to have an effortless bounce to it. Some of that is tech-

nique, of course. But the thickness or thinness of the cymbals affects that too. So I look for that. I just bought a very thin pair of 15" Zildjian As from the '50s. They're light and swift. So when I do different things on them, it's almost effortless."

With such a cool collection of instruments in his home, it has to be somewhat bittersweet to be spending so much time on the road. "I really do miss playing at home and going out to see my musician friends in town," Hamid admits. "The local scene in Chicago is filled with energy and life, and I miss being a part of that. Plus I want to know who are some of the young and upcoming musicians. With my touring schedule, I don't have the opportunity to get out much. But I'm planning to start taking about two months off each year so I can spend more time in town."



Chimaira's Andy Herrick

Resurrection

by Ed Breckenfeld



Neil Lim Sang

MUSIC KEY

half-open	∅	C.C.
H.H.	✱	
T.T.	✱	
S.D.	✱	
F.D.	✱	
B.D.1	✱	
H.H.	✱	
w/foot	✱	
		B.D.2
		Add T.T.

Chimaira is back with a vengeance on their latest album, *Resurrection*. With the return of original drummer Andy Herrick, this metal-core sextet from Cleveland sounds completely rejuvenated.

Herrick's intense twin-kick assault and creative hand patterns are prominent in the mix. Here are some of his coolest beats from *Resurrection*.

"Resurrection"

On the title track, Herrick wastes little time delivering the goods. The intro contains a couple of classic double-bass grooves, separated by an around-the-kit quad move. (0:19)

1

$\text{♩} = 190$

"Pleasure In Pain"

This song's opening beat synchs up with a staccato guitar riff. Andy's 32nd-note kick flourishes are balanced by an off-beat crash at the end of each measure. (0:10)

2

$\text{♩} = 90$

"Worthless"

Herrick is not just blessed with fast feet. This speedy tom pattern becomes more explosive as crash cymbal accents are added. The melodic aspect of Andy's tom work is a nice contrast to his heavy double-kick approach. (0:07)

3

$\text{♩} = 190$

"Six"

Mirroring the title of this track, Herrick blasts away with rapid double-bass sextuplets in this song's slow middle section. The combination of the two extreme speeds is jarring. (4:33)

4

$\text{♩} = 110$

The track ends on a compound time signature that mixes 4/4 with 7/8 and 9/8. Andy's basic pattern remains the same throughout, but he adjusts to the time changes by adding or subtracting a 32nd-note kick drum grouping at the end of each measure. (8:30)

5 $\text{♩} = 150$

"No Reason To Live"

The open space in this sporadic groove helps to highlight Herrick's bursts of rapid-fire double-kick notes. These types of rhythmic clusters appear throughout the album. (0:52)

6 $\text{♩} = 87$

"The Flame"

Andy's four-bar intro groove provides instant momentum for this song. The first three bars escalate in intensity as more kick drum notes are added. The phrase climaxes with a triplet pattern in the fourth measure. (0:06)

7 $\text{♩} = 150$

Towards the end of the tune, Herrick uses triplets as a basis for some fills that involve kick and snare. (4:49)

8

"End It All"

Here's another guitar riff-matching groove that also includes some improvisations at the end of the second and fourth measures. (2:29)

9 $\text{♩} = 95$

"Needle"

This track's beat is built on four stroke-ruff kick work. The triplets switch from offbeats to downbeats in a heavy half-time feel. (0:07)

10 $\text{♩} = 129$



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



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More Hands, Grooves, And Fills

A Complete Curriculum

by Pat Petrillo

MUSIC KEY

- open O
- H.H. X
- T.T. ●
- S.D. ○
- F.T. X
- B.D. X
- H.H. X
- w/ foot

Welcome back! I hope you had fun with my first article (July '07), and that you are showing improvement in the three areas of playing that I covered. This month we explore more challenging material, with the focus on roll development exercises, a bass drum rhythm chart to improve accuracy, timing, and phrasing, a few more ghost-note grooves, and some six stroke-roll fill ideas.

Hands: Rolls

In order to play open and smooth-sounding rolls, you have to use a lot of rebound. A great way to make sure that your rolls are even is to start by playing 16th notes (often called a "check pattern"). Then bounce doubles within this hand motion. Some people suggest that you accent the second note of the double in order to balance out the sound, as the second note usually has a little less volume than the first note. But if your goal is to play an even-sounding roll, then you shouldn't practice the roll with any accents. You want both bounces to come up evenly, with the same amount of velocity. I demonstrate this approach on the video clip, which can be found on the Education page at modern drummer.com.

Remember that repetition is the key to developing endurance. So repeat the exercise numerous times at one tempo. Then increase your metronome by 10 bpm. Continue this process until you start to "feel the burn." Don't just do the exercise for a minute and then stop. You want to max-out at your fastest tempo and hold it there for a few minutes.

The six-stroke roll is often phrased as sextuplets. This is one of the most applicable rudiments for the drumset, as we will see in the fill examples. In order to be able to execute a clean six-stroke roll, I developed the following exercise. It combines the two most commonly used forms of the rudiment: the original six-stroke roll sticking, and an "inside accent" inversion. Be sure to whip in the accents, and try to keep the roll low to the drum.

Grooves: Smooth R&B, Funk Rock, And Electric Jazz/Funk

The foundation of any contemporary groove lies in the accuracy and quality of the bass drum sound. In order to improve timing and phrasing, I created a series of ten four-bar "Rhythm Charts" to play on the bass drum. You can play any number of groove variations on top.

I was inspired by New Breed author Gary Chester's method for developing reading, but I took it a step further and wrote chord changes and bass lines around each of the rhythms. That way, the grooves are placed within a musical context. Below is a four-bar rhythm chart groove that doesn't start on beat 1. It will help improve your accuracy for executing two consecutive 16th notes in various places.

Start with 8th notes on the hi-hat and 2 and 4 on the snare. Then read the rhythms with the bass drum. Listen and lock in to the music track that I've provided at modern drummer.com. Once you can execute 8ths on the hi-hat, try 16th notes or any other variation. The vibe of the first track is smooth R&B, so keep the bass drum open, even, and sounding fat.

SMOOTH R&B

Here's a groove that breaks away from having the snare on the backbeats. The phrasing and feel of this groove is derived from the funky guitar part, while the displaced accents create rhythmic contrast. This one also works on double 16ths on the bass drum, so remember to articulate each note.

FUNK ROCK

Continuing on the theme of not starting on beat 1, here's a two-bar groove that follows the lead of the guitar and Rhodes part in the play-along track. The accents are displaced, and I've added some subtle ghost notes. The challenge in this groove is to follow a soft ghost note with an accent on the next note. I first heard Clyde Stubblefield execute this within James Brown's infamous "Mother Popcorn" groove. To make this groove even more challenging, add variations on the cymbal bell, like on the "&" of each beat.

ELECTRIC JAZZ / FUNK

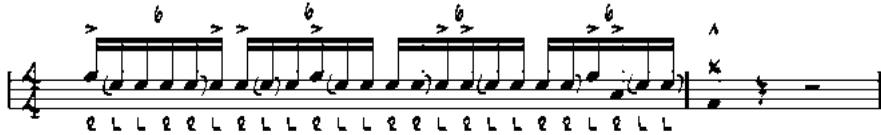
Fills: Six-Stroke Roll Movement

This month's fills focus on ways to apply the six-stroke roll to the drumset. Our first fill works well in any situation and has been used famously in many Motown intros. It's the basis of some of the more complex movements in the upcoming examples.

Now let's move the accents around the drums in a continuous phrase, using a rack and floor tom.



The six stroke-roll inversion gives fills an interesting rhythmic twist.



As you can see, this type of practice method allows you to stay organized, implementing exercises that you work on with your hands into fill ideas. Have fun with these, and I'll see you next time!



Pat Petrillo is a full-time faculty member at The Collective in New York City. He has played with Gloria Gaynor, Patti LaBelle, and Glen Burtnik, has performed numerous Broadway shows, and is a popular clinician. His new multi-media instructional package, *Hands, Grooves & Fills!*, is available through Hudson Music/Hal Leonard. For more on Pat, visit www.patpetrillo.com.



To download the play-along mp3s that accompany this article, log on to the Education page at modern drummer.com.



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Is That Double Bass?

The Power Of The Floor Tom

by Glen Sobel

MUSIC KEY

open	O	R.C.
H.H.	⊗	⊗
T.T.	⊗	⊗
S.D.	⊗	⊗
F.T.	⊗	⊗
B.D.	⊗	⊗
H.H.	⊗	⊗
w/ foot	⊗	⊗

A few years back I was working on some tunes with a band. During rehearsal the guitar player suggested a double bass groove for one of the sections. That day I was without my trusty double pedal, so I had to think of something as a substitute. What I came up with was an interesting pattern using the floor tom and single kick to mimic the sound and vibe of a pummeling double bass groove.

This artificial double bass pattern proved to be a better fit for the song, since it had a more "modern" feel to it. I've been able to get a lot of mileage out of this idea by incorporating different variations and voicings.

The pattern starts like a funky rock beat.

1

Now play the same pattern with the right hand alternating between the ride cymbal and floor tom. The right hand should be playing this:

2

Here's what the complete groove looks like with the alternating right hand.

3

Now move the left hand notes that aren't on beats 2 and 4 to the floor tom. This gives you the complete double-bass effect.

4

Once that's comfortable and grooving, move the left hand around to play other toms or snare hits (Examples 5-6).

5

6

You can add extra bass drum notes to create a heavier sound. In Examples 7 and 8, the bass drum overlaps with some of the floor tom notes.

7

8

The right-hand 8th-note pattern can be reversed so that the ride is on the upbeat and the floor tom is on the downbeat.

9

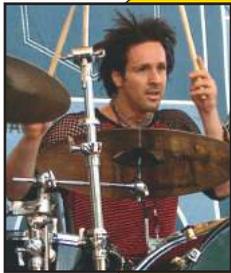
Another variation is to play all of the right-hand 8th notes on the floor tom. This creates a heavy, tribal kind of feel.

10

11



These patterns can be manipulated in many different ways. For example, try alternating the right hand between the floor tom and a second hi-hat or a crash. Or try adding extra toms to give you more melodic variations. I'm sure with some practice and imagination you can take these ideas much further. Until next time, keep groovin' and keep rockin'!



Glen Sobel is a drummer in Los Angeles. He is currently playing and recording with Elliott Yamin. He has toured and/or recorded with Beautiful Creatures, Paul Gilbert, Tony MacAlpine, Gary Hoey, Nikki Sixx, Jewel, Jennifer Batten, and many others. Glen is also on staff at Musician's Institute. For more info, log on to www.myspace.com/drummerglen.



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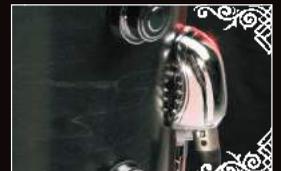
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Afro-Cuban Bata Rhythms

Part 2: Rhythmic Structure And Drumset Application

by David Gomez

MUSIC KEY

Cow-bell
T.T.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H.
w/foot
Rim-click

Last month we discussed the history and basic feel of Afro-Cuban bata drums. This time we'll take a look at how to decipher, understand, and adapt bata rhythms to the drumset.

First off, our goal is not to use the bata vocabulary to work out strict patterns. That would jeopardize the beautiful organic feel that these rhythms have to offer. Instead we'll be exploring what I call "melodic reference points," where we think of these rhythms as melodically as possible. When a phrase is internalized and thought of as a complete melody, you eliminate the barlines. This leaves you with one long melodic phrase, which will make your playing sound more fluid and natural.

Tui-Tui

The bata rhythm we will be adapting to the drumset, tui-tui, is derived from a religious Santeria prayer to the Yoruba deity known as Oya. Below is a transcription of the basic pattern played by each bata drum. When you listen to the mp3 (which can be found on the Education page at moderndrummer.com), check out the conversation between the iya and itotele drums. When we start applying this pattern to the drumset, these conversations will become little fills within the main groove. The syllables above each note are the ones that bata drummers use to sing patterns to one another.

CLAVE

OKONKOLO
R.H.
L.H.

ITOTOLE
R.H.
L.H.

IYA
R.H.
L.H.

Syllables: LA KI LA KI KLI LA LA KI LA KI KLI LA
HIP KA KA KA KA KA KA HI HI KA
PA HIP PA HIP PA HIP KO KO PA PA KO KO

Here's a summarized version of the previous rhythm. It contains the overall melodic and rhythmic skeleton, which will be adapted to the drumset.

CLAVE

TUI-TUI SUMMARIZED

Syllables: HIP KA KI LA KI HIP PA LA KI LA KI HI HI KO LA KO

Practice Suggestions

Step 1: Analyze each individual part in the full transcription. Check out how each voice relates to the clave and how it was adapted in the summarized version.

Step 2: Clap and sing each part. Clap a 6/8 clave and verbalize each drum pattern using the syllables provided in the full transcription.

Step 3: Clap and sing again. This time, clap a 6/8 clave and sing the entire summarized version. Memorize this pattern. Then clap a 4/4 clave (in a 6/8 feel) and repeat steps 1–3.

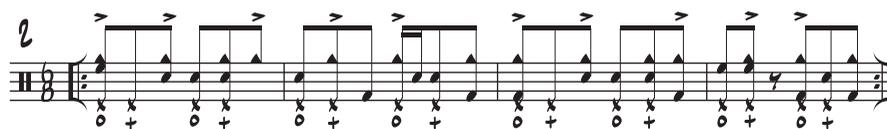
Tui-Tui On Drumset (Basic Melodic Idea)

As we learned in Part 1, developing a solid 6/8 feel is essential before trying to apply bata rhythms to the drumset. In the next example, notice that a 6/8 clave ostinato is played with the right hand so you can clearly hear the polyrhythmic bata phrase against it. Practice this pattern very slowly at first.



Tui-Tui On The Drumset (Final Groove)

Here's a more developed version of the previous groove. Notice the use of accents. These help create a fuller and more rhythmic sound, which gives the illusion that there are three bata drummers playing. The hi-hat functions like a shekere to add a bit of high-end tonality to the groove. It also helps keep everything in sync.



Tui-Tui Variation

Below is a variation of tui-tui for drumset. Notice that the 6/8 clave ostinato has been replaced by another ostinato. This 6/8 clave variation is known as abakua. There's a rhythmic illusion of a duple meter in the pattern, but the 6/8 feel should remain constant.

You should approach this pattern by thinking of its melodic reference points. Remember to think of it as one long phrase. Once you have the pattern internalized and memorized, you won't have to think about barlines, which will give you a smoother and more fluid sound.



Select Discography

It's also important to listen to folkloric Afro-Cuban bata music in order to develop the right feel. The more you listen to the drumming and songs that accompany these rhythms, the more familiar you'll be with the nuances in each one. Below is a list of recordings I consider to be the most fruitful in the study of Afro-Cuban bata drumming.

Lazaro Ross: Orisha Aye (set of thirteen CDs)

Abbilona: Tambor Yoruba (Volumes 1 & 2)

Conjunto Nacional de Cuba: Musica Yoruba

Papo Angarica: Fundamento Yoruba 1 & 2 and Osun Lozun

Lydia Cabrera: Havana & Matanzas (field recordings)



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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Big Picture Drumming

Take The Musical Conversation To A Whole New Level

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann

Big picture drumming—also known as playing for the song—involves looking at music as a whole, not as small parts like drum beats and fills. It's also about not being obsessed with leaving your specific mark on the music.

A lot of drummers don't get this concept. Many tend to be impressed with technique, speed, and complexity, which to them defines what's hip and what's not. But technique alone does not equal musicality.

Technique is often overrated and misunderstood. We certainly need technique to communicate our musical ideas. But technique should be a bridge between the creative mind and the physical body—and that's it!

Listen To The Music

The song will always tell you what to play and what not to play. Whether your parts are simple, complex, loud, or soft will be determined by the song, not just your ability. In the real music world, playing advanced things just because you can is called "wanking." You're only playing for yourself and your ego. You're trying to prove something. But there is no real connection with the listener when one plays this way—and people can feel that there is no connection. Yeah, a few tech heads might be impressed, but the majority won't give a damn

how slick you are.

Look at drummers like Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Brian Blade. Do you think Vinnie plays like he did with Frank Zappa when he's playing with Faith Hill? What about Steve Gadd with Paul Simon—does he sound like the Steve Gadd who played with Chick Corea? And you can bet that Brian Blade doesn't bust out his jazz chops and polyrhythms when playing with Bob Dylan.

These guys are all big-picture players. They have musical maturity. Yes, their personalities come out in the music, but not at the expense of the music. This is a major reason these guys work so much.

Play It Like A Conversation

As an analogy, let's think of a song as a conversation. We all know that having a great conversation with someone is about much more than showing off a good vocabulary. Having a great conversation means really listening to the other person and being interested in what they're saying, and not thinking up something clever to say while they're speaking.

When you listen well, you can respond in a deeper way, and you can guide the conversation to a higher level of meaning. Sometimes the conversation can be exciting, sometimes it's laid-back—just like a song can be intense or mellow.

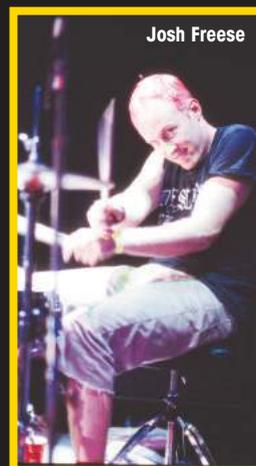
Also like a conversation, your playing must be appropriate to

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

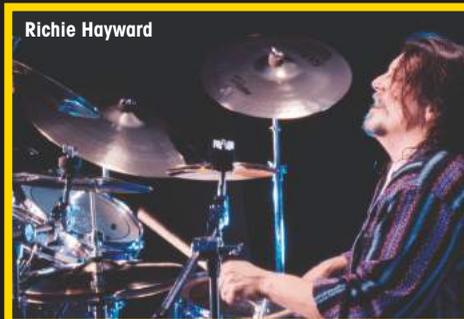
Most big-picture drummers have far more technique than is at first apparent. My favorite example of a big-picture drummer is Steve Jordan. Compare the way Steve played with Steve Kahn's *Eyewitness* (*Eyewitness* and *Casa Loco*) to his performance on "Don't Get Me Wrong" by The Pretenders. Talk about night and day! Steve is what big-picture drumming is all about. Other drummers who epitomize the concept are **Richie Hayward** (Little Feat), **Manu Katché** (Peter Dinklage, Sting), **Levon Helm** (The Band), **Matt Cameron** (Soundgarden, Pearl Jam), **Josh Freese** (A Perfect Circle, The Vandals, Kelly Clarkson), **Bruce Gary** (The Knack), **Russ Kunkel** (Jackson Browne, CSN, James Taylor), **Liberty DeVitto** (Billy Joel), **Jamie Oldaker** (Eric Clapton), **Mick Fleetwood** (Fleetwood Mac), **Jerry Marotta** (Peter Dinklage, Hall & Oates), **Roger Hawkins** (Aretha Franklin, Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section), and **Al Jackson Jr.** (Booker T. & The MG's).



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BIG PICTURE DRUMMING

the musical context. You can go into a conversation with an idea of what to talk about, but ultimately the conversation will guide itself—if you're listening properly. The same goes for a song. The music will tell you what to play. It will dictate your parts. Sometimes a song might not even need drums! You might decide that it sounds bet-

new drummer. This drummer was less flashy and busy than the previous one—but the band sounded a lot better. The new drummer played with more dynamics, and his beats and technique did not get in the way of the music. He was doing his job—staying out of the way of the music, and supporting it properly. He was a mature and

ally putting more pressure on yourself than the situation calls for.

The problem is that there is too much focus on you. As soon as you really start listening to the music, the spotlight is taken off of you and goes onto the audience. You are there to complement the music so that the audience can enjoy it.

You have to hear the music through the audience's perspective. They are listening to the whole performance, not just to the drummer. Sorry to break it to you super drummer-heads out there, but that's how most people are reacting to the music.

As soon as you can make this shift in perspective, you will play more musically. Your drum parts will make more sense for the music. Your mind will be more creative and come up with ideas you otherwise would never have thought of. You will truly be playing music on a much deeper level, and the interaction will feel effortless.

Try this technique and see what happens. When you start playing for the big picture, you will begin to see music in a different light. You'll enjoy playing more—and people will enjoy listening to you more!



New York-based drummer "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann has performed with Motown group The Elgins, jazz legend Houston Person, Richie Cole's Alto Madness band, The Lonesome Prairie Dogs, and Kilsy, and is the drummer for Ween drummer Claude Coleman's own band, Amandla. For more on Pete, go to www.myspace.com/peterkaufmann.



Playing advanced things just because you can might impress a few tech heads—but most listeners won't give a damn how slick you are.

ter without them—just like some conversations might require you to listen and say very little. Again, the idea is to think of the whole.

Let me give you an example of playing out of musical context. I once saw an electronica/indie-rock band at a New York club. The drummer was technically capable. He had great rock chops and a lot of stage presence. Anyone watching could tell he was a strong, confident drummer. The problem was that he was overplaying and not playing for the song or the band at all. He was overpowering the other players, and really just playing for himself. In fact, he sounded like he was playing for a heavy rock band rather than the mellow band that he was on stage with.

The next time I saw the band they had a

musical player and provided for the situation appropriately. And that's why he ended up being that band's regular drummer.

The Spotlight Technique

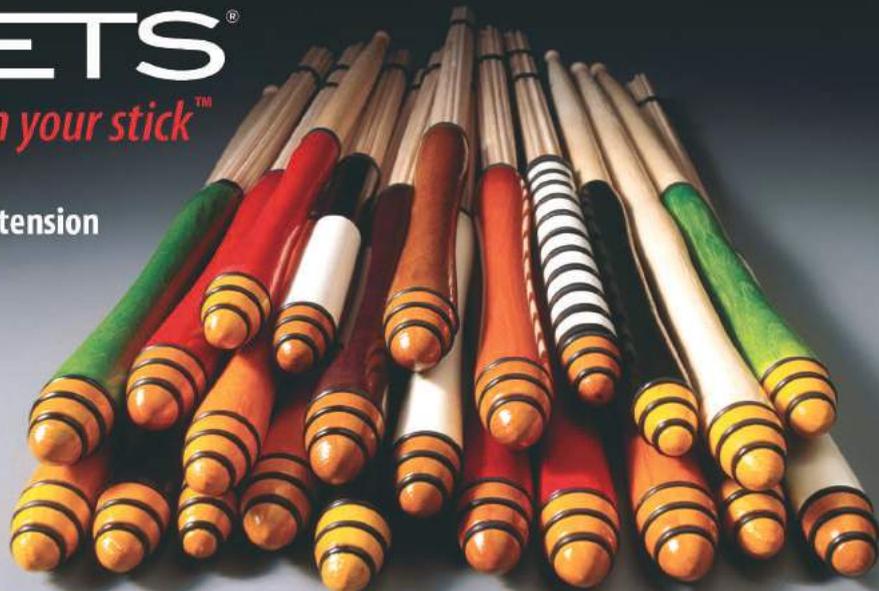
Here's a technique that I use sometimes if I'm having trouble seeing the big picture. This technique was originally intended for public speaking, but it can be applied to playing the drums or any other instrument.

First, think of yourself on stage in front of a lot of people. Pretend that a big spotlight shines down on you every time you start thinking about yourself and what you're going to play. When you're under the spotlight, you feel tense and a bit insecure because you're just thinking about yourself and what you're going to do. You're actu-

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TAMA

Building A Successful Teaching Practice

Part 2: The Start-Up

by Robert P. Smith

In last month's inaugural installment of this series, we discussed the reasons you might want to start teaching drums. For this installment, let's assume you've decided that teaching is your calling, and you really want to make a go of it. You can already picture yourself working in your humble studio, surrounded by artifacts from a lifetime of drumming, waiting for your eager students to arrive so that you can solve all their problems with a few insightful words of wisdom. The only problem is, you don't have any students.

This brings us to the next phase of building your career: getting clients. This is an area that will take patience, hustle, and determination. It's not going to happen overnight, and it's definitely not going to happen by itself. You have to make it happen.

From The Ground Up

Let's imagine that you're new in town. You've just moved into a new apartment, with rent and other bills to be paid, and you have neither a client base nor any clout among the local musicians. You may have to get a "regular job" while you establish your teaching practice. This isn't the end of the world, nor is it an indication that you're already throwing in the towel. You're just doing what's necessary to realize your goals. These may be trying times for you, but keep your eyes on the prize. It's only temporary.

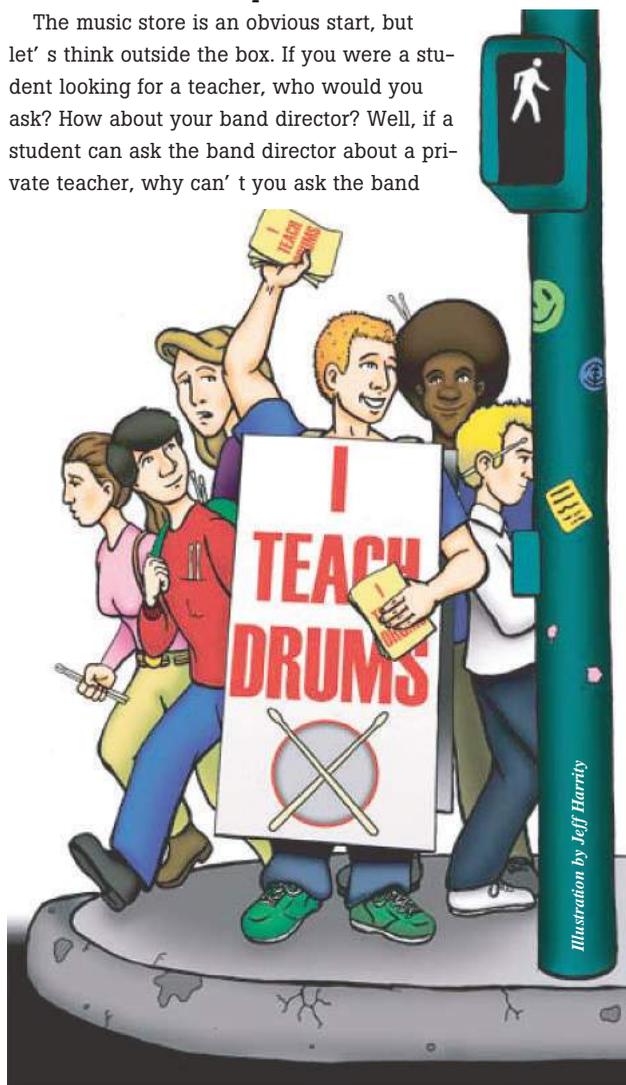
You probably already know your first step: Hit all the local music stores to see if they're hiring, as well as to post a flyer advertising your services. This is a good first step, but you want to think "maximize" with every situation you walk into. So instead of going up to the counter, asking for a job, and hearing, "Sorry, we're not looking for teachers right now" or "Just leave your name and number and we'll get back to you if something opens up," put together a résumé, a photo, and some business cards with decent graphics, and ask to see the manager. Remember, you're looking for a job! So dress well and carry yourself like a professional. When you can offer a well-made promo pack about yourself, your inquiry will be taken much more seriously than that of the kid in the Fall Out Boy T-shirt and flip-flops. Be courteous and gracious if, in fact, they're not hiring. Thank the manager for his or her time, and say that you'll stop back in later. Then do return, in two to

three weeks. Don't be shy about it; as long as you're not rude, the manager will remember you and will probably offer you something when it opens up. Whatever you do, don't give up.

If you're hanging flyers, don't go for the "sharpie on college-ruled paper" look. Get familiar with a computer program like Photoshop, and work up something that's eye-catching and professional. Don't settle for the ordinary. Again, maximize your opportunity. Take a simple idea and elaborate on it to make it your own.

Other Options

The music store is an obvious start, but let's think outside the box. If you were a student looking for a teacher, who would you ask? How about your band director? Well, if a student can ask the band director about a private teacher, why can't you ask the band



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director about a private student? In other words: Get to know your local band directors!

If you're living in your home town, this should be easy. But away from home you need to learn what schools are nearby and who their band directors are. Then call or email them. (Many schools post teacher emails on their Web sites.) Explain who you are and what you're looking for. Don't mince words, because these people usual-

Getting clients will take patience, hustle, and determination.

It's not going to happen overnight, and it's definitely not going to happen by itself.

ly have a lot on their plates. Again, professionalism is key. Be brief, polite, and deferential. If you get a reply of interest, ask if you could meet sometime to talk—maybe over lunch. (Plan to pick up the bill.) A band director will want to meet the person he or she might be sending students to. Treat this meeting as a job interview.

If all goes well you could see your student roster jump exponentially, because band directors tend to talk with one another and can spread your name around. You might even get invited to work as a sub-contractor within the school district, working with the marching band, the jazz band, or some other ensemble. Additionally, I always volunteer to be a judge at district and county band auditions; it's possible to meet over twenty band directors in one day at such an event. Do your research and seek out these opportunities.

Another option is to check your local community colleges and universities to see if they're hiring for an adjunct position. You don't need a PhD to work for a college, but you might need a bachelor degree in some area of music—or a rather impressive playing résumé that proves your musical skill. And if you can't get a position on a teaching staff, don't be deterred. A full-time college professor might

be looking for someone to send students to for private lessons, especially if the college has a small music program with limited staff.

Creating A Résumé

I've mentioned "your résumé" a couple of times already, so let's talk about that for a moment. To begin with, you need one in order to be perceived as a professional with legitimate qualifications. But beyond that, a résumé should describe who you are as a person.

When putting your résumé together, make sure to collect references from a former band director, a boss who really liked you, or anyone who can attest to your individual qualities. Your personality will have as much to do with your teaching success as your drumming ability will, so play that angle up. Let people know how good you are with kids, and how important education is to you. Remember, many of your clients will assume that you're a good musician by virtue of your being a music teacher. But they'll make their decision to work with you based upon your ability to relate to students (young and old), as well as on the way you conduct yourself.

Stick To It

When it comes to developing a teaching practice from scratch, the key is perseverance. My own teacher once told me, "The guy who can take the most slaps in the face is the guy who will succeed the most." If you're committed to teaching, you can make a living at it. But you can't let yourself be deterred by a few rejections.

Look at it as an adventure. Every day there are new places to go, new people to talk to, and new experiences to be gained. And they'll all add up to making you a better teacher. So why are you sitting there? Get out and network!

Next time, we'll take a look at the question of where to teach. 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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Viktor Krauss

The Business Of Sound

by Matt North



It's one thing to become a bassist that other bassists talk about. But it's another thing to become a bassist that bandleaders and other instrumentalists talk about. Lyle Lovett often introduces his long-time bassist, Viktor Krauss, as "one of the best musicians I've ever worked with." Guitar great Bill Frisell praised Krauss' s work alongside Jim Keltner on the '98 release *Gone, Just Like A Train*, saying, "Viktor' s got terrifying technique and speed on the instrument that you may never see, because he' s most concerned with making the total music happen...the feel...the bottom. He ain' t no show-off."

Krauss' s 2007 release *Viktor Krauss II (Back Porch)* is the follow-up to his critically acclaimed debut *Far From Enough* (which featured Steve Jordan and hit Number 6 on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz charts). On the new CD, Krauss enlisted the talents of session great Matt Chamberlain—referring to the drummer as his "insurance policy" during production. The results of this drummer/bassist pairing have been described as falling "somewhere between industrial folk and a David Lynch soundtrack—an adventurous date for those that like their instrumental prowess on the money and their listening on the edge."

Since joining Lyle Lovett' s band in 1994, Krauss has appeared on multiple tours and albums with guitarist Frisell, as well as with Carly Simon, Elvis Costello, Ben Taylor, and John Fogerty. His film composing credits include *Twister* and *Dr. T. & The Women*. And he worked on Jakob Dylan' s upcoming release with long-time collaborator Jim Keltner. Here, Krauss shares his insights on the high-ranking drummers that have impacted his illustrious career.

Matt Chamberlain

I first met Matt on a Bill Frisell date at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas. Matt had never played with us before, and

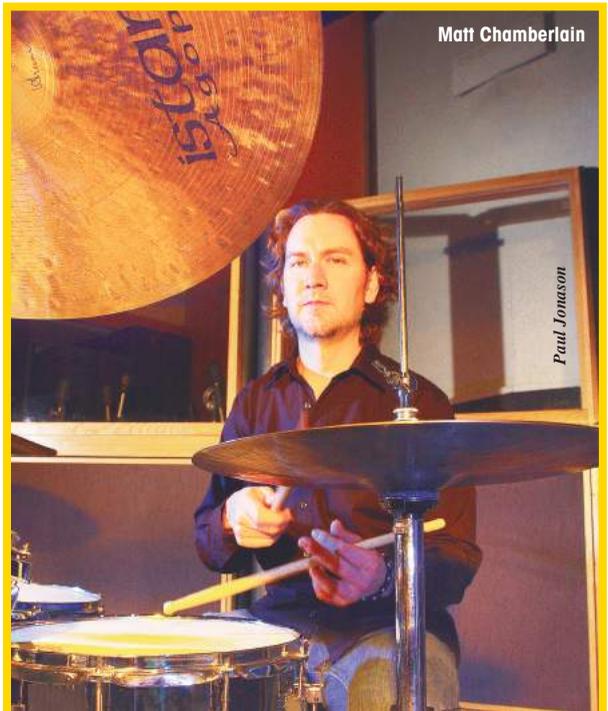
he hadn' t been sent any music ahead of time. So whatever Matt felt in the moment was what he did. It was a new and amazing interpretation of songs the rest of us had all played a lot together.

I first got to record with Matt on a Brian Judah project, and experiencing that "studio" element of his playing—by getting under a set of headphones—was when I really heard how unique he is. Matt is incredible live, of course. But when musicians record, we realize, "This is permanent," and it has to be our best performance of the song. That' s when you really discover what someone' s deal is. When I first heard Matt come through the headphones, he was just stunning. You can' t help

A KRAUSS COLLECTION

Viktor has recorded with

Kenny Aronoff
 Matt Chamberlain
 Steve Jordan
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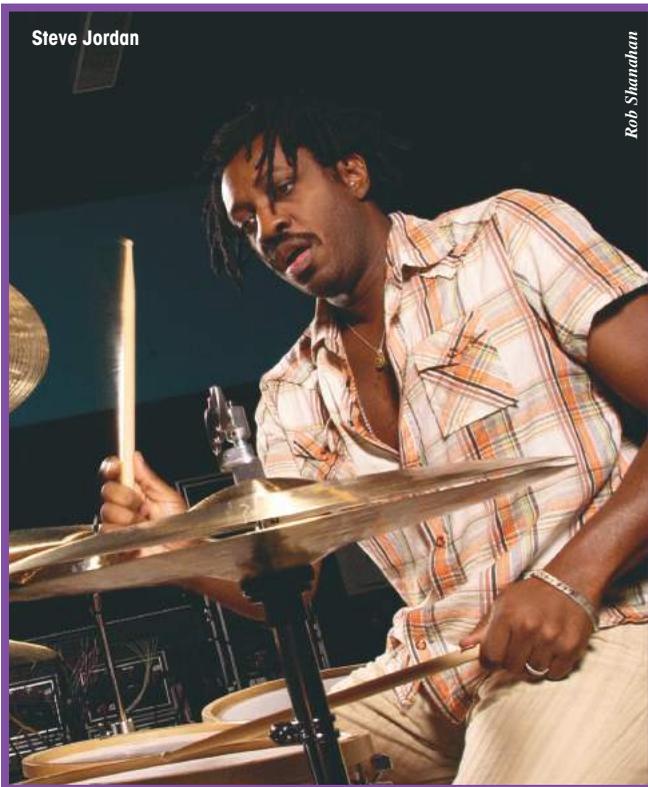
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VIKTOR KRAUSS

but play your best with drumming like that; the feel and the beat are so "in your face," there's no escaping it.

I knew Matt would be great for my latest record. The studio had a



big 32" concert bass drum, and they rigged a beater to it so Matt could use it like a conventional bass drum. During a long period where the engineers were working out sounds, Matt and I started running through every heavy metal tune we could remember, with me on upright bass and him on that mammoth drum. We really clicked, and it was exciting to realize that we shared similar musical palettes. I don't know if Matt thinks this, but I interpret him as coming from a rock space more than anything else. I'm somewhere between rock and film music, so Matt felt perfect.

Matt had all of his gear sent to the studio, including what I think he called a "toy kit." It's a full drumkit made of really small, toy drums that sound electronic, but were actually acoustic. He used that on "Hop" and "Eyes In The Heat." And on one of the more cinematic tunes, he used xylophone mallets to hit a set of car keys. That ended up being a brilliant sound.

I'm very attracted to musicians who mean everything they play. "Here's this note and I really meant to do it," as opposed to, "Okay, I kind of screwed up there, but it still sounds pretty cool." Matt's interpretation is simply, "Okay, here it is." I told him once that there's a real "middle finger" element to his playing. He's strong and assertive, but it's not an attitude of, "I'll play what I think is right and you have to follow it." It's not that at all. Matt has just figured out a musical aesthetic that everyone seems to really, really like.

Steve Jordan

Steve recorded drums on my first record, Far From Enough. I had only played with him on a couple of Lyle Lovett dates before that. I was in New York working with Steve and Lyle on a remake of Ray

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Charles' "What'd I Say" for the film *Where The Heart Is*. At the same time, I was putting together everyone I wanted to use on *Far From Enough*. What sold the album to the label was the involvement of Bill Frisell, Jerry Douglas, myself, and my sister [bluegrass/country superstar] Alison. But the one person I hadn't figured out yet was the drummer. With Bill being such a strong voice, I didn't want to use anyone I had played with before in conjunction with him. Then one day it just hit me: Steve Jordan!

I wanted to make sure the record could rock. I was already sitting in Americana territory (which wasn't really my intent) and I definitely wanted that conviction thing from a drummer, where there's no doubt where the beat and authority are. When you hear Steve on John Mayer or Keith Richards recordings, you know it's him. There was one tune on the album, called "Tended," where the snare comes in after the entire first verse and chorus, and it's like, well...there's Steve Jordan. Another track, called "Grit Lap," had a huge amount of space between beats—like Billy Squier's "The Stroke," except with no subdivisions, just bass and snare. To keep that steady, Steve kept time with his right hand in the air, and every part of his body was in motion. What Steve does—and what I think any really good musician does—is throw his whole personality out there. A lot of the drummers I admire have a good sense of who they are and what they want, and they play the same way.

Jim Keltner

Jim is sort of the opposite of what I said about Steve Jordan. He's a chameleon, capable of giving producers any kind of drumming they request. He's done so many different things that it's possible to hear him and not know that it's him. The latest thing I did with him was



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VIKTOR KRAUSS

Jakob Dylan's record—on which Jim was asked to play like Phil Rudd of AC/DC! And he sounded exactly like Phil Rudd.

When Jim's doing his own thing, I hear so many sounds going on.... But when I look back at him, he's barely moving. He plays with such an economy of motion. Plus there's usually something strapped to his ankles, or a shaker duct-taped to one of his sticks. He has these wild-sounding things he calls "snoms," which are small mounted toms with snares attached below. On the Jakob Dylan record he had nothing but snares set up as toms...these little plastic snares called Maestros. Each time I've worked with Jim it's anything goes. It's never the same kit. Even when he uses electronic kits, it's still organic and human.

The first record we did together was Bill Frisell's *Gone, Just Like A Train*. I remember really liking how it felt during rehearsals. But after we got under headphones, it was spectacular. Nothing we did was to a click track, but it was perfect time. My role was to lay the biggest possible foundation so that Bill and Jim could go wherever they wanted. I think Jim's playing had a way of simplifying my playing even more, just to let the people that have all the spikes

do their thing. He's about being creative, but in a way that frees things up for everybody else. I'm really proud of that record.

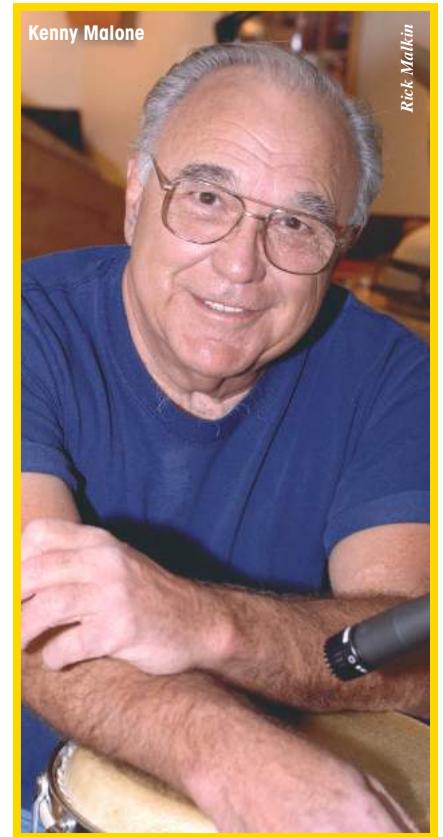
Jim has played on everything, yet his attitude is better than anyone I know who might be just starting out. He was the same way a couple months ago with Jakob Dylan as he was twelve years ago, when we first worked together. He obviously cares about his own performances, and you can see him react in the studio when he doesn't feel right about something he played. Meanwhile, we're all in disbelief because it sounded so great to us. But there's something he hears that we don't, and he cares enough to say that we should do it again when most people would be happy to get on to the next song. That degree of dedication really goes a long way.

Kenny Malone

Kenny Malone has been one of Nashville's A-list guys for a very long time, and we've worked together a lot. If you look up Kenny on the All Music Guide, you'll see a lot of big stuff from the 1970s and '80s. When you hear him, you hear the deepest, most classic snare sound, and a great feel.

I first met Kenny on a session with my sis-

ter and The Cox Family. He must have been in his late sixties, but he was in top physical con-



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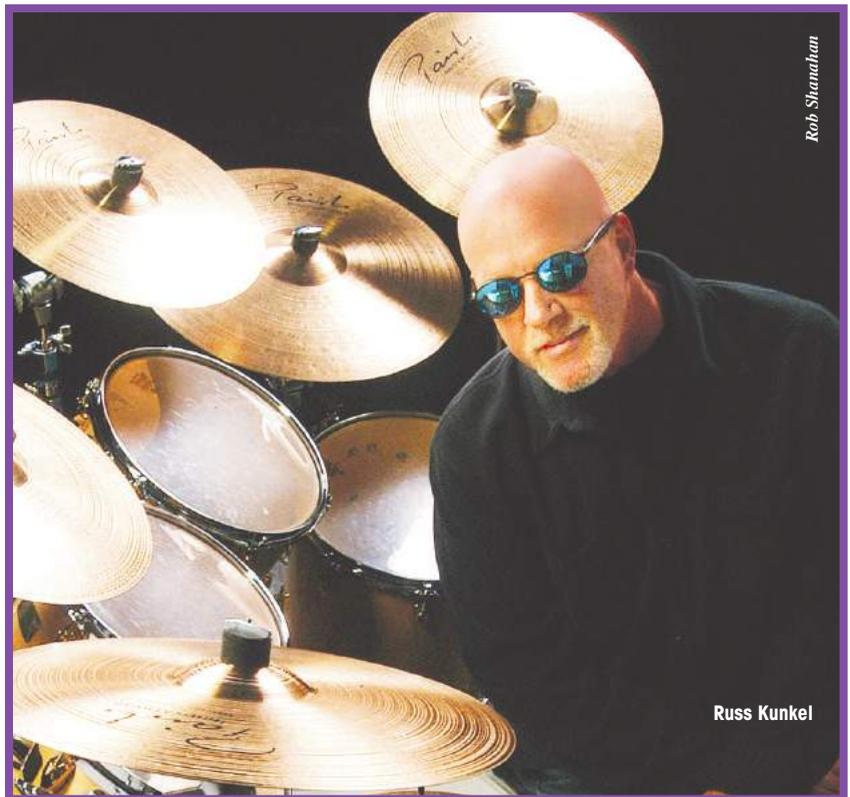


VIKTOR KRAUSS

dition. My sister calls him "the guy everyone would want for a grandfather." He couldn't be more positive about things, and he's very excited about music, even after all this time. He still goes around the room finding things that make the perfect sounds. He'll grab someone's coffee cup and start hitting it with mallets to see if the tone works.

Kenny is also one of the most lyric-oriented drummers I've ever met. He's always interested in reading the lyrics to find out what he can add. We worked together on one project where my sister asked him to put a tambourine on a song. Kenny didn't feel a tambourine was the right choice. He felt tambourines were for happy, celebratory moments, and the lyrics of the song weren't happy. After he explained this, it made perfect sense not to use a tambourine.

On the other hand, Kenny will sometimes jump in and say, "I've got the perfect sound for this spot. Can I try it?" When we worked on the Twister soundtrack together he found a couple spots where he said a triangle might work. He only did it twice—just one hit each time—but every time those spots come by, you get goosebumps. There couldn't have been a better choice for the moment.



When Kenny's playing kit, it's nothing but feel. He's got a minimalist approach, where he'll do most everything with a brush in his right hand, while his bare left hand is

pushing down on the snare drum to get different tonal combinations, like a tabla. He tunes interestingly too. He'll tune his bass drum to the one chord of the song, and then he'll get the snare's pitch around the root of the five chord. And it totally makes sense.

Russ Kunkel

The first time Russ and I played together was in 1995, on tracks for Lyle's Road To Ensenada that didn't actually appear until Step Inside This House in '98. Later we did a few commercials, as well as the film score for Dr. T. & The Women. Russ also invited me to play on Graham Nash's solo record, which he both produced and played on. Then he joined Lyle's touring band in 2003. Lyle does very well with musicians that he respects and trusts, but I think he feels like he can do anything he wants as long as Russ is back there behind the drums.

I was a huge fan of Russ through all the James Taylor records, as well as his work with Warren Zevon, Jackson Browne, and Stevie Nicks. I grew up listening to him more than the other drummers I've been working with lately. He's very conscious of the shape of a song, and my impression is that if he sat in on a gig where they played a bunch of instrumentals, it probably wouldn't bug him if he didn't take a solo. That's the way

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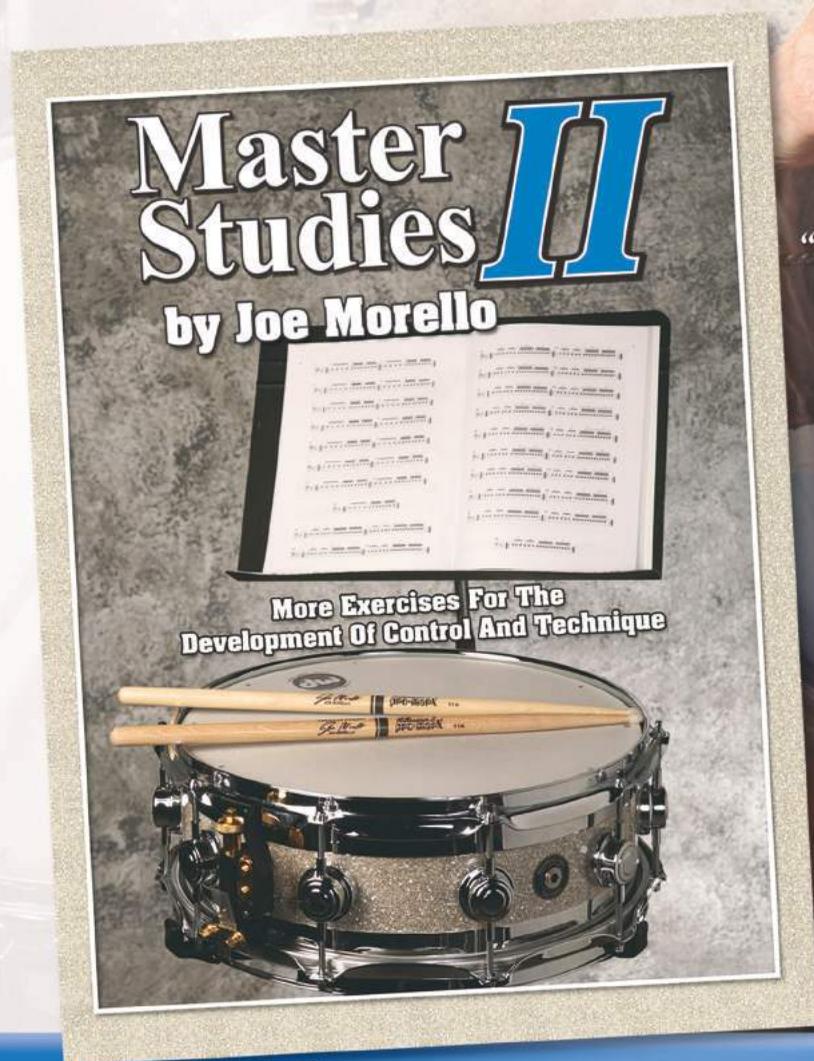
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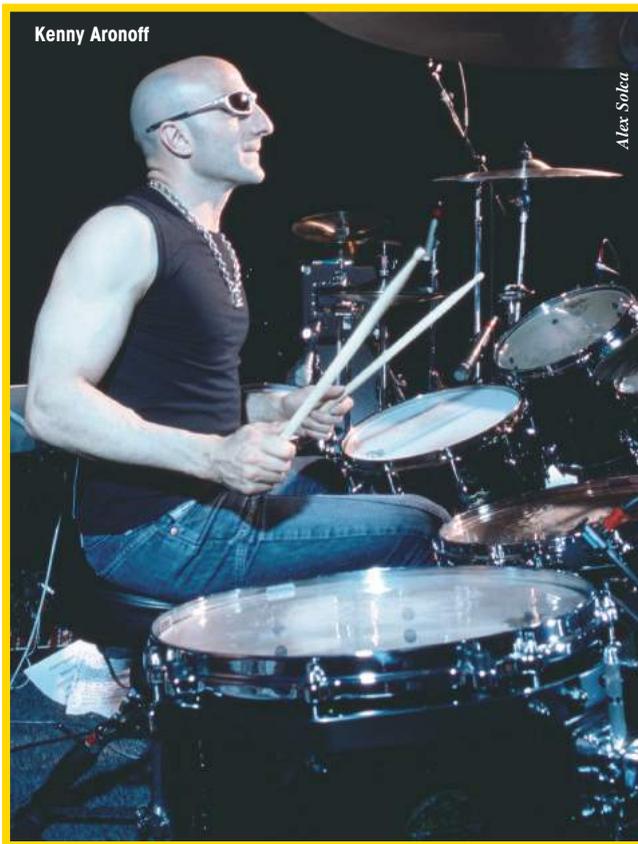
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VIKTOR KRAUSS

I am too. I don't necessarily care to take a solo a lot of the time.

Russ' s tom fills are what define his sound to me. His tom work always sounds like a part that was sculpted that way by the composer. It' s the way he hits the drums—his touch—along with the

of that era in the coolest possible way. And by " that era," I mean the ' 70s—Russ' s era. His playing still sounds like that. It' s recorded better now, but it still has the distinct signature he puts on a song, and I think that' s amazing.



Kenny Aronoff

Kenny Aronoff and I worked together on John Fogerty' s *Djà Vu* *All Over Again*. He' s a sweetheart of a guy, with a great sense of humor. I have a QuickTime movie of him playing drums while balancing a bottle of water on his head. Have you seen him do that?

On John' s record we did a lot of takes per song, which can sometimes be tough in terms of really getting a groove going. But Kenny is always right there with the enthusiasm of playing a take for the first time. I also remember that I had a lot of bass lines and compositional ideas that came directly from noodling with Kenny and following what he was doing.

What was also neat about Kenny was all of his offerings of sounds. I don' t know how many bass and snare drums were in the studio that week, but it looked like [famed cartage company] Drum Paradise. I was impressed by the care Kenny puts into tuning, all the way down to putting a wallet on his snare, and whether the wallet was open or closed. He has a desire to find the perfect match for the bass and snare combination on each song—and every sound, for that matter.

Kenny has a youthful energy, combined with the wisdom gained from doing it as long as he has. I only worked with him a few days on the Fogerty record. But when I bumped into him out in Los Angeles about a year later, gave me this big hug, like we' ve been friends for life!

For more information on Viktor Krauss, visit www.ViktorKrauss.com.

way he uses brushes, Blasticks, or a full stick. When you hear it, you say, " That' s the guy!" Think about " Fire & Rain" ...there' s that laid-back feel...the way his kit sounds. .it' s just unmistakably Russ. There' s always a sense of control and purpose, and it feels like it' s

Matt North records and performs with Jesse DeNatale, Maria McKee, and Rob Kendt. He also teaches in Los Angeles. Visit www.GoodDrummer.com for more info.



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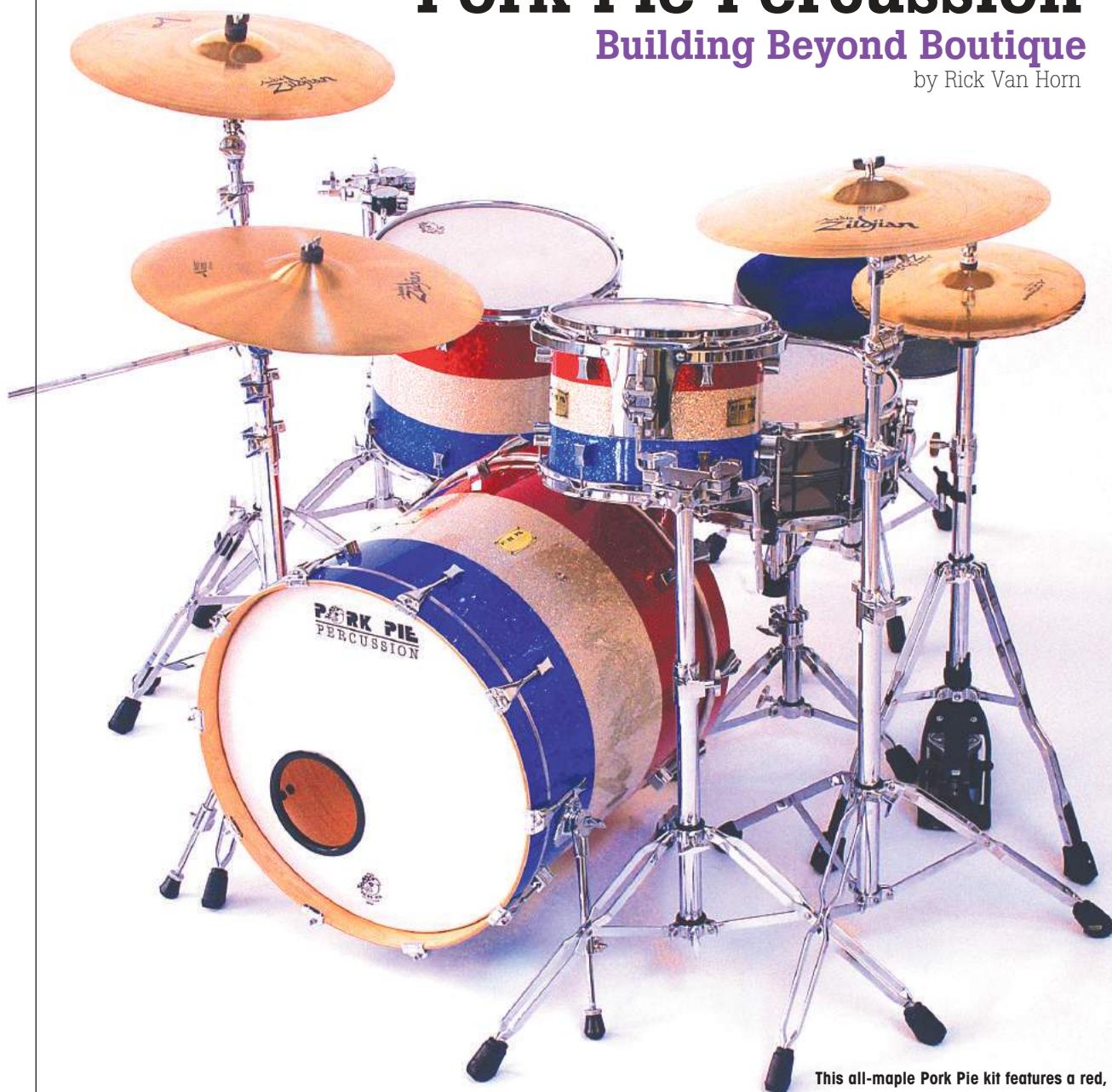
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Pork Pie Percussion

Building Beyond Boutique

by Rick Van Horn



This all-maple Pork Pie kit features a red, white, and blue sparkle finish and a suspension mounting system. It represents the high-end drums made in Pork Pie's California shop.

Bill Detamore is a pioneer in the field of custom drums. While talented individuals have hand-crafted drums for generations, Bill's Pork Pie drums were the first to capture drummer attention on a large scale...initially on the West Coast, where the company is based, and later across the country. Pork Pie snare drums and complete drumkits, with their jaunty "pig" logos, helped launch the very concept of "personalized" custom drums.

When MD first visited the Pork Pie Percussion operation in 1992, it consisted of a garage workshop and a bedroom office at Bill's house in the LA suburb of Woodland Hills, California. The production staff consisted of Bill and...well...Bill. At the time, he was making a few custom-crafted snare drums, as well as re-cutting bearing edges on existing drums belonging to notable drum stars.

"I've done edges for lots of people over the years," says Bill. "The first job that I did, for Mike Fasano, led to me doing work for Matt Sorum. That led to working for Mike Bordin, and it went on

PIGS ON PARADE

Pork Pie doesn't make "stock" drum lines, with the exception of the Little Squealer series. Some specific snare-drum models are manufactured in volume in response to consistent dealer and consumer demand. Otherwise, each and every snare drum or drumkit is custom-made to the buyer's individual specifications. Pricing varies according to individual drum specs. Here are some examples of Pork Pie's creations.



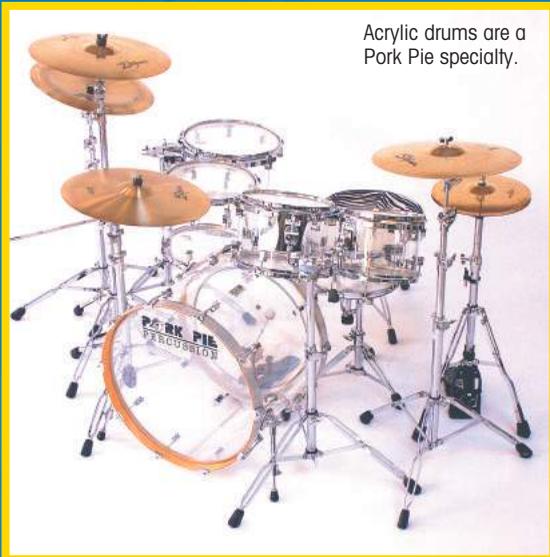
Four-piece Clown kit in silver glass wrap with multi-colored hardware



This kit features a deep red fade and an unusual assortment of drum sizes.



7x14 maple snare with "bullet hole" vents, in Blue Glass wrap with white hardware



Acrylic drums are a Pork Pie specialty.



7x14 charcoal acrylic snare with red and black hardware



6 1/2 x 14 Big Black snare, with brass shell and black chrome finish



4x14 maple snare in black lacquer with gold-plated tube lugs



7x14 maple snare in Red Glass wrap with offset lugs



This four-piece Little Squealer kit with black hardware is made in Taiwan to Pork Pie's stringent specs. It offers Pork Pie design features at an affordable price of \$1,925.

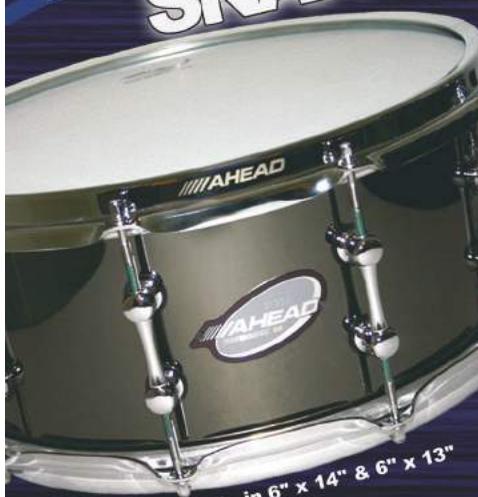


This 8x14 silver sparkle Little Squealer snare is the first in the line to offer a finish other than black.



6x14 cherry snare with vertical grain, in natural satin finish

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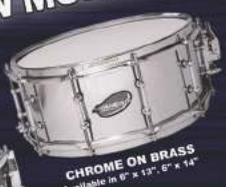
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from there. At that time, most of my business was re-cutting edges. My production of Pork Pie drums was very limited."

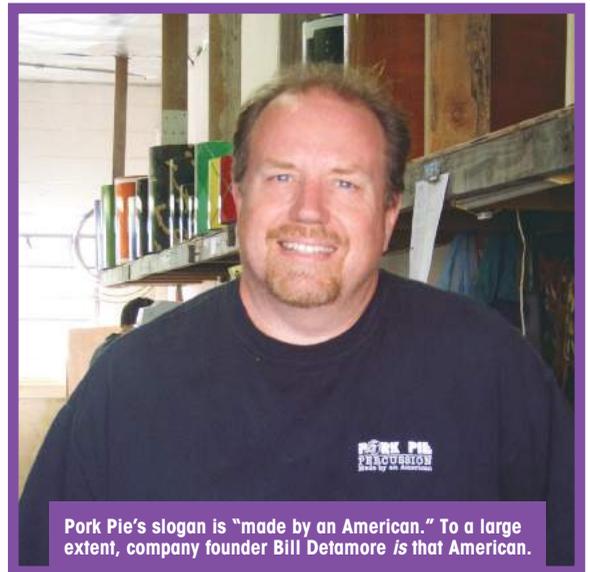
Bill's production didn't remain limited, however. As his reputation grew, so did the demand for his custom-made, uniquely finished drums. In 1997 this growth resulted in a relocation of the Pork Pie operation to its present quarters in Canoga Park, in LA's San Fernando Valley. Says Bill, "We now have four different warehouses and ten employees. We're not on the scale of the major manufac-

turers; what we do in a year they probably do in a month. But for a small shop we do a tremendous amount of work."

As Pork Pie grew, Bill shifted from making kits for individual consumers to making kits for the retail drum market. "People think we're still 'boutique,'" says Bill, "but we're a long way past that. We now have dealers all across the US, as well as in Canada, Europe, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Korea. But Pork Pie drums are still custom, in the sense that we don't make anything for stock. Everything we do is made to order. The buyer designs a kit, and we make it. That buyer might be a dealer who wants something special to display in his store. Or it may be a drummer who has a very specific idea for a personalized kit. That drummer will place an order through one of our dealers. The only time we'll deal directly with a consumer these days is when that person lives too far away from a dealer to make placing an order there practical. I'm not going to ask someone to drive seven hours to buy a Pork Pie drumset."

Snare Drums

In the late 1980s, Bill discovered a market for snare drums of unusual sizes, as drummers began to use "auxiliary" snares. "Starting in 1989," says Bill, "I made and sold a lot of 6x10s. And I want to give credit where it's due: I got the idea from [veteran drum builder] Joe Montineri, who's now consulting with Keller, the shell-making people. Later I started making 6x12 and 5x13 drums. And now there's our 5x12 Little Squealer model. We've made thousands of those. It's big enough to use as a primary snare if you want, but small enough



Pork Pie's slogan is "made by an American." To a large extent, company founder Bill Detamore is that American.

to use as an aux snare."

Pork Pie also offers a wide variety of "full size" snares—many of which have some unusual features. "Our 7x13 Little Squealer is vented with what we call 'bullet holes,'" says Bill. "We also have a 5x14 Little Squealer with a super-thick 16-ply shell that's vented with forty holes. And we also sell a lot of our Big Black model, which is a 6½x14 brass-shell drum with black nickel plating and tube lugs—reminiscent of a Black Beauty."

The Little Squealer Line

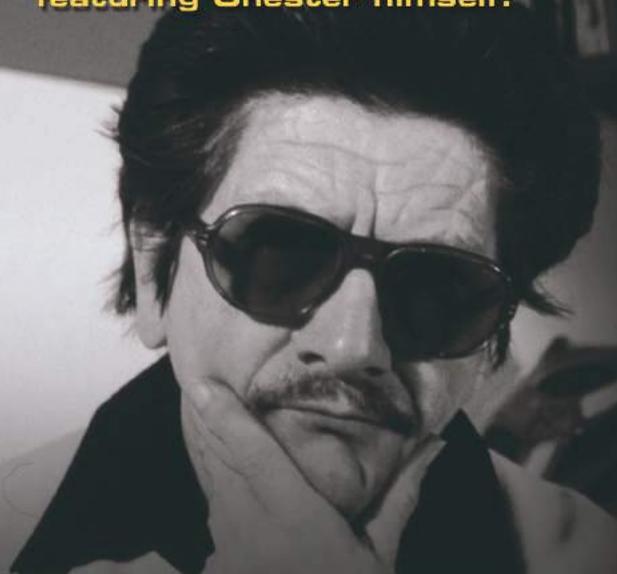
Bill's mention of Little Squealer drums bears explaining. A few years ago, demand for Pork Pie drums began to outpace the company's manufacturing capabilities. At the same time, the drum market was demanding more affordable products that could be sold in volume. To meet this demand, Bill established the Little Squealer series—yet another play on the Pork Pie "pig" theme. The drums are made in Taiwan to Bill's stringent specifications, including edges, snare beds, and other design features. The line started out with snare drums, and now includes complete drumkits.

Originally, all Little Squealer drums had black finishes with black hardware. Recently, however, an 8x14 Squealer snare in silver sparkle with black hardware was introduced, and additional hardware color options on the black drums are in the works.

Although Bill feels that the Little Squealer line offers excellent quality and value, he's conscientious about differentiating it from the Pork Pie drums made in the California shop. "The Taiwan-made drums have

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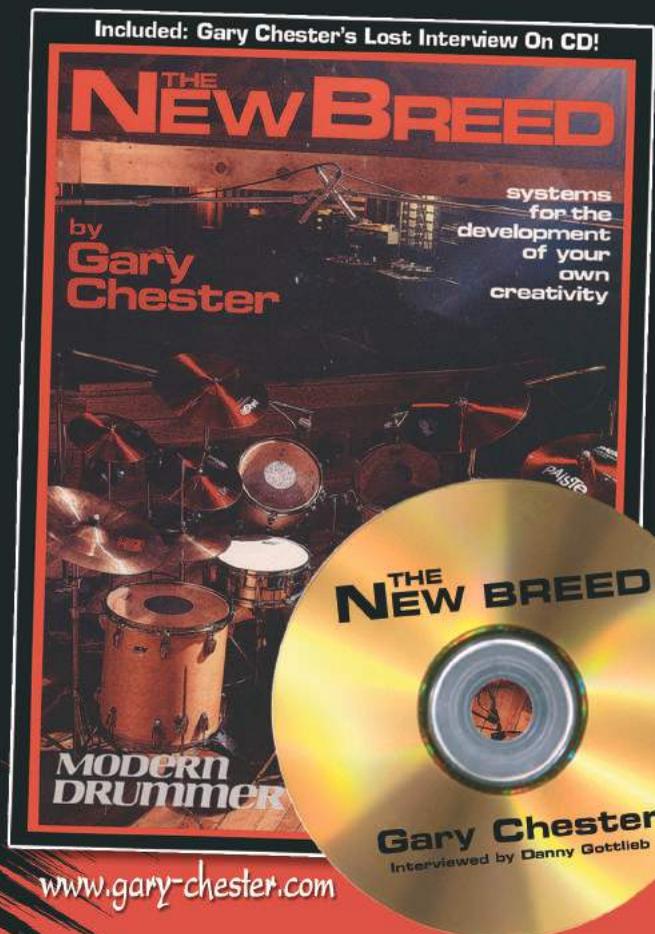


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In 1984, three years before his death, Gary Chester sat down with drumming great Danny Gottlieb to discuss his unique concepts. The interview is fascinating. Among the many concepts Chester covered are:

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PORK PIE

badges that read: ' Little Squealer by Pork Pie,' " says Bill. " I don' t want the lines to be blurred with our gear. I want everything to be completely clear to the drummers who buy the stuff."

Wood Shells

Pork Pie obtains maple and birch shells for the American-made custom drums from

Keller Wood Products of New Hampshire. Exotic-wood shells come from a manufacturer in Taiwan. Those include shells made of cherry, mahogany, and walnut. " At the 2007 Winter NAMM show," says Bill, " we displayed an orange kit with mahogany shells, as well as a walnut kit that I painted candy green. They both got great response from people who saw them. Our Taiwanese

supplier likes doing shells with different woods. And using that supplier helps us keep costs down while having interesting products to offer."

Pork Pie also offers a wide variety of solid-shell snare drums, which feature shells made by Vaughncraft. " It' s fun to pick some really wild woods," says Bill. " We make drums of bloodwood—named for



Pork Pie specializes in unique custom finishes, like the "argyle socks" and camo lacquer creations shown here.

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PORK PIE



the deep red natural color of the wood—and of Osage orange, which has a tone like hickory or maple. And then there's lacewood, which I think is just gorgeous. We've also made quite a few solid mahogany drums."

Whatever the shell's wood type, all Pork Pie solid snares get maple reinforcing rings on the inside. "That's partly for strength." Bill explains. "But the bigger thing for me is that it brings attack to the edge. You get lots of shell tone—like the fat, warm tone of

mahogany—and then the maple rings add a crack that'll kill you. If a mahogany shell had mahogany rings, I think the attack would tend to sound boxy. I'm trying to get more tone—just out of the edge—with a little more precision to the cut."

Creating A Custom Design

How do Pork Pie's craftsmen turn a buyer's idea for a custom kit into reality? "It's a multi-step process," Bill replies.

"Sometimes we get samples, photos, or pictures that people download off the Internet. One guy wanted his kit finished to look like an argyle sock, so he sent an actual sock. It was dark blue, with light blue accents and a little silver stripe. From that we knew we'd base-coat the kit in silver, and then add layers of patterns in shades of blue."

Even creating a single custom color can be an involved process. "A customer may tell us, 'I just want red,'" says Bill. "Well, there are six million shades of red. Other times, customers will try to verbally describe very specific colors—which rarely works. We'll tell them to go to Home Depot and get color chips to send us. Then we can mix the paint to match those colors. We ask for as much information as possible, so that we can match the customer's vision as closely as possible."

Wrap Finishes

Not all Pork Pie drums feature custom lacquer finishes. The company offers hundreds of wrap finishes from Delmar. They've also started working with wraps that feature computer-generated graphics. "Our first foray into that," says Bill, "was the creation of a graphic wrap that duplicates one of our

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hand-painted multi-layer lacquer jobs. The reason we did this was that when people saw that lacquer finish at the last NAMM show they just absolutely flipped out. But it was such a pain in the ass to create that I don't ever want to do it again. So this was a way for us to be able to still offer that finish, and at the same time let somebody get a cool-looking kit at an affordable price."

Acrylic Shells

Pork Pie also does a brisk business in acrylic snare drums. Bill stresses that the material has a sound all its own. "Drummers who've never played acrylic drums often think they're going to sound hard, bright, and brittle," he says. "That's absolutely untrue. I like to say that they have the warmth of a maple drum and the attack of a birch drum, with tons of bottom

end. Just as an example: Gregg Bissonette bought one of our 6x14 clear acrylic snares a couple of years ago. Not long after, I got a call from [LA session drummer] John Ferraro, who said he'd just been in the studio playing on Gregg's kit with that snare drum, and he wanted one for himself because it sounded amazing."

What about color options? "Amber acrylic is

AND THRONES TOO!



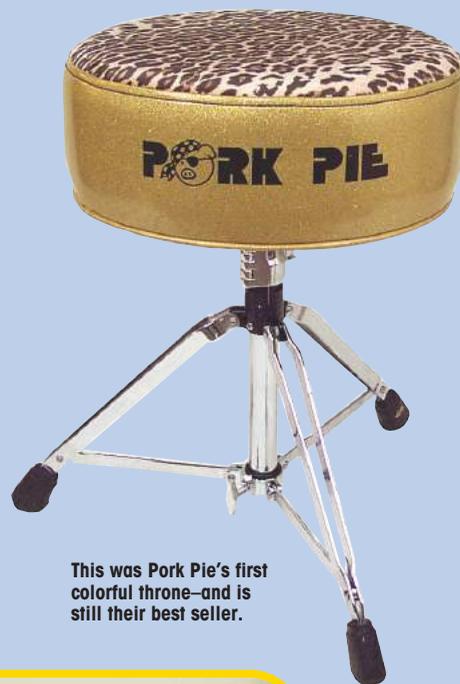
Since 1997, Pork Pie has come to be known for its colorful drum thrones almost as much as for its drums. Gus Ciceri oversees the throne operation. "We offer short tripods, standard tripods, and a hydraulic version," says Gus. "We offer round seats as well as saddle-style seats, which we call Big Boys. And we specialize in colorful patterns and prints on the seats."

Pork Pie's colorful seat tops are made by a custom upholsterer in California, using a high-density foam that provides comfort without "mushing down" over time. The seat-base castings and tripods are made in Taiwan. Gus Ciceri assembles these components in a small workshop a few miles from Pork Pie's drum-making facility. But "small" refers only to the floor space. The operation itself is substantial, with over 6,000 thrones sold last year.

What prompted a custom drum builder to get into colorful thrones in the first place? "I was doing a gig at a 1950s diner," replies Bill Detamore. "I was sitting at the bar during my break, and I looked over at the bar stool next to me. It had a green sparkle top on it, and I thought, 'That looks like a drum throne.' We'd been making seats in black vinyl, like everybody else. So we called the guy who makes the tops for us and asked if he had any of the glittery material that was used in dune buggies back in the '60s. He told us, 'I've had a ton of that stuff for years. I can't get rid of it.' So he made us some samples. The first one had gold sparkle vinyl sides and a leopard-skin top—and that's still our best seller."

In the years since then, Pork Pie has added to the range of colors, prints, and materials available on their seat tops. "Today," says Gus Ciceri, "we offer ten different side vinyls, as well as tops that include red crushed velvet, black crushed velvet, swirls in purple, red, black, silver, gray, and green, and leopard and zebra animal-skin prints. We've got seats with stars, and seats with our logo pigs...and the list goes on. And we still sell a *ton* of thrones with traditional black seats, too."

What's the appeal of a custom-finish drumseat, which no one except that drummer will see? Says Bill Detamore, "It's all about personal expression. It makes a drummer feel special to have something that somebody else doesn't have. But beyond that, our thrones are well made, durable, and *very* comfortable—a fact that was highlighted in *Modern Drummer's* look at thrones in 2006. Admittedly, they're not cheap. But they're genuinely American-made, and you can get pretty much whatever kind of custom seat design you want. When we started with colorful thrones, we thought they'd be a trendy item, with a run of three years at the outside. But it's been over ten years, and we're shipping more now than we ever have."



This was Pork Pie's first colorful throne—and is still their best seller.



Gus Ciceri assembles each throne by hand.

pretty much recognized as 'Bonham' s color,' " replies Bill. "So it' s a popular seller. But we make drums in a wide variety of colors, including a smoky finish with black hardware that looks really nice. And we' re working on a spiral multi-color design.

"Acrylic is a touchy material to work with," Bill continues. "We have to use special drilling techniques to avoid cracking, as well as special router bits to create the bearing edges. We also have special buffing machines dedicated to polishing the acrylic shells. It' s a whole different approach to manufacturing."

Bill On Bearing Edges

From his earliest days cutting bearing edges for touring and recording artists, Bill Detamore has held a firm opinion about how those edges should be created. "I believe that my drums sound the way they do because I understand the physics of how a drumhead works and how a shell works," he says. "The whole concept of my bearing edge design is to blend the two together. I think you have to make a bearing edge that works with a drumhead, because a drumhead isn' t going to change its shape to fit your drum. So I looked at a Remo head, with its metal hoop and its Mylar sur-

face, and I made note of the radius of the collar. That' s basically a quarter of a circle, which forms a contour. Our router bits are custom-made to create the same contour on the outside edge of Pork Pie shells. We call it a counter-cut. The inside angle of the edge is a 45° cut.

"A lot of drum builders use 45° cuts to the inside and the outside," Bill continues. "That creates a sharp edge that provides very little contact between the shell and the head. Some people say that' s good, because it lets the head resonate more. But it doesn' t get the shell involved, so I think you lose most of the 'drum' sound. With my edge, the vibration from the struck head goes straight into the shell and makes it vibrate as well. It' s a marriage between the head and the edge."

In The Drum Shop

Construction and finishing of drums in Pork Pie' s California shop is essentially a hand-crafting operation, done on a drum-by-drum basis. There are no assembly lines or computerized machines. As Bill puts it, pointing to the workmen in the shop, "Those are the computers, right there. I can' t do all this alone. The guys around me make this happen as much as

I do. Pork Pie has become a total group effort. I' m important because I sign the checks, but I' m no more important than any of the other guys here. That' s a big part of what keeps the wheels on this wagon."

A Unique Philosophy

Although Bill Detamore earned his reputation making custom drums, his personal philosophy is more that of an artisan than a builder-for-hire. "I' ve always done things according to what I like," he says, "because I' ve got to be into what I' m doing in order to do it well. If I make something and people don' t like it, that' s fine. They' ll buy what they like someplace else."

Has Bill ever said no to a specific order? "I say it all the time," he responds, smiling. "I probably spend more of my time talking people out of doing stuff than into doing it. With all the choices that we have in our industry, I think it' s hard for people to look past vanilla. Vanilla is easy, vanilla is safe. And vanilla is fine—but let' s put some topping on it. Let' s push it a little farther. See that envelope? Let' s crush that envelope and do something really cool for you. After all, it costs the same."



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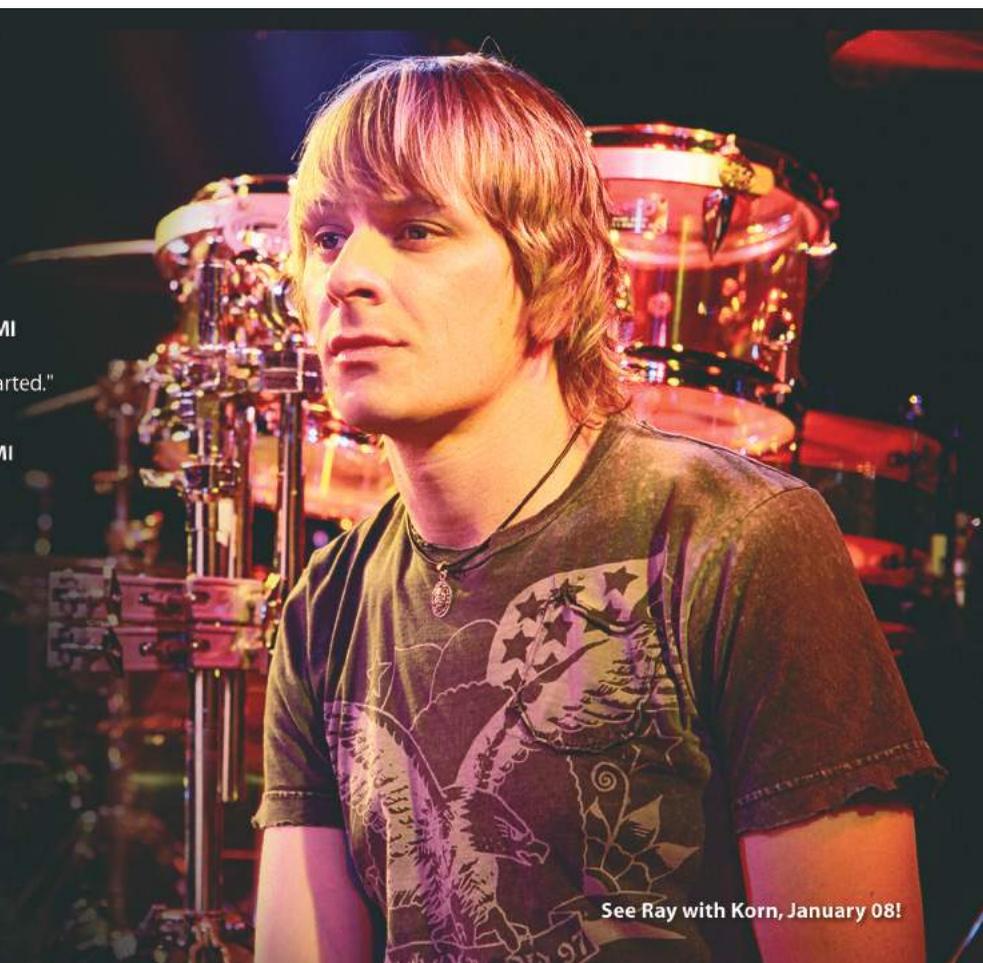
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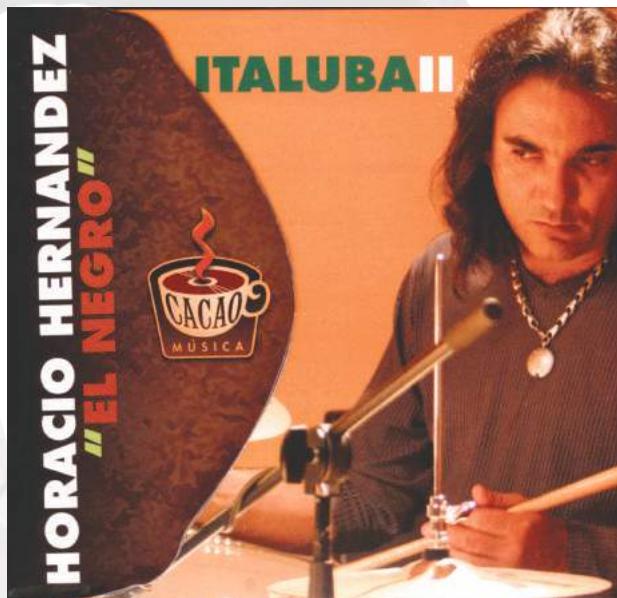
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- ★★★★★ Classic
 ★★★★★ Excellent
 ★★★★★ Good
 ★★★★★ Fair
 ★★★★★ Poor



HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ ITALUBA II

★★★★★

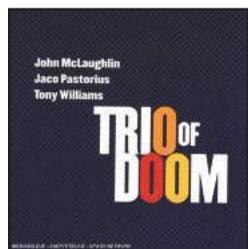
Fans of "El Negro" will love the wide-open energy of "Last Minute," the polyrhythmic mastery of "Te Prima," and the dynamic range of "Mr." The drummer really gets to show it all off here: his mastery of Cuban rhythms—yeah, there's some left-foot clave—along with his unabashed love of jazz, rock, and pop rhythms. As clear and precise as his stick-work, Negro's foot patterns keep a healthy bottom-end groove. *Italuba*, which was initially formed for a clinic tour, has become a serious band—although not too serious to have fun with the joyful Tijuana Brass send-up "Meridien." This elaborately produced package details the quartet that also features trumpeter **Amik Guerra Lig Long**, keyboardist **Iván Bridón Nápoles**, and bassist **Daniel Martínez Izquierdo**. (www.cacaomusica.com, www.bn.com)
Robin Tolleson



McRAD F.D.R.

★★★★★

Reflecting upon nearly three decades of skate-punk experience is Philadelphia's **CHUCK TREECE**, who performs here as a solo act known as McRad. Treece, who has manned the kit for punk legends Bad Brains and alt-rockers Urge Overkill, puts his old-school up-tempo chops at the forefront of *F.D.R.*, whose sound is reminiscent of seminal modern punk acts Lagwagon and NOFX. Treece's high-octane, slam-through playing also traces back to the more primal hardcore efforts of Minor Threat and Gorilla Biscuits. Still, Treece tosses in a few twists, including the bass-and-drums instrumental "Always," which focuses more on laying a solid groove than the straight hustlin' through. (Uprising) **Waleed Rashidi**



TRIO OF DOOM

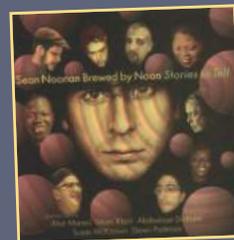
★★★★★

Recorded live in Havana in 1979 but previously unreleased, *Trio Of Doom* documents the single concert performance of **TONY WILLIAMS**, **John McLaughlin**, and **Jaco Pastorius** as a working unit. Though studio versions of the meager twenty-five-minute set were released as part of *Havana Jam* (and are included here), it's the live renditions that reveal the musicians' immediate, amazing connection. As with 1975's *Believe It*, *Trio Of Doom* documents some of Tony's most fiery playing. Tracks like "Prince Of Darkness" and "Are You The One...." rank as consummate, blast-furnace examples of his pummeling tom/bass drum combinations and machine-gun snare work. Essential. (Sony/Legacy)
Ken Micallef

TAKING THE REINS

SEAN NOONAN BREWED BY NOON STORIES TO TELL

Sean Noonan is appropriately holding cooking spoons in the photo on the back of *Stories To Tell*. The music he presents is an open-minded mix of musical cultures, and very tasty. Much of it has a free African feeling, with twists—such as **Susan McKeown** singing a traditional Irish folk song over the sly 7/8 groove of "Noonbrews," a switch to a second-line half-time funk feel for the psychedelic guitar solo on "Connections," or the tabla percolating under "Urban Mbalax." (Songlines) **Robin Tolleson**



ROB GARCIA'S SANGHA HEART'S FIRE

Garcia's drumming is always succinct, sensitive, and composition-minded, so it's no surprise his own band reflects that principle. The focus is lucid, uncluttered ensemble sonority, delivered by a septet of flute, reeds, voice, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. Mixing jazz and Latin influences, it's an upbeat, sunlit pleasure. (Connection Works)
Jeff Potter

BARRY ROMBERG'S RANDOM ACCESS PART SIX BIG GIANT HEAD

Drummer Barry Romberg's sixth Random Access album has the feeling of a true band, crisp yet relaxed, and it remains loyal to the masters of harmonic and rhythmic openness. Piloting a quintet through most of the cuts, Romberg shows quick hands and wit to go along with forward-leaning composing and production chops. Delight in the freedom and irreverence. (www.barryromberg.com)
Robin Tolleson

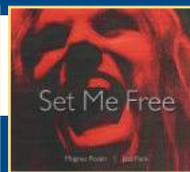
LIGHTING THE FUSE

By Ilya Stemkovsky

OZ NOY, MAGNUS ROSEN, ARISAWKADORIA

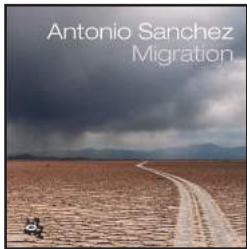
Israeli-born guitarist Oz Noy plays fusion with a serious dose of attitude. His tone and phrasing owes a little to fellow axe-man Wayne Krantz, but Noy's soulful, clever tunes are clearly his own. On *Fuzzy*, Krantz's long-time drummer **KEITH CARLOCK**, Letterman's **ANTON FIG**, and studio great **VINNIE COLAIUTA** seamlessly take turns raising the heat (and the bar). Strap in. (www.magnatuderecords.net)

Magnus Rosen (ex-Hammerfall) and Swedish drummer **BIRGER LOFMAN** pull no punches on *Set Me Free*. Think Primus meets Michael Manning at the haunted house. Lofman lays down funky rock beats and



steers the odd-time passages of "Heptagon" with choice percussion and cool hi-hat work. (www.magnusrosen.net)

On *Chapter One*, Arisawkadoria stabs at jazz-funk and electronic styles. Seattle's **KEVIN SAWKA** alternates between busy Stubblefield-inspired grooves ("Cosmic Debris") and impressive jungle ("Ninja"). Aspiring drum 'n' bass heads take note of Sawka's muted snare, left hand doubles, ghosting, slinky ruffs, and inventive over-the-bar phrasing. (www.arisawkadoria.net)



ANTONIO SANCHEZ MIGRATION

★★★★★

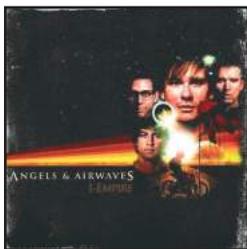
Mexico City-born but NYC-bred Antonio Sanchez is a true modern drummer. He's equally at home swinging ("Did You Get It?") or playing subtle yet complex odd-time Latin patterns ("Challenge Within"). For *Migration*, his impressive debut as a leader, Sanchez employs a two-sax front line (the outstanding **Chris Potter** and **David Sanchez**), leaving the absence of a chording instrument but giving the drummer space to display his very light touch, daring solos, and intricate hi-hat work (à la Bill Stewart). Famous friends **Pat Metheny** and **Chick Corea** lend their estimable talents to an already exceptional album. A beautiful recording job seals the deal. (www.CamJazz.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK EVEN IF IT KILLS ME

★★★★★

If there's one word that aptly describes what **TONY THAXTON** does behind the kit in pop-punk outfit Motion City Soundtrack, it's "delivery." Simply put, Thaxton drives every phrase and passage home on *Even If It Kills Me* with deft precision, backed by some moderate muscle. His dynamic approach is most notable on the straightforward "This Is For Real," where he bursts into crash-filled choruses, only to carefully restrain himself through the verses and bridge, without losing steam. But he's also cautious enough to leave space when necessary—an important (and sometimes forgotten) aspect of rock drumming that keeps Thaxton in the foreground of this musical front. (Epitaph) **Waleed Rashidi**



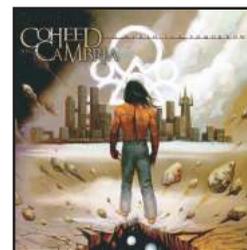
ANGELS AND AIRWAVES I-EMPIRE

★★★★★

Like Weezer's Patrick Wilson, if I decided to step out front from behind the tins to front my own rock band (A guy can dream, can't he?), I'd hire drummer **ATOM WILLARD** to back me up. Wilson's Special Goodness is one place you can hear Willard; Tom DeLonge's post Blink-182 group, Angels And Airwaves, is another. On AAA's second album, *I-Empire*, Willard quickly proves why he's the go-to guy for so many projects. (Moth, The Offspring, and Rocket From The Crypt are also on his résumé.) If you want boundless energy and a perfect mix of song support and slamming rock acrobatics, there are few guys out there who do it as naturally. Just listen to Atom setting up the breaks on the single "Everything's Magic," his mammoth beat at the beginning of "Secret Crowds," or his unexpected rhythmic approach to "True Love." Willard makes you want to stick around and hear what he's going to do next, and *that's* what you pay for when you hire a pro. (Suretone) **Adam Budofsky**

COHEED AND CAMBRIA NO WORLD FOR TOMORROW

★★★★★



The final chapter in Coheed And Cambria's planned five-album, alternate-universe concept project features Foo Fighter **TAYLOR HAWKINS** in

place of departed drummer Josh Eppard. Hawkins' trademark steady, aggressive thumps only tighten Coheed's heady/hooky balance. The drummer builds straight, granite-solid foundations for singer **Claudio Sanchez'** endearingly reedy vocal melodies, and ramps up fat, thundering blasts to match the songs' prog-punk guitar acrobatics only for tension, never for show. The lack of hyper-busy drumming has always belied Coheed's constant Rush comparisons. (Those are likely born of Sanchez's helium howl.) But there's a real commonality nonetheless, particularly here: the ability to pull prog's slick intricacy and high-minded concepts into something that's as catchy as it is cerebral. (Columbia) **Nicole Keiper**

AND FURTHERMORE...

BEATLEJAZZ ALL YOU NEED

Jazzing the Beatles canon is not new, the earliest attempts being regrettable swung versions by artists who Should've Known Better and Let It Be. Fortunately, Beatlejazz does know better. Led by sensitive, deft drummer **BRIAN MELVIN** and marvelous pianist **Dave Kikoski**, along with bassist **Larry Grenadier**, the trio smartly balances the faithful and interpretive, making it their own. Star guests include **Toots Thielemans** and **Joe Lovano**. (Lightyear) **Jeff Potter**



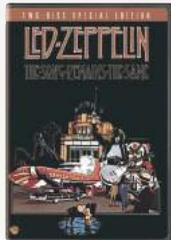
YIORGOS FAKANAS DOMINO

Smoking instrumental electric jazz/Latin/rock material from Greek bass master Fakanas, featuring the drumming wizardry of **DAVE WECKL**. Dave sounds fresh and right at home on this challenging material, and he's got plenty of room to stretch. (www.fakanas.gr) **Mike Had**

MULTI-MEDIA

LED ZEPPELIN THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME, DELUXE EDITION

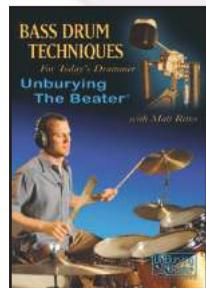
DVD AND BLU-RAY LEVEL: ALL \$44.98



Led Zeppelin never much cared for *The Song Remains The Same*, citing shabby playing and silly fantasy sequences. If you weren't around to see the band live in the '70s, however, the film at least conveyed the might of a Zep show. But when 2003's self-titled live DVD box set came along with leaner and more sonically potent performances, the band's stance on their 1976 concert movie was validated. Now it's re-evaluation time, as *The Song Remains The Same* has been re-issued on DVD. And while clams and ponderous fantasies remain, the deeper glimpse into the duality of **JOHN BONHAM** during the "Moby Dick" sequence alone justifies a purchase. As Bonzo rattles the timpani and slaps at his Vistalites with those meaty hands (given more resonance via Kevin Shirley's remix) during his showcase, video footage exposes John Bonham the family man, funny car enthusiast, handyman, and everyman enjoying a pint. Also of interest is watching—not just listening—as **John Paul Jones** and Bonham joyfully play off each other in "Heartbreaker" and "Dazed And Confused." You realize how important Jones' steadiness was to Bonham's thunderous approach. (Warner Home Video) **Patrick Berkery**

UNBURYS THE BEATER: BASS DRUM TECHNIQUES FOR TODAY'S DRUMMER WITH MATT RITTER

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$39.95



Put aside the sticks and forget the chops for a moment, and focus on the bass drum foot. Just how does one get a powerful sound and play with control on the bass drum? These are issues for every drummer, regardless of style. In this excellent analysis, Ritter delves into heel-up and heel-down playing techniques, discussing the pros and cons of both. He then shows how to combine the best elements of each to effectively play the bass drum. An awareness of muscle groups and body mechanics informs his approach, making this reminiscent of the ideas behind the Moeller technique. Playing with great sound, accuracy, comfort, and speed are the goals, and with some practice the information proves effective. While the presentation is predominantly talk and there are a couple of missed demonstration opportunities, these are minor issues given the excellent analysis of core technique. (UnBuryingtheBeater Productions/Hal Leonard) **Martin Patmos**

RHYTHM IS THE CURE: SOUTHERN ITALIAN TAMBORINE BY ALESSANDRA BELLONI (MUSICAL NOTATIONS BY GORDON GOTTLIEB)

BOOK/DVD LEVEL: ALL \$24.95



A book about tambourine? Make that *Southern Italian* tambourine (tamburello), and you've entered another level of hand drumming. Alessandra Belloni—artistic director, founder, and lead performer of NYC-based I Giullari Di Piazza—returns to her roots and explains the historical perspectives of this technique as well as the "how to" in concise pictures and musical examples, demonstrated on the great DVD. In one chapter, she compares the tarantella to the swing rhythms produced by New Orleans bands, and in another she uses the Italian techniques for Brazilian rhythms, including baião and maracatu. (Mel Bay) **Andrea Byrd**

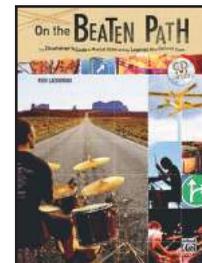
HANDS, GROOVES & FILLS BY PAT PETRILLO BOOK/CD/DVD LEVEL: ALL \$39.95



Collective instructor Pat Petrillo's new book/CD/DVD combo, *Hands, Grooves, & Fills*, is an indispensable collection of exercises to improve hands (including his "TAB" system—essentially a symbol shortcut for rudiments), grooves (including modern beats like reggaeton and drum 'n' bass), and fills (including split sextuplets and rata-macues). Petrillo's vibe is fun and interesting; he uses phrases like "2 Bar Nastifications" and "Swingalations." And the ninety-minute DVD looks and sounds great and would be useful to any gigging drummer. (Hudson/Hal Leonard) **Ilya Stembkovsky**

ON THE BEATEN PATH: THE DRUMMER'S GUIDE TO MUSICAL STYLES AND THE LEGENDS WHO DEFINED THEM BY RICH LACKOWSKI

BOOK/CD LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE \$29.95



If a beginner learns to emulate Carter Beauford's taut syncopation, but doesn't study the roots of Beauford's style, he's cheating himself. *On The Beaten Path* would make an ideal text for said newbie. Author Rich Lackowski's deep appreciation for the history behind funk, punk, metal, jazz, and jam-band drumming informs this collection of biographies, transcriptions, and a CD of the transcribed figures. It reads like part drum lesson, part drum *history* lesson. Any beginner whose chops are gelling, but whose understanding of metal drummers before Jason Bittner is lacking, would be wise to pick up *Beaten Path*. (Alfred) **Patrick Berkery**

DRUM TUNING AND MAINTENANCE BY JOE RANDEEN

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$19.95



Every drummer worth his sticks knows the basics like rudiments and common drum beats. But just as important as learning how to play is learning how to tune and maintain your drums. Joe Randeon's *Drum Tuning And Maintenance* DVD is just the right tool to help any drummer get this part of the job done. Randeon doesn't miss anything here. Whether discussing types of drumheads/applications, shell materials, or seating your heads, each segment is well-shot and easy to view. (HowAudio.com) **Fran Azzarto**

ON THE BEATEN PATH

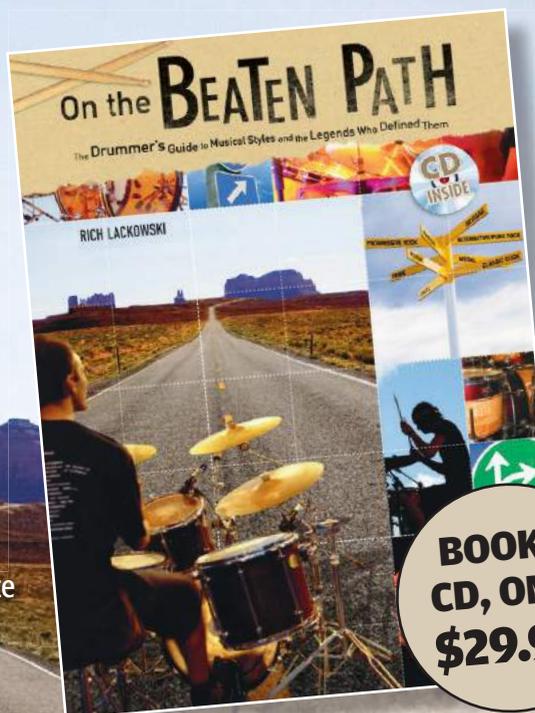
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EXOTIC COORDINATIONS AND EXOTIC INTERDEPENDENCE BY NICK MARCY

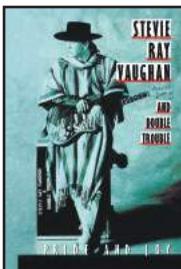
BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$16.95 EACH (\$29.95 FOR THE PAIR)



Texas-based drummer and educator Nick Marcy's books *Exotic Coordinations* and *Exotic Interdependence* contain exercises ranging from simple speed-builders to super-complicated rhythmic displacement. *Coordinations* is like taking a lesson with a Frankenstein of your favorite players—a Colaiuta-inspired funk workout here, a cross-stick/ghost note combo there. Similarly, *Interdependence* addresses wild 16th-note flams and suggests that you think of Ginger Baker when approaching a cool tom-tom exercise. Throughout, Marcy writes humorous anecdotes coupled with suggestions for warm-up exercises. Also tackled are various triplet sticking combinations and something Marcy calls "Fat" and its permutations. (Prepare your brain for those.) Want to work out your "Quazi Latin Substitutes?" They're here. A fun feature of both books is Marcy's willingness to reference great drummers and other instructional books. The material seems to be all over the place, but that's the idea: educational texts outlining the modern drummers' need to be well-rounded and challenged. (www.nickmarcy.com) **Ilya Stelmovsky**

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE PRIDE AND JOY

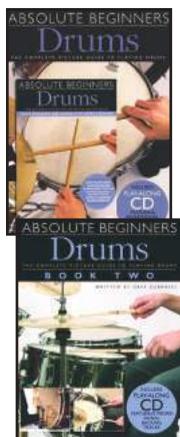
DVD LEVEL: ALL \$14.98



Largely campy (intentionally so in some cases), the videos in this DVD collection nonetheless underscore SRV's six-string brilliance while highlighting the musical ferocity of drummer **CHRIS LAYTON** and bassist **Tommy Shannon** (a.k.a. Double Trouble). Undeniably, Stevie was the star, but DT helped inoculate the guitarist's stinging, bluesy Hendrix-/Albert King-style riffage with shufflin' chicanery and rhythmic bite. (Vaughan's MTV *Unplugged* performances, included here, rank among the series' best.) (Epic/Legacy) **Will Romano**

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS DRUMS: THE COMPLETE PICTURE GUIDE TO PLAYING DRUMS BY DAVE ZUBRASKI

BOOK/DVD/CD LEVEL: BEGINNER \$24.95 (BOOK ONE), \$12.95 (BOOK TWO)



This instructional package lives up to its title and more. *Book One* starts out with a step-by-step guide on how to set up your kit; from there it moves onto tuning, posture, grip, and much more. The "pictures" part of this series is truly complete, and it's what separates it from the rest of the pack. Each lesson is also duplicated on the included DVD, with great camera angles and helpful visuals. As if that wasn't enough, the package also includes a play-along CD.

Where *Book One* leaves off, *Book Two* seamlessly picks up and digs in. Topics including syncopated snare drum patterns, drum fills, 16th-note beats, and basic rudiments are covered in forty easy-to-read pages. *Book Two* doesn't include a separate DVD, but never fear, the included CD is all you need to help you along with each new lesson. (Amsco Publications) **Fran Azzarto**

DAVID KUCKHERMANN WORLD PERCUSSION 1 & 2

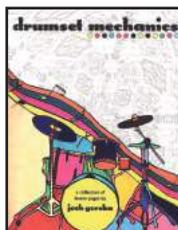
DVD LEVEL: ALL \$42



David Kuckhermann has presented some very effective instructionals here. Each disc contains over two hours of Oriental dance rhythms marked with step-by-step finger-drumming techniques that include the tak, snap, double stroke, and jingle rolls. (*World Percussion 1* covers frame drums, while *2* covers riq and darbuka.) Traditional and modern styles are introduced, and as each new pattern is presented, a slow-motion camera shot follows. This is the equivalent of "vari speed" on a tape recorder for teaching melody lines in an intimate fashion. These DVDs were produced in a comfortable, logical sequence, allowing both the beginner and professional drummer to benefit. (www.framedrums.de) **David Licht**

JOSH GORSKA DRUMSET MECHANICS

BOOK LEVEL: BEGINNER TO ADVANCED \$15



Chicago area instructor Josh Gorska's new book, *Drumset Mechanics*, combines sixty-one of his favorite instructional worksheets. It's a handy quick-reference tool for examples of various rock beats heard in modern music, right-hand independence, advanced bass drum/snare combinations, bossa novas, 2:3 cascaras, and beyond. Nothing ground-breaking here, but the layout is clean and simply explained for drummers of all levels. A convenient "Doodle Page" allows students to write their own grooves in the actual book. (www.myspace.com/drumset_mechanics) **Ilya Stelmovsky**

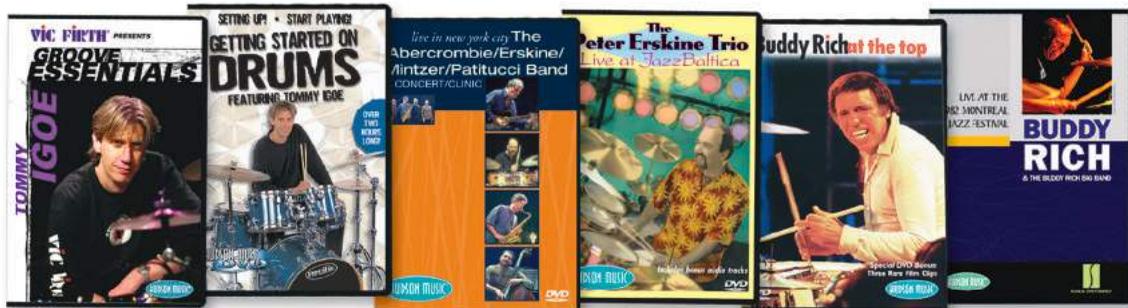
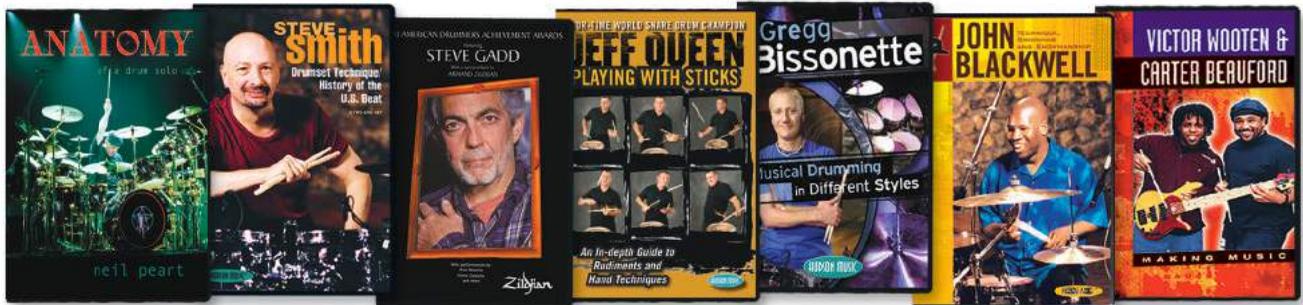
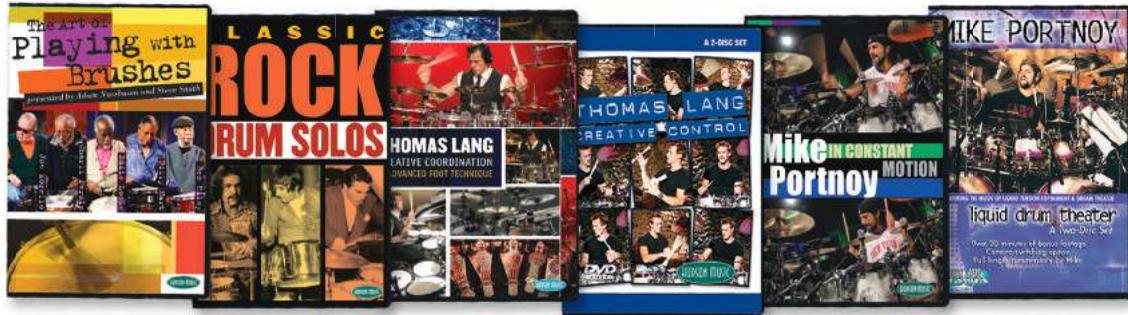


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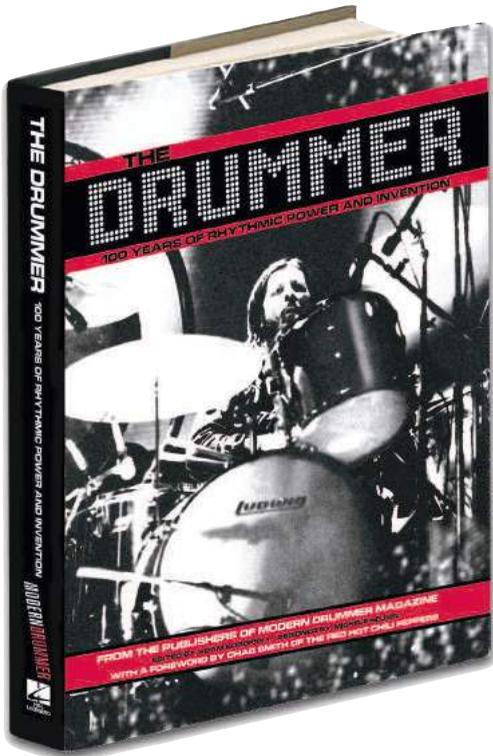
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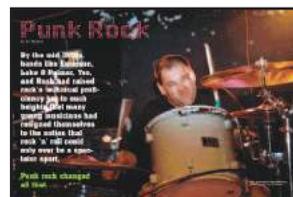
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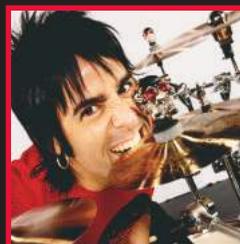
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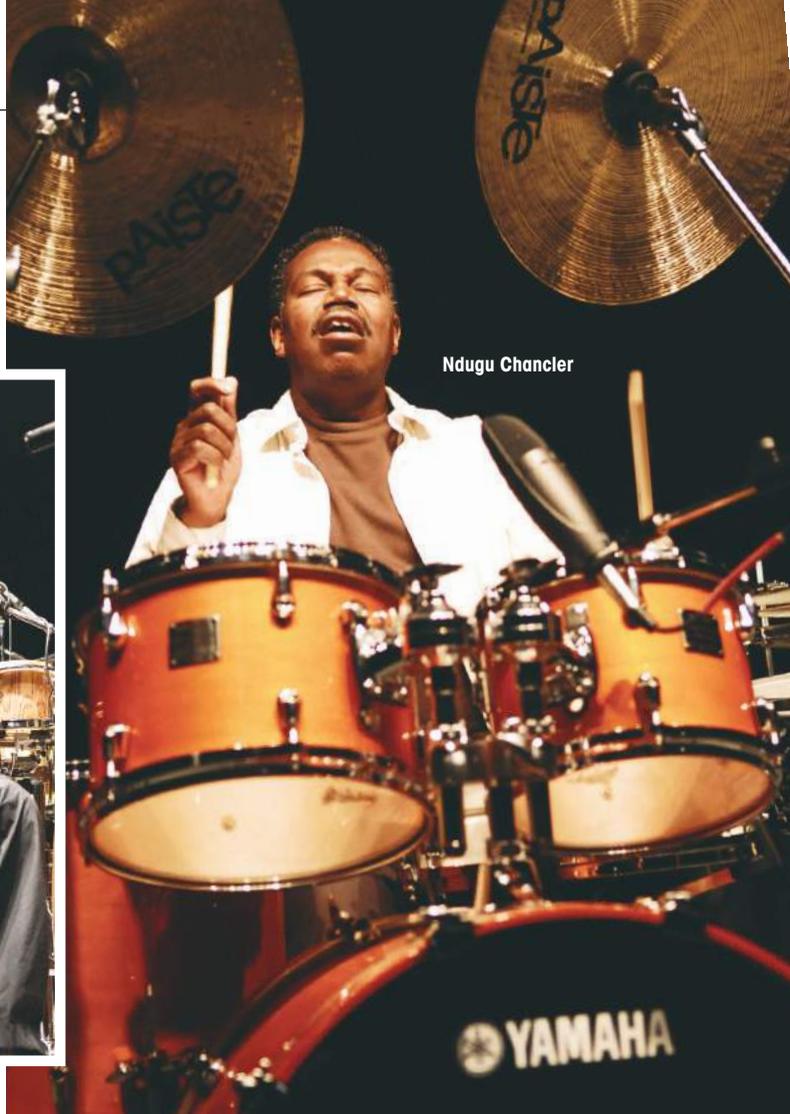
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Pasic 2007

Story by Michael Dawson
Photos by Heinz Kronberger



Alex Acuña



Ndugu Chancler

The 2007 Percussive Arts Society International Convention was held this past November 1–4 in Columbus, Ohio. The event brings students, educators, manufacturers, and world-class percussionists together to share their knowledge and experiences. Honored at the convention were PAS Hall Of Fame inductees **Anthony Cirone** (symphonic percussion), **Warren “Baby” Dodds** (early drumset pioneer), and **Steve Reich** (master minimalist composer).

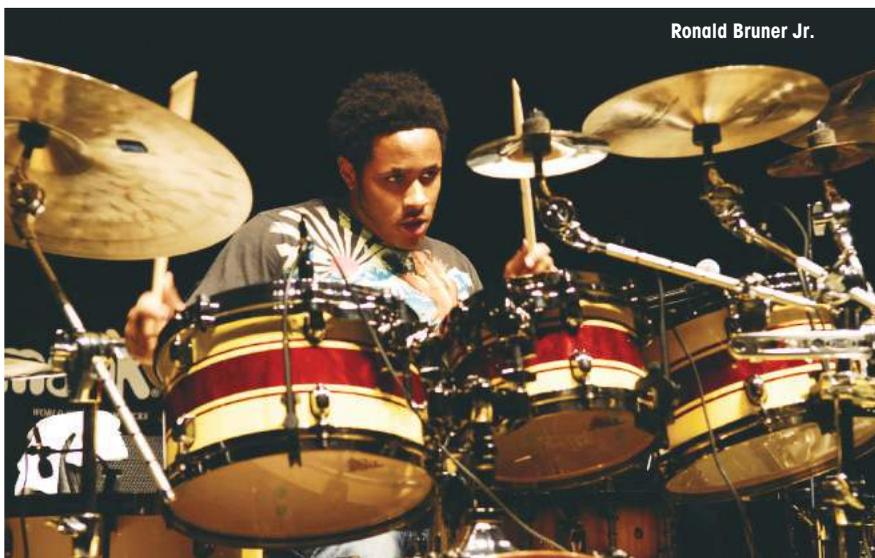
New York-based jazz drummer **Pete Retzlaff**’s laid-back drumset clinic included a discussion on musically relevant left-hand comping. This was contrasted by the blazing single strokes and floor tom/splash cymbal crossovers of **Ronald Bruner Jr.** Bruner also played an extended Billy Cobham-style solo and fielded questions on how he developed his monstrous chops.

Arizona State professor **Dom Moio**’s presentation focused on various approaches to jazz soloing. Moio was followed by a Latin-jazz clinic by **Walfredo Reyes Jr.**, who demonstrated some serious samba over a couple tracks before bringing out master conguero **Giovanni Hidalgo** for a thrilling percussion/drumset duet. Thursday concluded with

Australian sticksmith **Grant Collins**, whose enormous Pearl drumkit was given a workout with multi-pedal foot ostinatos and roundhouse tom fills.

On Friday, MD Festival alum **Dave DiCenso** gave one of the convention’s more informative clinics, discussing ways to improve time and feel by singing, clapping, and playing various one-bar clave rhythms and permutations. Then **Dave Weckl**—who’d just flown in from Budapest—opened his clinic with a slick and musical solo that illustrated why he’s one of the most influential drummers of the past twenty years.

Giovanni Hidalgo next performed masterfully to a standing room-only crowd. John Mayer drummer **J.J. Johnson** then laid



Ronald Bruner Jr.



Dave DiCenso

down some deep grooves before tackling questions about developing feel and playing along to a click. Following Johnson's clinic was a historic roundtable discussion featuring the drummers of Weather Report. Sharing their experiences with the legendary fusion band were **Alex Acuña, Ndugu Chancler, Peter Erskine, Skip Hadden, Omar Hakim, and Chester Thompson.**

Day two featured masterful performances by jazz luminary **Lewis Nash**—who discussed the importance of being able to speak the language of jazz—and pop/fusion icon **Omar Hakim.** Omar opened with a spirited solo, answered questions, and then closed the night by playing over a medley of classic funk/R&B tracks.

On the final day of PASIC, Medeski Martin & Wood drummer **Billy Martin** touched on concepts from his new book, *Riddim*, then concluded with a samba-styled solo full of his famed loose and open feel. Next up, Mastodon drummer **Brann Dailor** and guitarist Bill Kelliher blazed through several of their band's prog-metal tracks. Chicago jazz drummer **Joel Spencer** then conducted the final masterclass of the convention.

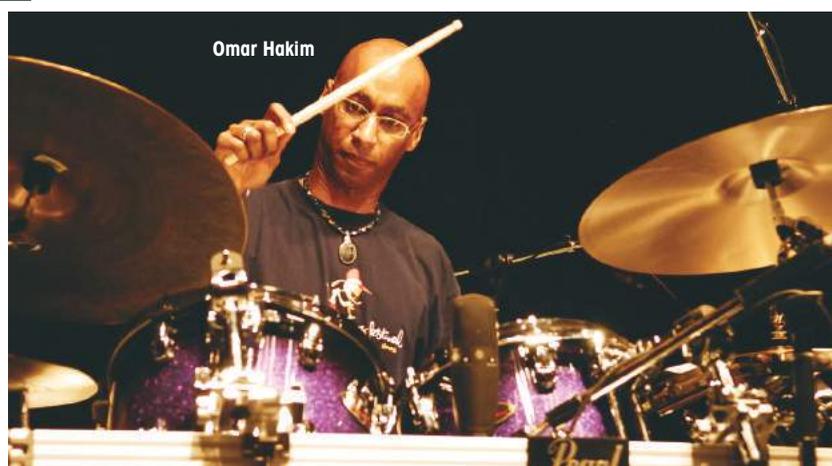
A PASIC highlight was legendary studio/touring drummer **Ndugu Chancler**, who began his clinic with a video montage of clips from his days with artists like Miles Davis, Santana, George Duke, The Jazz Crusaders, and Frank Sinatra. Ndugu then floored everyone with a passionate and dynamic solo full of masterful chops, deep-pocket grooves, and meaningful musicality.

The clinic portion of PASIC 2007 ended with Alex Acuña and Peter Erskine performing drum/percussion duets over several classic Weather Report tracks. Steel drum master **Andy Narell's** group, featuring monster Cuban drummer **Jimmy Branly**, closed the event with an evening of original world/jazz compositions.

PASIC 2008 will be held in Austin, Texas. For more info, go to www.pasic.org.



Billy Martin



Omar Hakim

Indy Quickies

Ludwig honored Ed Shaughnessy and his thirty-year commitment to Ludwig drums with a special tribute at the 2007 PASIC in Columbus, Ohio. Ed was presented with a Black Beauty snare drum engraved with his caricature.



From left, Ludwig's Todd Trent, Ed Shaughnessy, and Ludwig's Jim Catalano

Thomas Lang

Fifteenth Annual Montreal Drum Fest

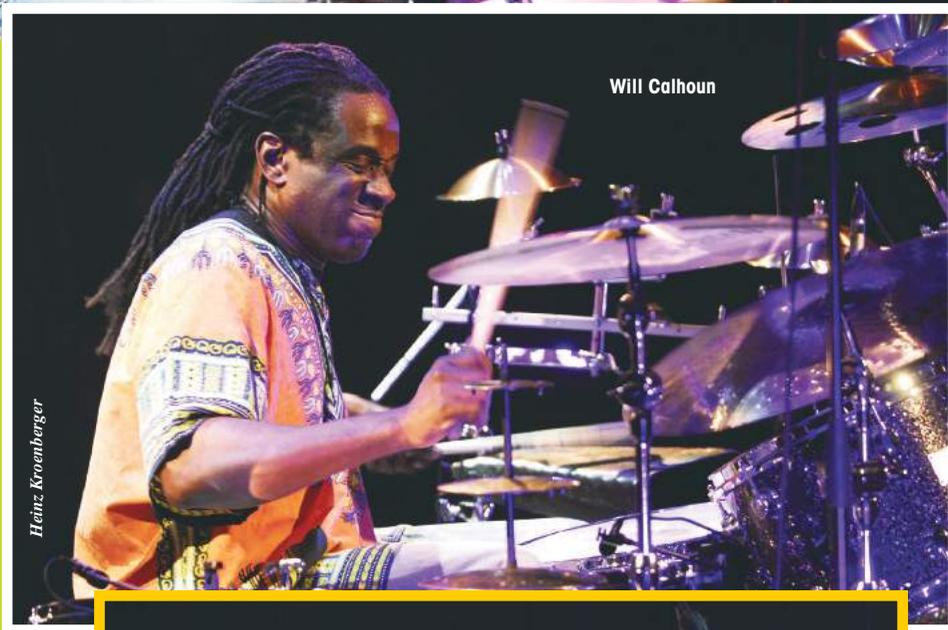


This past Saturday, November 10 and Sunday, November 11, the Montreal Drum Fest presented its fifteenth-anniversary show at Pierre Mercure Hall in downtown Montreal. Things got underway on Saturday with the Yamaha Rising Star showcase, comprised of students **Sonny Tremblay**, **Bryan Sosa Hernandez**, and **Francois Laliberté**. Quebec veteran **Guy Nadon** next joined Francois for a rousing duet. As festival artistic director Ralph Angelillo put it, "This is what the festival is all about. It creates a sense that anyone can succeed if they keep at it."

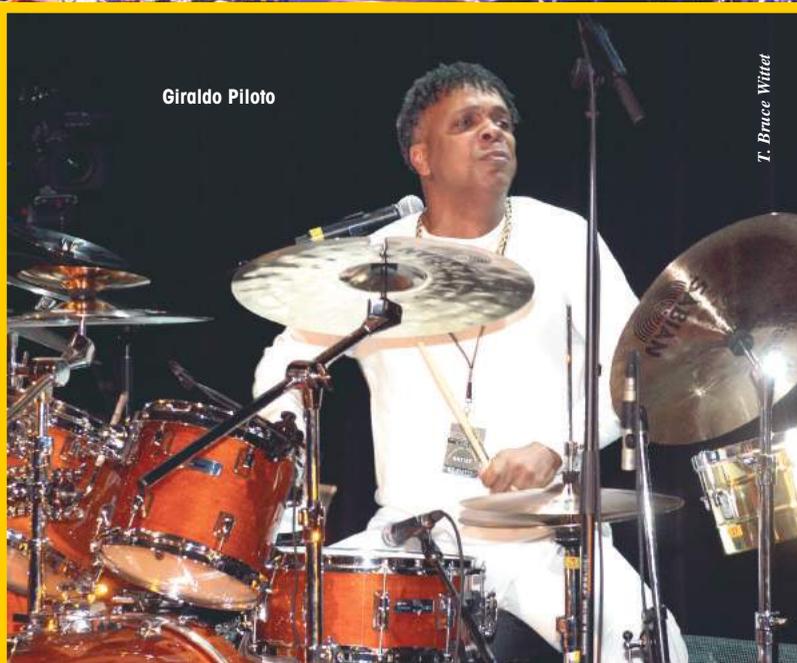
Yanic Bercier of Canadian metal band Quo Vadis displayed invincible blast beats and a formidable left hand. Contemporary jazz star **Terreon Gully** embodied groove and hospitality when he played and fielded questions. **Dave Langguth**, Nelly Furtado's drummer, was a returning hero, this time with a snappy funk band, while Living Colour's **Will Calhoun** created beautiful rhythms and sonic textures with an acoustic kit augmented by a Korg Wave Drum. Nickelback's **Daniel Adair** was solid and confident fronting a group that included virtuoso guitarist Dave Martone.

On Sunday, Serbian drummer **Marko Djordjevic** displayed a take-no-prisoners playing style, while **Blandilo** (a duo featuring drummer **Merlin Ettore** and percussionist **Joannie Labelle**) demonstrated the limitless possibilities of drumset and percus-

Will Calhoun



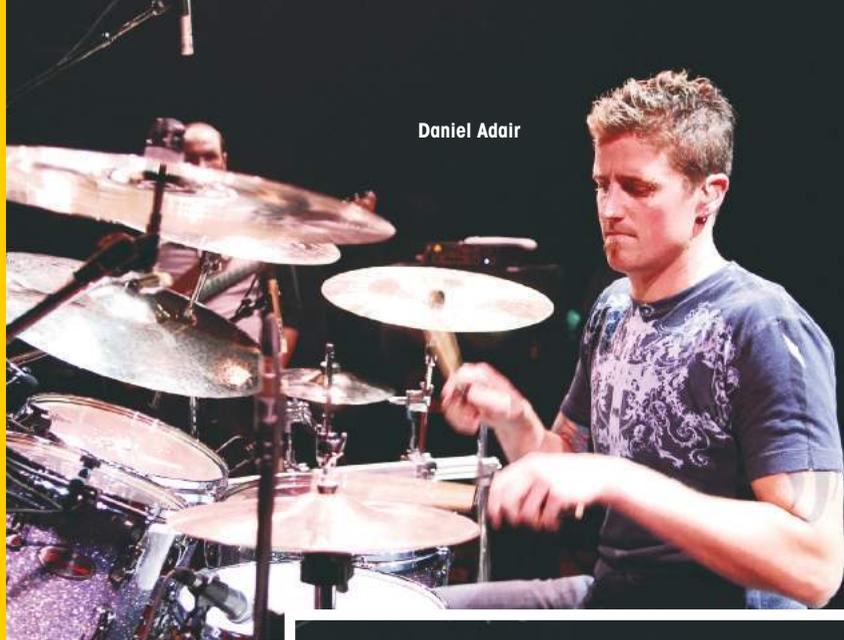
Giraldo Piloto



sion. **Kenny Aronoff** shared his powerful studio drumming grooves, while **Thomas Lang** took flight on a set of Roland electronic drums. In a rare appearance outside his native Cuba, Afro-Cuban drummer extraordinaire **Geraldo Piloto** (of Klimax) was both bombastic and delicate. Finally, a closing duet by **Peter Erskine** and **Alex Acuña** reminded us of the joy that one drummer can excite in another.

The day was all but done when MD writer T. Bruce Wittet presented festival producers **Ralph Angelillo** and **Serge Gamache** with a commemorative plaque from Modern Drummer, honoring the Montreal Drum Fest's fifteenth anniversary. Visibly moved, Ralph spoke of the kinship he felt for the MD team, citing the encouragement of late MD founder Ron Spagnardi as a motivating factor in the Fest's initial creation.

Sponsors for this year's event included Evans, Dream Cymbals, DW, Gon Bops, KoSA, Latin Percussion, Mapex, Mountain Rythym, Paiste, Pearl, Premier, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Roland, Sabian, Sonor, Tama, Taye, Vater, Vic Firth, Yamaha, Zildjian, and Musi-Technic. For more information, go to www.montrealdrumfest.com.
T. Bruce Wittet



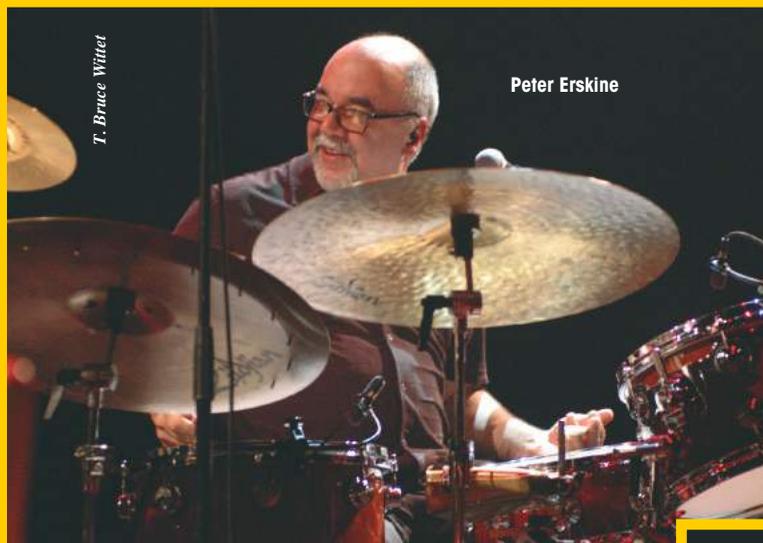
Daniel Adair

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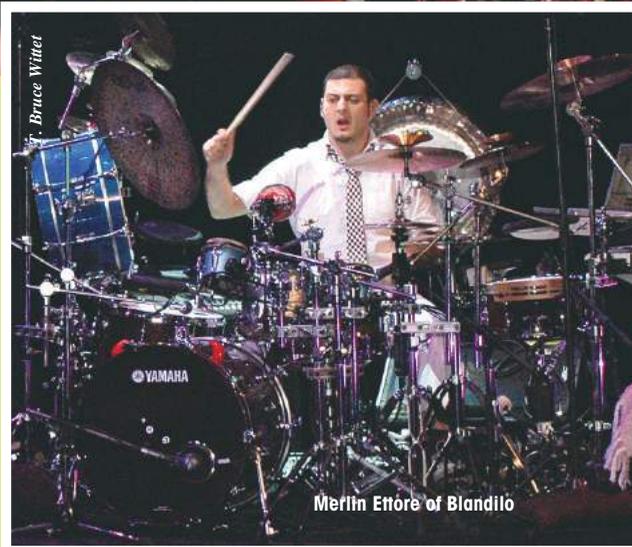
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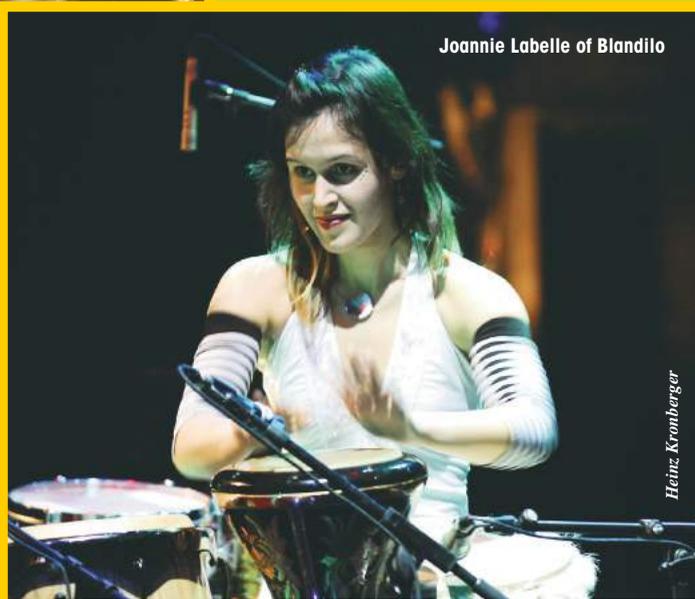
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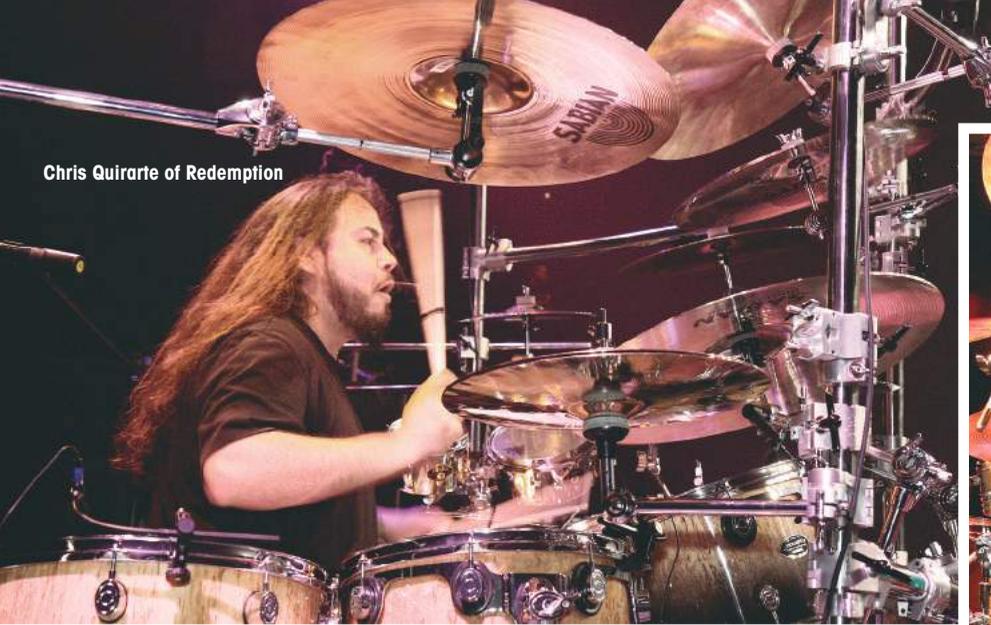
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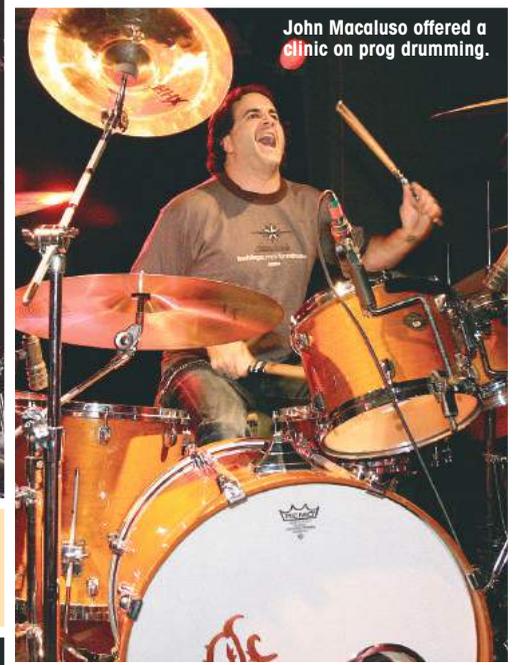
Joannie Labelle of Blandilo

Heinz Kronberger

Chris Quirarte of Redemption



John Macaluso offered a clinic on prog drumming.



ProgPower USA VIII

Progressive metal fans lined up to witness the sold-out ProgPower USA VIII weekend, held this past October 4–6 at Center Stage in Atlanta, Georgia. The three-day festival hosted fifteen international bands playing music that was heavy, melodic, technically challenging, and (of course) progressive!

The festival opened with local Atlanta favorites Halcyon Way (with drummer **Ernie Topran**), followed by American bands Krucible (**Darren Davis**) and Cellador (**David Dahir**) and Sweden's Freak Kitchen, featuring the exceptional drumming of **Björn Fryklund**.

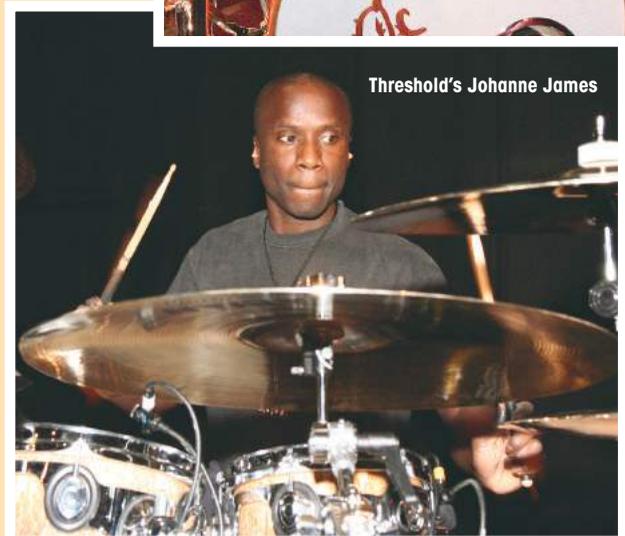
Day two included Italy's Raintime (**Enrico Fabris**), Norway's Communic (**Tor Atle Andersen**) and Pagan's Mind (**Stian Lindaas Kristoffersen**), the US's Virgin Steele (**Frank Gilchrist**) and Redemption (**Chris Quirarte**), and Finland's Sonata Arctica (**Tommy Portimo**). New York-based prog-metal drummer **John Macaluso** gave a well-attended afternoon drum clinic to promote his new release, *The Radio Waves Goodbye* (www.lionmusic.com).

The final evening featured Greece's Firewind (**Mark Cross**), England's Threshold (**Johanne James**), Germany's Primal Fear (**Randy Black**), The Netherlands' After Forever (**Andre Borgman**), and an all-star jam that included drummers Stian Lindaas Kristoffersen of Pagan's Mind, Björn Fryklund from Freak Kitchen, and this story's author, performing on a cover of Iron Maiden's "Flight of Icarus." This year's festival sponsors included Pacific Drums And Percussion, Drum Workshop Hardware, Sabian Cymbals, Evans Drumheads, and Shure Microphones.

ProgPower USA gives American fans a chance to see many high-profile European prog metal bands (and their drummers) that rarely, if ever, perform in the US. A DVD of this year's festival will be made available through www.progpowersusa.com. The lineup for next year's festival can also be found on the site.

Story and photos by Mike Haid

Threshold's Johanne James



Raintime's Enrico Fabris



Andre Borgman of After Forever

Who's Playing What



Pearl Jam's **Matt Cameron** has been using Yamaha's Steve Gadd Signature 30th Anniversary drum-set on tour. The kit, only fifty of which were produced, is a replica of the custom set that Gadd has used for almost twenty years. In other news, Latin American pop legend **Charly Alberti**, **Jon Wysocki** (Staind), **Stacy Jones**

(American Hi-Fi, Hannah Montana), and **Doug Yowell** (Duncan Sheik, Suzanne Vega) are new Yamaha artists.

LP's artist roster now includes **Jason McGerr** (Death Cab For Cutie) and **Kim Thompson** (Beyoncé).



New Pearl artists include **Royal Prince**, **Franklin Vanderbilt** (Lenny Kravitz), **Zoltan Chaney** (Vince Neil), **Ross Federman** (Tally Hall), **Darren Verni** (Unearthly Trance), and **Matty Amendola** (independent).



Famed jazz drummer **Jimmy Cobb** has joined Vater's roster of drumstick artists.



Puresound Percussion snare wires are on the drums of **Ronald Bruner Jr.** (Stanley Clarke), **Chris Deaner** (Kelly Clarkson), **Dave DiCenso** (independent), **Gavin Harrison** (Porcupine Tree), **Glenn Kotche** (Wilco), **Samantha Maloney** (independent), **Jojo Mayer** (independent), **Doane Perry** (Jethro Tull), **Chad Szeliga** (Breaking Benjamin), **Jason Sutter** (Chris Cornell), and **Paul Wertico** (independent).

Top studio and touring percussionist **Ralph Irizarry** is now playing Tycoon percussion instruments.

Eighteen-year-old drummer/percussionist/clinician **Hannah Ford** is a new Toca Percussion artist.



Ronnie Vannucci (The Killers) and **Matt Chamberlain** (Tori Amos, studio great) are now playing Craviotto drums.



Rock touring great **Jimmy DeGrasso** (David Lee Roth, Megadeth, Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne) is a new Sabian cymbal artist.

Journeyman drummer **Kevin Winard** (Steve Tyrell) is endorsing Acappella drumsticks.



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The Cloud Nine Kit

After Zack Young and his bandmates in A.i. finished their most recent album, *Sex & Robots*, a lyric from one of its songs inspired them to create an all-white stage set, which they dubbed Cloud Nine. Zack decided to tailor his touring kit to match that set.

"My kit used to be a strange mosaic of different-looking gear," says Zack, "because I use a traditional rock drumset mixed with lots of electronic trigger pads. I wanted to find a way to make the acoustic and electronic drums look seamless, and I figured that matching their color and improving their symmetry would achieve this. My brother Nick [singer/guitarist for A.i.] and I spent a long time designing the setup, using Gibraltar parts to create a frame. All the hardware is connected to that frame, including the hi-hat and snare drum stands.

"Once we finished designing the setup," Zack continues, "we took the DW drums apart and had their shells wrapped in high-gloss white by thisoldrum.com.

We wanted the hardware powder-coated in white, too. This included all the metal parts for the drumKAT, the Daux pads, the DrumTech pads, the Gibraltar gear, and the DW rims and hardware. That totaled over 2,000 tiny to large pieces of metal that had to be taken apart, sandblasted, heated to 400 degrees C., coated white, and then reassembled. We photographed everything we took apart so we'd know how to fit it all back together. Only the cymbals and the Ludwig chrome snare weren't colored, because the powder coating would have killed their sound."

The Cloud Nine kit includes a 22" DW kick drum with a DW 9000 pedal, 12" and 16" DW rack toms, a 6 1/2 x 14 Ludwig Supraphonic snare, a drumKAT Turbo, six rack-mounted Daux single-zone 6" trigger pads, two ddrum acoustic drum triggers (for the kick and snare), one Drum Tech dual-zone Pole Pad, and two Drum Tech Fat (electronic kick) Pedals. All pads and triggers are hooked up to a drumKAT controlling an Akai Z-8 sampler. The gear is mounted on a custom Gibraltar rack. The front bass drum head is by DrumArt.com; all other heads are Drum Doctors signature Remo models.



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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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Jason plays the new 24" K Light Ride. Hear it at zildjian.com/klight

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