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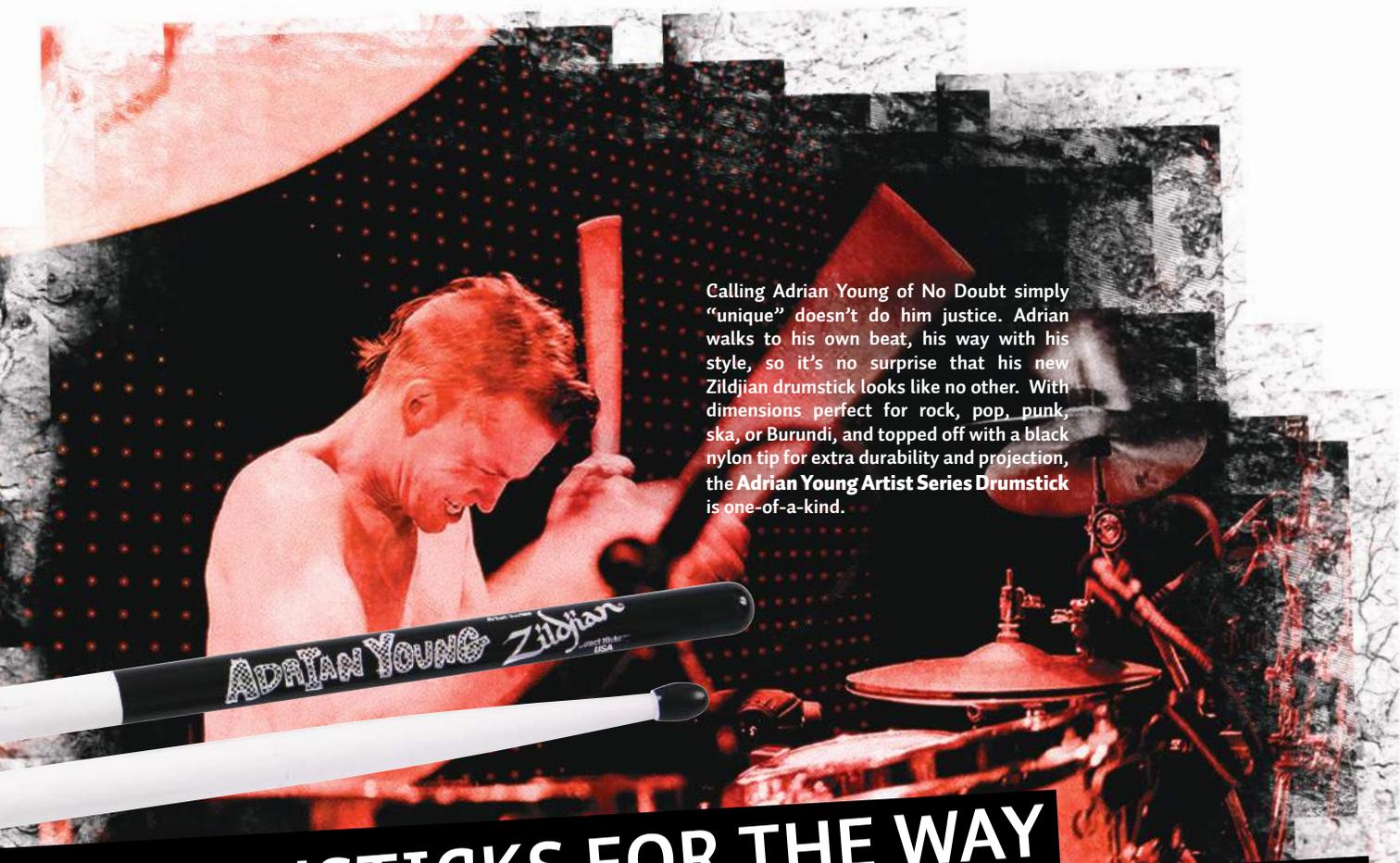


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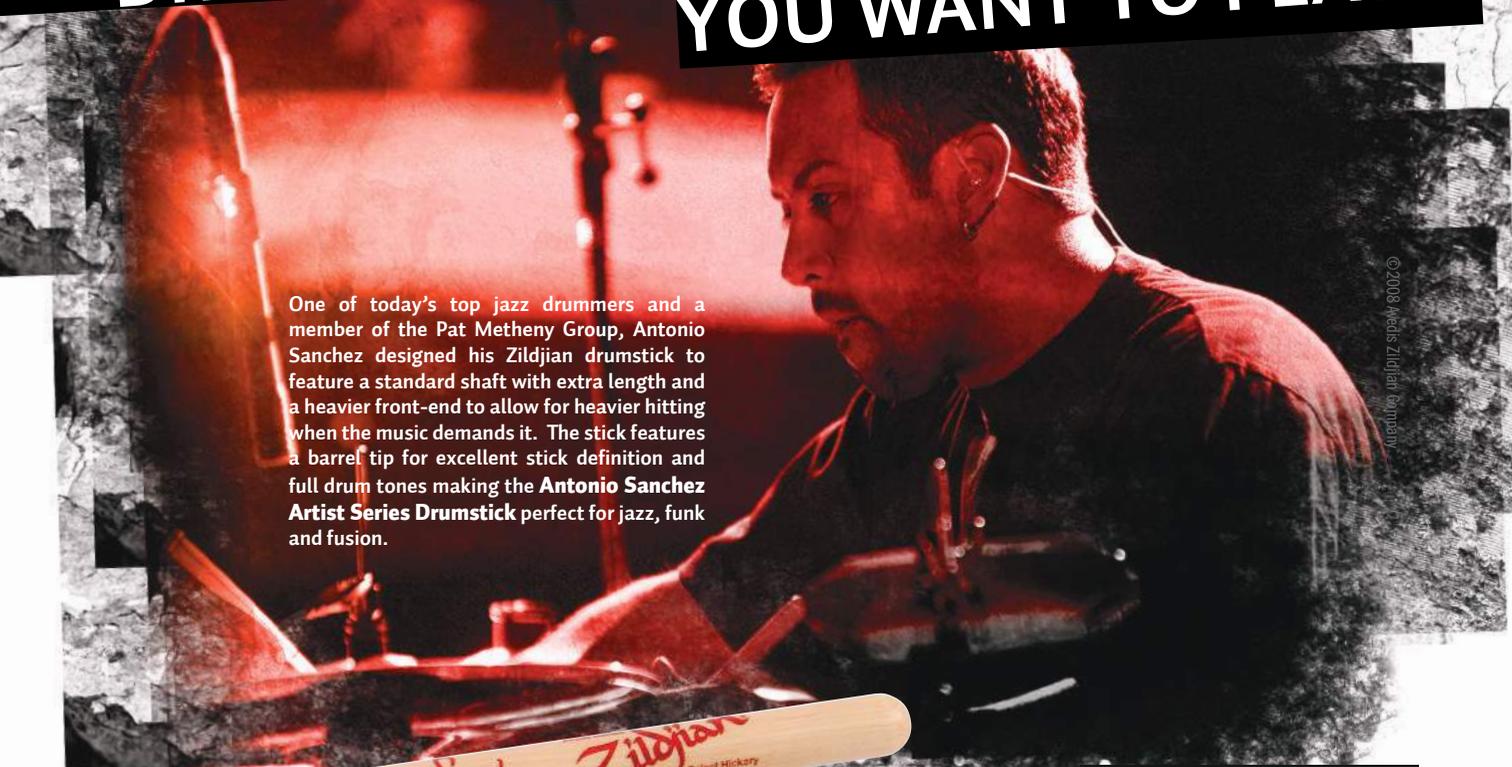
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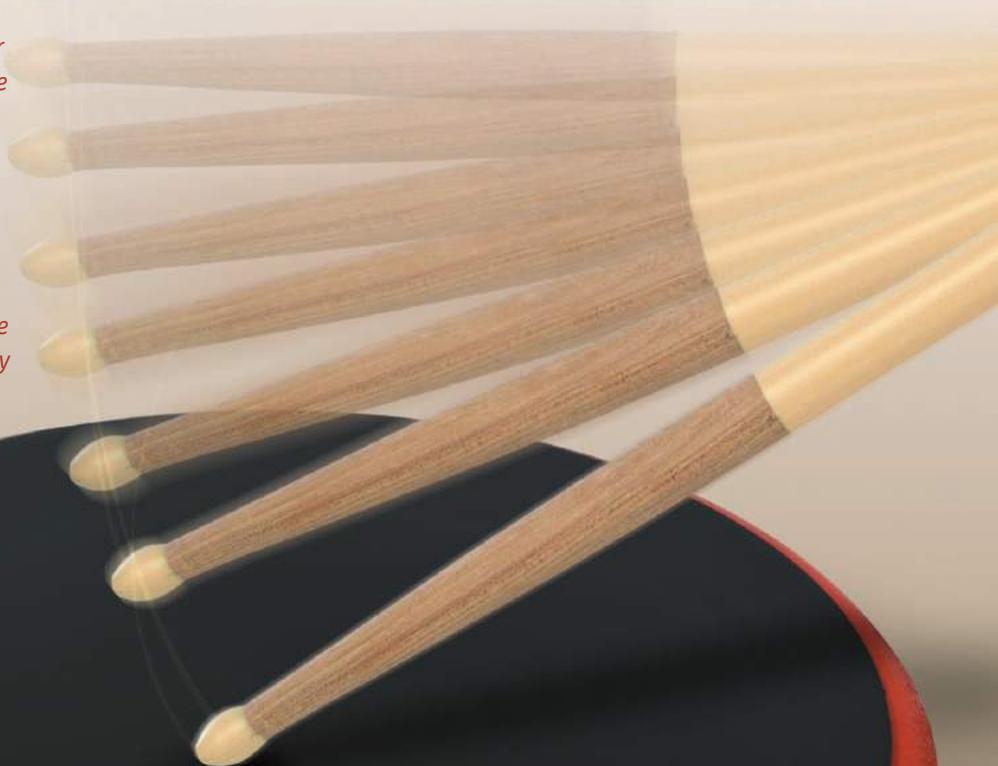
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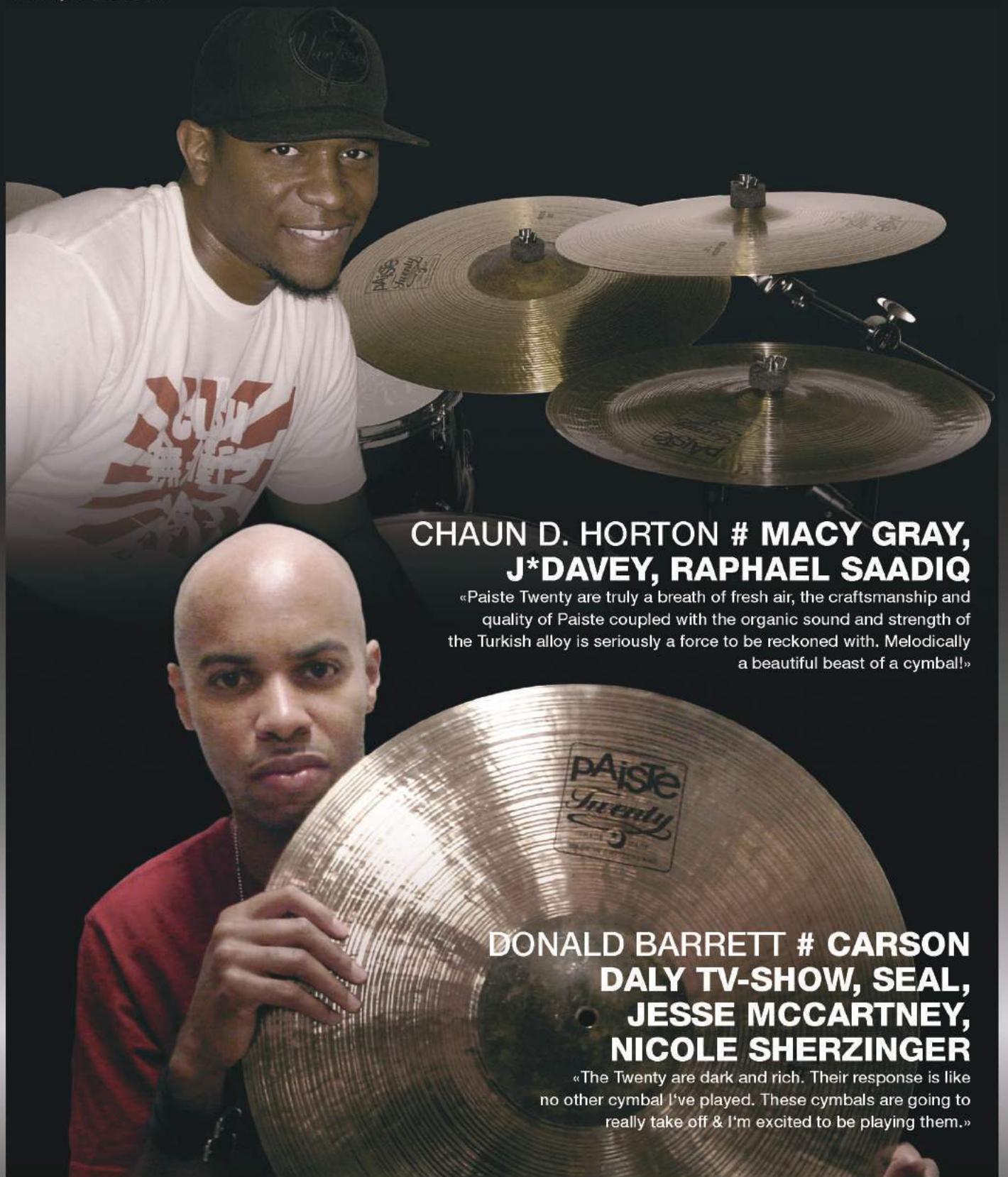
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84 **Alex Gonzáles**

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100 **Seether's John Humphrey**

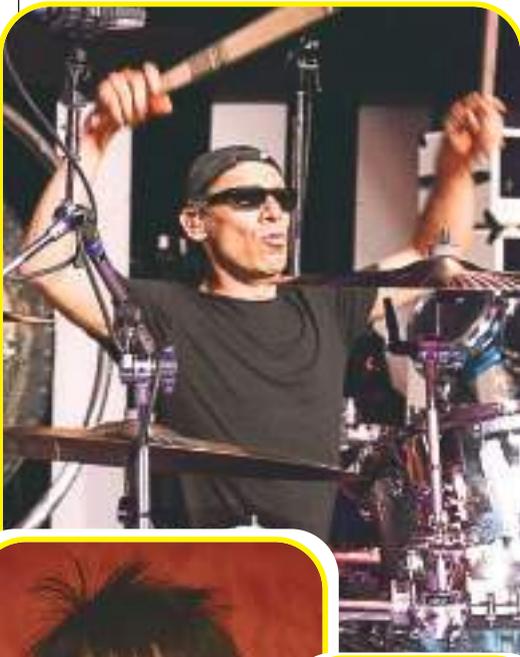
What doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger. John Humphrey has battled back from debilitating physical pain to kick Seether's butt all over this world.

110 **Jazz Firebrand Marcus Gilmore**

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Christopher Otazo



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Ash Newell



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WIN! WIN! WIN!
 PAGE 82
 One Of Three Fabulous Mapex Drumkits Or
 A Black Panther Snare Drum
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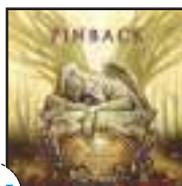
Doing it right the second time.



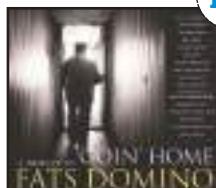
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The Gladstone/Krupa Snare Drum: A Look At Gene's Treasure by Harry Cangany



zak starkey - the who



generation K

Percussion is the family business at Zildjian, and Jason and Zak can boast the same. The music may be classic, but the cymbals they use are a modern expression of the days of monster beats and ferocious crashes. Now five new K Zildjian models can give you the same sound they need to drive two iconic bands.

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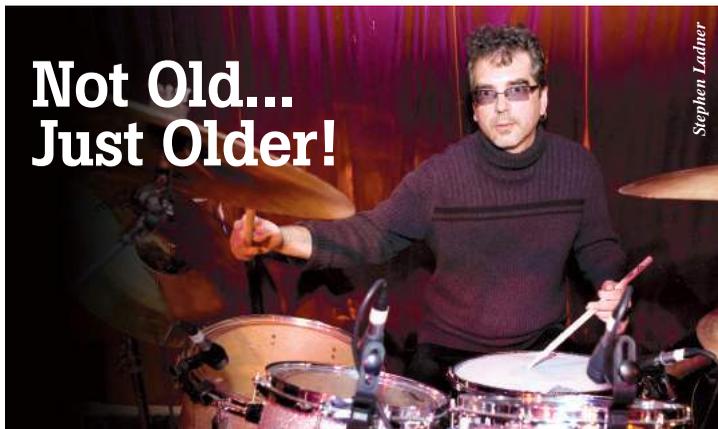


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So, I recently turned the big Five-0. I guess I'm officially a grownup now! At first I figured, big deal—it's only a number. (That's what we all say once we pass forty, right?) But now I'm convinced that life shoots us through time at lightning speed. Getting older isn't that bad a thing, though. So far, for me it's been a pretty good ride. I count my blessings every day: I still do most of the things I did in my younger years (though now I might not do them as many days in a row). I'm close to most of my childhood friends. I have a great family and a pretty good career. So, getting older is not that much of a drag. (Yeah, that's the ticket, I'll keep telling that to myself!)

Anyway, here we are kicking off a new year with our jam-packed NAMM Show issue. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the NAMM Show, it's the annual four-day convention put on by The National Association Of Music Merchants, and it's one of the largest and most important gatherings of musical instrument retailers and suppliers from around the world. With more than 85,000 attendees and over 1,500 exhibitors, the NAMM Show is the premier gathering of the music products industry. It's been going on for over a hundred years, and it grows more popular each year. Look for MD's annual gear coverage from the show floor in the June issue. You can also check out the best new drum-related products at moderndrummer.com.

Speaking of our Web site, please stop by when you have a moment. It's updated every day with breaking news and artist blogs, and every month we spotlight an exclusive "Caught In The Web" interview. Plus we add sound samples to our media page to correspond with the stories in our latest issue. You can also tune in to MD Radio and hear the drummers that are in the magazine. And while you're there, sign up for the monthly electronic companion to Modern Drummer magazine, our e-newsletter MD Wire.

Finally, while we're on the topic of worldwide connections, I'd like to add a very special thank you to all of our myspace friends (www.myspace.com/moderndrummermagazine). I've personally been turned on to many awesome drummers, bands, singer/songwriters, and music lovers this past year; it's just incredible how much great music is out there.

In closing, I'd like to wish you the very best for this year and for many years to come. Stay safe and healthy, be happy, and love one another. It's one world! Enjoy the issue.

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 32 Number 3

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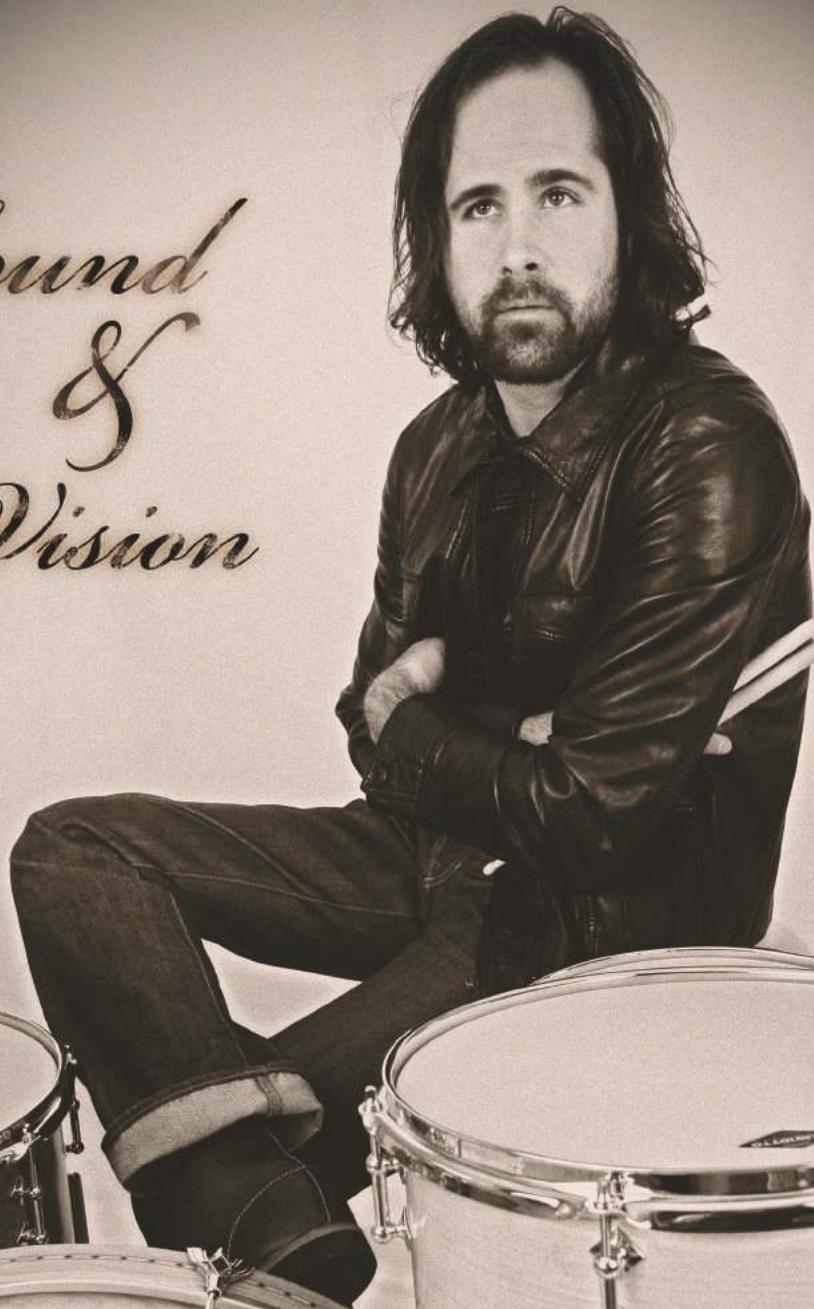
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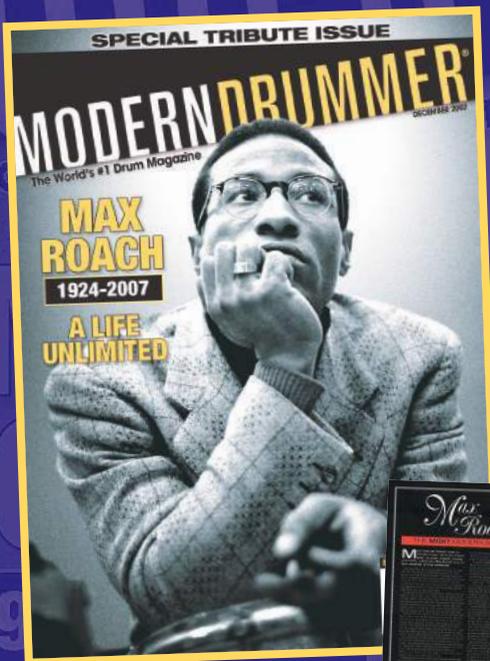
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Max Roach

Many music magazines have printed salutes to Max Roach since his passing. None of them—especially any of the other drum magazines—have offered the insight, information, and impression of due respect that your extensive December tribute contained. Congratulations on a superlative job.

Evan Alexander

What a beautiful tribute to Max Roach! Really well done. Thanks for doing the right thing for Max.

Kevin N.

Just picked up the Max issue of MD. GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, and GREAT! Thanks for the pleasure.

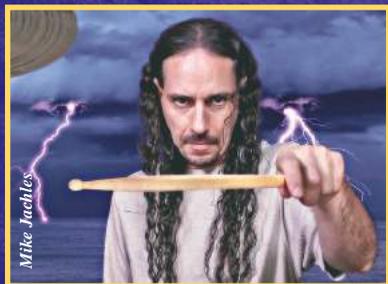
Butch Miles



Derek Roddy

Just wanted to send a big Thank You for including me in my favorite magazine. It means a great deal to me. The article looked great. Thanks, too, to Mike Haid for doing such a great job on short notice. Wonderful!

Derek Roddy



Derek Roddy credits European grinders for the development of blasts. But I'd like to suggest that it was West Coast crossover bands that invented and developed this style, right here in the US. Derek further credits Pete Sandoval with "[taking] the blast beat to another level" and "giving it a solid time signature." But crossover musicians gave blast beats a musical context before the early-'90s death-metal era that Sandoval represents.

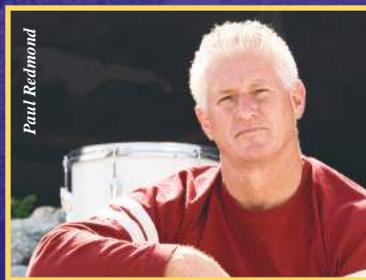
There was no official rulebook for what counted as blasting back in the day—nor should there be one now. This is precisely the thinking that has led to the varied history of an elusive topic.

Mike T.

George Hurley

I was very glad to open the December MD and see George Hurley's face peering back at me. George has long been my favorite drummer, and it's about time he got a little attention. I'd love to see a full-length feature on him, but I'll take what I can get. Thanks for covering drummers who might be off the mainstream's radar but are no less deserving of accolades.

Ryan Horky



Thanks From Yamaha

Thanks for the great article on Yamaha's 40th anniversary in your January '08 issue. Rick Van Horn did a terrific job, and having our staff photos on the same page as Steve Gadd was a nice touch.

One important person on our staff, however, was not mentioned. Prudence Elliott is the marketing assistant we share with the guitar division. If it weren't for her, the wheels would come off this machine for sure. She's talented, bright, and creative—and every bit as important to what we do here as anyone else on the team. Please allow me to give her the props she deserves.

Jim Haler
Product Manager, Yamaha Drums

Help Save The Vidacovich House

I'm writing to you to ask you to help my mentor, teacher, and good friend Johnny Vidacovich. The house that Johnny shares with his wife Deborah is in need of major repairs, and they need financial help. This is the house that I learned my most important musical lessons in, and that Kevin O' Day, Brian Blade, and other great drummers learned in. Johnny is a unique drummer and a New Orleans treasure.

Johnny will be teaching lessons for the next few weeks at a discounted rate of \$75 an hour. Book lessons with Deborah via email at jvidacovich@cox.net. Donations by check—payable to Johnny Vidacovich—can be mailed to 4816 Bienville St., New Orleans, LA 70119. Online donations can be made at www.stantonmoore.com/news/jv.html. Thanks!

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Steve Smith

On "Don' t Stop Believin' "

I' ve enjoyed your playing all through your long career, from before Journey up to Vital Information. Can you tell me where you got the idea for the "cymbal bell/tom-tom" combination groove that you used throughout the Journey song "Don' t Stop Believin' " ?

Robert Tyler

As a Journey bandmember I had a lot of ideas that I wanted to contribute to the music. But I was coming from a jazz and fusion background. Playing "busy time" or "chops-oriented" fills—which is what I was used to—worked on a few tunes in the Journey repertoire, like the epic "Mother Father" from *Escape*, or earlier, more open tunes like "I' m Crying" from *Departure*. But for the most part, I needed to keep my parts fairly straight-ahead, and to play with a "big beat." To challenge myself musically and appeal to drum fans that were listening to details, I tried to work in subtle rhythmic ideas and orchestrations that would add to the music and still work for the other members of the band.

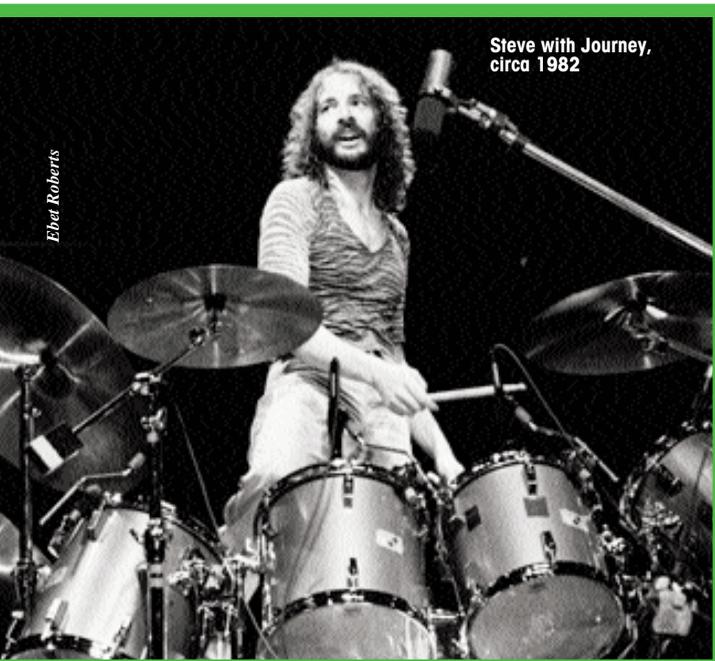
While we were writing *Escape* in 1981, Terry Bozzio was in a very modern instrumental band called Group 87. In their music, Terry was playing well-orchestrated beats that incorporated many different sounds from the kit—not your typical "kick/snare/hat" patterns. Terry' s drumming inspired me. At the same time, some of the synth-oriented new-wave bands of that time were using the Linn drum machine, and I was experimenting with playing some of those ideas on the drumset.

When "Don' t Stop Believin' " was first being written in our Oakland, California rehearsal studio, I played a very straight beat to the tune. The guys in Journey wanted simple beats when we were writing, so that they could try out all of their ideas. I' d work on making my parts more interesting later, at home. While listening to my rehearsal cassette of the tune, I started "hearing" some drum and cymbal-bell countermelodies, and I worked on developing those ideas.

In the "teaser-chorus," where the drums enter, I play a two-bar phrase that uses the snare and toms as melodic voices. In the re-intro before the second verse I add the bell of the cymbal to the groove. I keep that going through the second verse. In the third verse I add a couple more notes to the cymbal bell part. Finally, in the chorus, I play a four-bar phrase that' s a little more complex. I had to learn how to play 8th notes on the hi-hat with my left hand in order to play the melodic parts with my right hand on the snare, toms, and cymbal-bell. (My first educational video—*Steve Smith Part One*, now available on Alfred Music DVD—contains a detailed analysis of this drum part.)

When I started playing the parts in rehearsal, they went fairly unnoticed by the band—which was a good thing. If I did something they didn' t like, they' d let me know right away. But if what I was doing was working, they usually didn' t say too much. By the time we recorded the tune, the drum parts had become part of the composition, and the engineers did a great job of featuring the drums in the mix.

I' m glad the tune still has a life. The albums *Escape* and Journey' s *Greatest Hits* continue to sell, and we license the tune often for movies, TV, and advertisements. Most recently that includes the last scene of the final episode of *The Sopranos*. For a good live concert featuring "Don' t Stop Believin' ," check out the Journey DVD *Live In Houston—1981 Escape Tour*.



Steve with Journey, circa 1982

Ebet Roberts

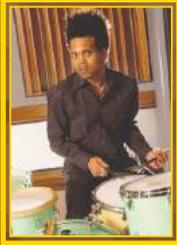
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Nick Lynn - Drummer

What's On James Gadson's Floor Tom?



I've waited a long time to read a feature about you in *MD*. You have been an inspiration to my musical growth for many years, and I thank you for the many wonderful performances you've shared with us. There is only one James Gadson.

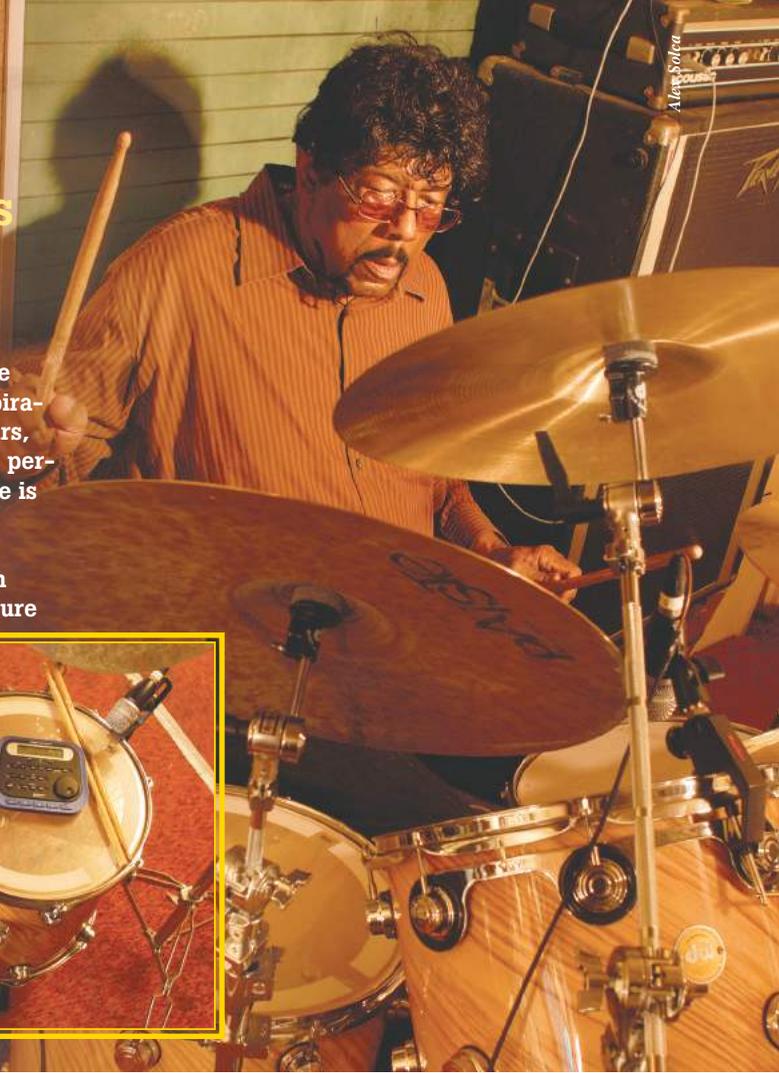
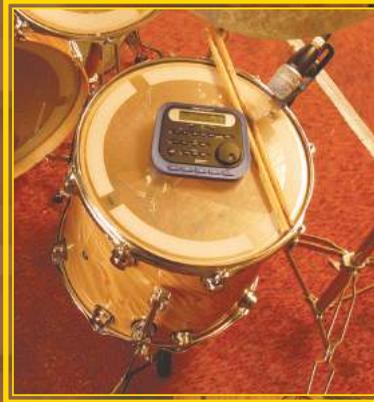
I'm interested to know if the device shown on your floor tom in the photo on page 115 of the September '07 *MD* feature

is an electric metronome. If it is, what is the brand, and what features do you like about that unit?

Charley Drayton

Charley, it's a pleasure and an honor to get a question from such a well-known and talented drummer as you. And I do appreciate all your kind words.

To answer your question, the device you refer to is not a metronome. It's a Frontier remote control that lets me run my computer in the studio from the room where my drums are. It makes my recording operations a lot easier.



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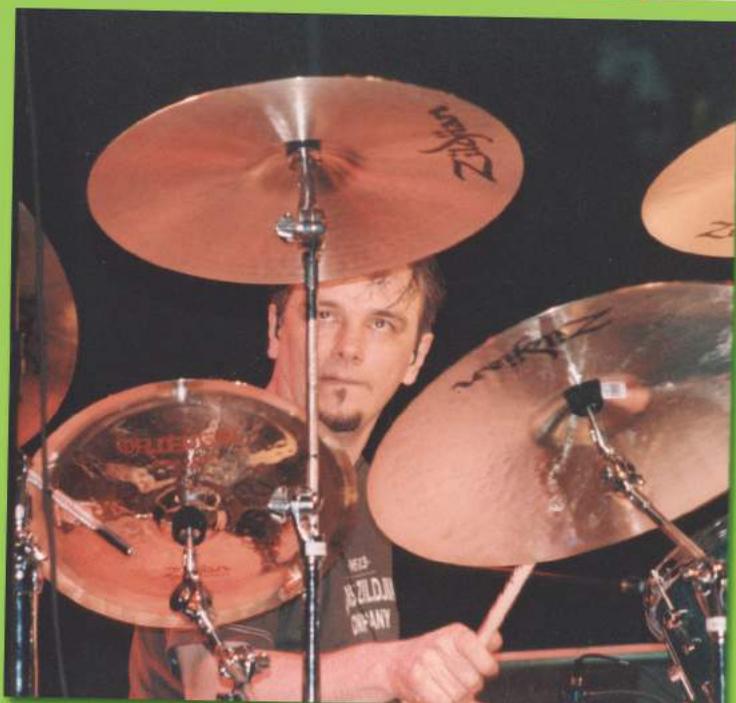
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QUICK BEATS

text and photo by Joe Perry

Porcupine Tree's Gavin Harrison



Place of birth: London, England
Influences: Stan Levey, Steve Shaeffer, and my dad
Hobbies/interests: I'm a car-racing fan
How I relax: Watch TV
Favorite food: Indian
Favorite fast food: Pizza Hut
Favorite junk food: Twiglets (English pretzels)
Favorite drink: White Russian
Favorite movie: *Being There*
Favorite TV show: *The Larry Sanders Show*
Favorite album: *Big Blues* by Art Farmer
Vehicle I drive: 2002 Jaguar S Type
Other instruments I play: Bass, keyboards
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A mathematician
Place I'd like to visit: Australia
I wish I'd played drums on: "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin
Musician I'd like to work with: Joni Mitchell
Next up & coming drummer: Morgan Ågren
Most prized possession: A 1940s A Zildjian 20" ride from my late drum teacher
Person I would like to talk to: Albert Einstein
Person I admire: Frank Zappa
Most memorable performance: Taormina, Sicily. Mt. Etna was smoking in the background.
Most embarrassing moment on stage: A drum clinic in 1998. A mic stand fell down on the web of my hand.
Most unusual venue played: On the top deck of a London double-decker bus. I was dressed up as a giant loaf of bread.
Biggest venue played: Olympic Stadium, in Rome, in 1998, for 92,000 people

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS

rvh@moderndrummer.com



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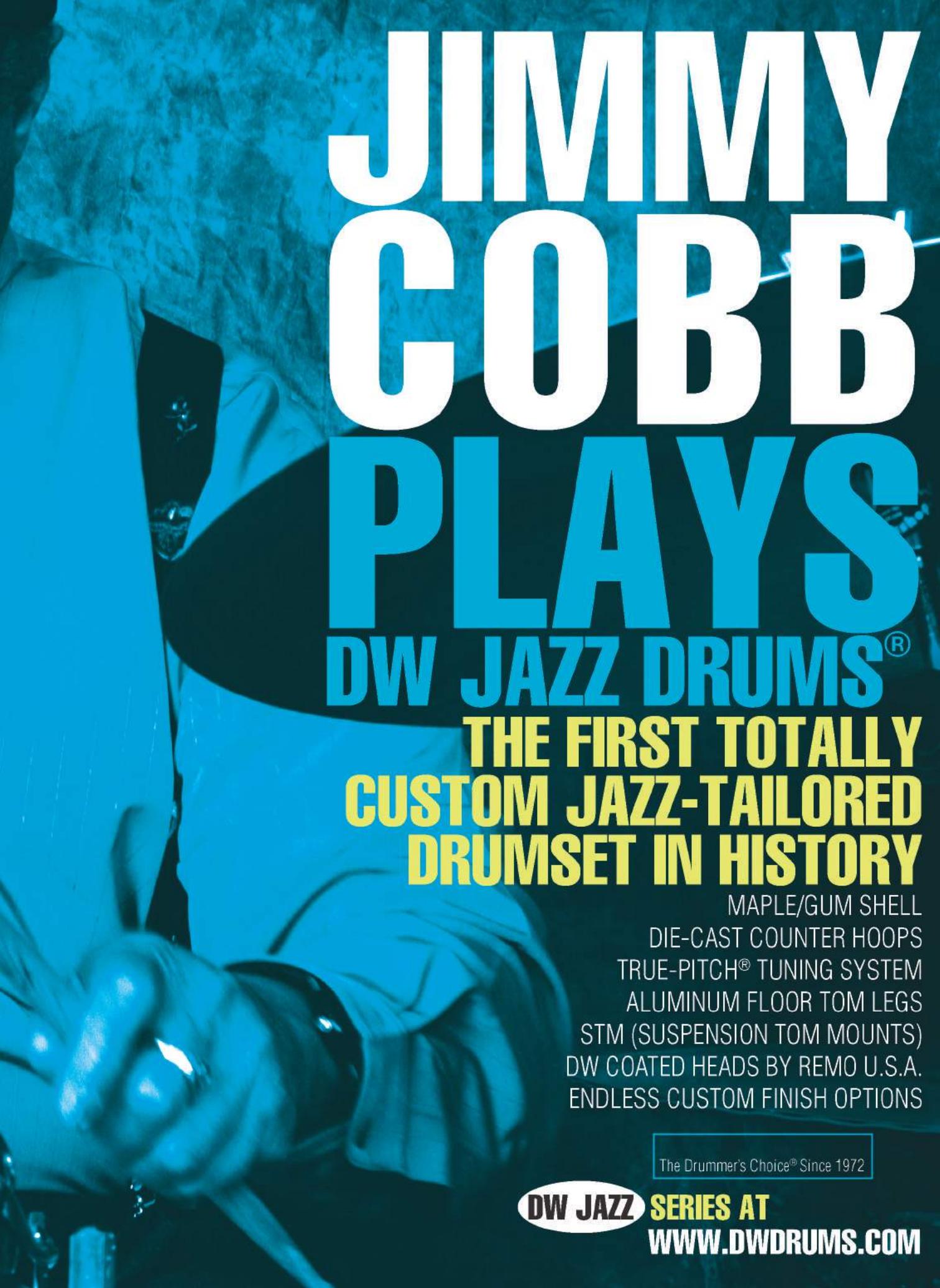
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Bad Religion's Brooks WACKERMAN Busy As He Wants To Be

When it comes to challenges—and keeping very busy—Brooks Wackerman is always up to the task. Whether it's tracking without cymbals, playing in the searing heat, jumping aboard well-established bands, or creating his own diverse projects, the drummer has proven that no gig's too tough.

Wackerman's main gig is with Los Angeles punk veterans Bad Religion. He's recorded the band's last three albums, including their latest, *New Maps Of Hell*.

Wackerman adopted a recording technique producer Joe Barresi used with Queens Of The Stone Age, tracking the album's single, "Honest Goodbye," without cymbals. "We wanted the sound of the 26" kick, but we just didn't want to battle with cymbal leakage," says Wackerman. "It was a little unusual playing without cymbals, but after a couple takes of air drumming, I got used to it. And after having heard the end result, I feel it was definitely worth it."

Wackerman took his DW VLT kit on the road with him last summer for Bad Religion's headlining stint on the Vans Warped Tour. But the outdoor festival didn't come without its obstacles, including experiencing the 120° heat in Florida in July. According to Brooks, "It made a half-hour show feel like a two-hour set."

Wackerman's cranked some heat for other bands recently, including touring with Tenacious D and recording half of Korn's latest album. (Terry Bozzio tracked the other half.) "They called me up, and I played one show with them at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles," says Wackerman. "After that, they asked me to come into the studio and record about five songs. It was a great experience."

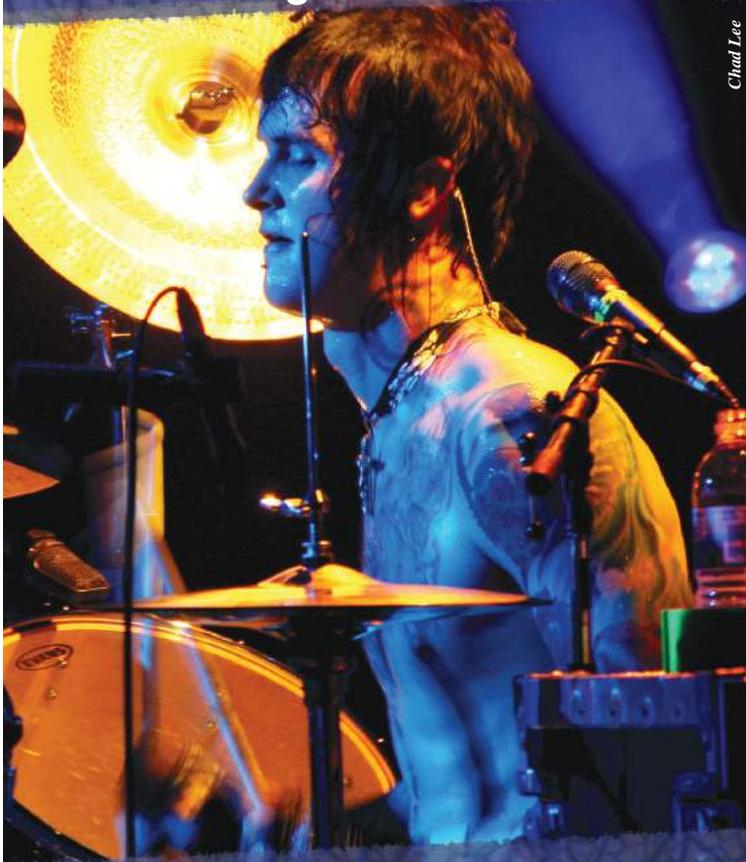
And if all these gigs aren't enough, Wackerman's got his own solo project, Kidneys, which he describes as "muso-pop." He drums on the self-titled debut, but sings lead vocals and plays guitar live. (Brooks' brother John, another powerhouse Wackerman drummer, plays drums on stage.) Brooks is also working with a metal group called The Innocent, featuring members of No Use For A Name and Bleeding Through.

Despite all that Wackerman's accomplished, he's still seeking new ideas, including getting inspired by Jojo Mayer's new DVD. "The guy is just an animal—incredible," Wackerman enthuses. "He's the only guy I've heard who can play the drum 'n' bass style accurately."

"I'm trying to become Jojo," Brooks laughs. "I just want to play like him!"

Waleed Rashidi

Avenged Sevenfold's James "The Rev" SULLIVAN Switching Gears



Cliff Lee

"I have a clear vision of what I'm going to do before I go in there," says Avenged Sevenfold's speedy stickman, James "The Rev" Sullivan. After recording an album as diverse and detailed as the band's latest, self-titled affair, he *better* have a pretty strong understanding of what he's going to do before sliding on the headphones.

Four albums into its career, Avenged Sevenfold have amassed a solid catalog of metal-core anthems. But this time The Rev and his bandmates opted to step outside the genre's boundaries, infusing orchestral, R&B, and country influences into their solid rock foundation, while self-producing the ten-song collection. And for The Rev, that meant turning to his vocalist or guitarists for their opinions on all things drum-wise.

"I always bounce certain fills off of them," he says. "But I like to watch them freak out when I nail something really tasty. They're involved more in the standpoint of tonality. We switched the drumkit up every two songs or so, and we were really meticulous with the tones of the drums. We didn't sample anything or throw any samples on top of anything. We got a really good, organic sound out of it. That was a new thing for me, but that's what we wanted to do. I doubt that most producers would want to switch up their drumkits for every song."

This "organic" self-production ethic also found The Rev easing up tempo-wise, but not to the point of fully disabling the click track. "I find that a lot of producers want things to snap to a grid or a click track—or completely the opposite, like just jamming on it," he says. "This time we found a middle ground. We wanted to be real loose with the click so that everything grooved a lot more. So I'd play with the click barely audible, and just wavered and jammed all over the place, as if it wasn't there. Then we'd use it as a reference later for cues for strings and things like that."

Despite the wide range of material, The Rev says that shifting from an acoustic ballad to a metallic marathon during the same recording session wasn't much of a problem. "It allows me to get real creative," he insists. "Like the second half of 'Unbound,' that was improvised on Roto-Toms. I got to cut loose a little bit and throw some shredding in there. It's really fun to switch gears every time."

Waleed Rashidi



Stephanie Pistel

Duran Duran's Roger TAYLOR Rolling On The Red Carpet

It shouldn't really be a surprise that Justin Timberlake, Timbaland, and Nate "Danja" Hills all have production credits on Duran Duran's new album, *Red Carpet Massacre*. After all, the band's four founding members—keyboardist Nick Rhodes, singer Simon Le Bon, bassist John Taylor, and drummer Roger Taylor—all original members (guitarist Andy Taylor declined to participate on the record)—have continuously been on the cutting edge of contemporary sound since their debut, twenty-nine years ago.

Roger Taylor describes the drum sounds on the new record as "a mixture of programming along with me playing a Roland V-Drum kit. We also mixed in quite a bit of organic drums. It's a real mish-mash of everything."

During the past three decades, the group—who *People* magazine at one time crowned "the prettiest band in rock"—has placed twenty-one singles on the Billboard Hot 100 and thirty on the Top 40 of the UK singles chart. The band has sold more than eighty-five million records, and they've won two Grammy Awards.

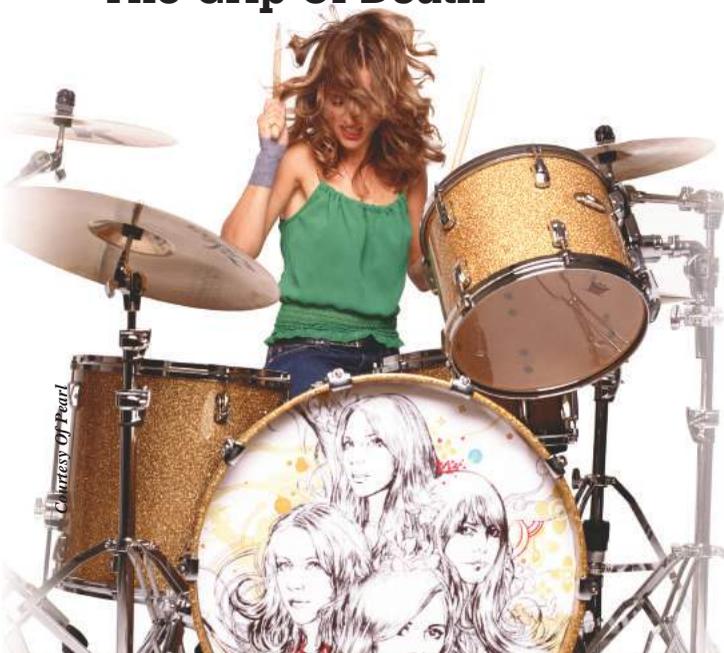
Duran Duran recently debuted their much-anticipated CD with a two-week run of shows on Broadway in New York City, playing past hits and tunes from the new recording. Taylor, who has always combined acoustic drums with electronics, again brought his studio wizardry to the stage. "I have my Tama acoustic kit set up in front of me," Taylor describes, "so I'll play some of the songs very organically on the 'real' kit. And for the first time, I've also got my full Roland TD-20 V-Drum kit set up to my left. I'm also triggering samples from the album."

Roger is happy and excited to be back in the band. He had exited the group years ago when the pressure of international superstardom forced him to step away. "The fame kind of overtook the music," Roger admits. "I joined the band because I wanted to be a *musician*, but it became all about being a celebrity. It got to the point where I thought, Okay, that's enough. Now that the years have gone by, I think our audience is more appreciative of the music."

For more of *MD's* interview with Roger, visit www.moderndrummer.com. And for more on the band, visit www.duranduran.com.

Billy Amendola

The Donnas' Torry CASTELLANO The Grip Of Death



Although Donnas drummer Torry Castellano still encourages the idea of being a self-taught musician, she's quick to admit that she had to learn the hard way that improper technique can cause serious problems. A few years ago, a bout with tendinitis rendered Torry out of commission for several months. After touring for over a year on her pop-punk band's 2002 release, *Spend The Night*, Castellano's problems became so severe that she had to undergo surgery and physical rehabilitation.

"When I got to physical therapy, they called it 'the grip of death,'" Torry recalls. "They were like, 'Oh no, you do *that*?' But it all ended up being really good. I learned a different technique, and I think I'm a better drummer because of it. It's all about letting the stick do the work. That way you're not going crazy, holding the stick so tightly that you're hurting yourself."

Besides applying the new technique, Torry began doing warm-up exercises and reconfigured her four-piece Pearl kit. Since then she's successfully (read: pain-free) recorded and toured behind two more Donnas albums, 2004's *Gold Medal* and their latest, the arena rock-flavored *Bitchin'*.

Castellano credits producer Jay Ruston (Meatloaf, Polyphonic Spree) for helping to shape her performance on this latest recording. "He definitely encouraged that four-on-the-floor type beat," she says, "which was a really good direction because I love that beat. But I was asking, 'Should I really put it in more than one song?' He was like, 'It sounds great.' And when we play those songs live, the rhythm really gets into people."

Castellano says she aimed for penetrating rock drum sounds as well, referencing the recordings of Def Leppard, Aerosmith, and Danzig. "I always loved the snare sound on the Danzig records," she says. "For a lot of people, it's way too dead. But for me, it really cuts through."

Castellano's advice to her fans—especially to young girls getting their start behind the kit—is to keep practicing and to not get discouraged. "It's something you've got to put time into," she says. "I also feel that, even now, some people say girls can't play drums. Ignore those comments. They're ridiculous."

Waleed Rashidi

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Roy Haynes (jazz giant): 3/13/25
D.J. Fontana (Elvis Presley): 3/15/31
Paul Motian (jazz great): 3/25/31
Graeme Edge (Moody Blues): 3/30/42
Ralph MacDonald (percussion great): 3/15/44
Micky Dolenz (*The Monkees*): 3/8/45
Harold Brown (*War*): 3/17/46
John Hartman (Doobie Brothers): 3/18/50

Carl Palmer (ELP, Asia): 3/20/50
James "Diamond" Williams (Ohio Players): 3/27/50
Kenny Aronoff (session great): 3/7/53
Tony Brock (*The Babys*): 3/31/54
Slim Jim Phantom (*Stray Cats*): 3/20/61
Michael Bland (Prince, *Soul Asylum*): 3/14/69
Brendan Hill (*Blues Traveler*): 3/27/70

Jim BOGIOS From Sheryl Crow To Counting Crows



Many drummers are aware that Jim Bogios left Sheryl Crow for Counting Crows back in 2003. But Jim hasn't really talked about the transition, until now. "I would never have considered leaving Sheryl unless it was for an opportunity to be a bandmember," the journeyman drummer says. "That was never going to happen with Sheryl, even though her gig featured me and it was as close to being a part of a band as you could ask—in that type of situation. It was my second family. So it was a big decision to leave. When I told Sheryl, she totally understood."

Though Jim recorded two new cuts included on Counting Crows' best-of disc, plus the song "Accidentally In Love" from the *Shrek 2* soundtrack, their new concept record, *Saturday Nights & Sunday Mornings*, is the first full-length he's done with the band. According to Jim, "The 'Saturday Nights' part was done in New York and is the more rocking, heavier-edged material. There's some really aggressive drumming on those tunes, with a lot of fills. One track is called 'Hanging Tree,' which has a great vibe and a lot of energy. 'Insignificant' is another that's pretty rocking, with a ton of drum fills."

"The 'Sunday Mornings' part was done in Berkeley, California," Jim continues, "and it features more of a mellow, moody side. That was a little more challenging. We were trying to get away from using the drumset, using alternate ways of playing, a lot of percussion, and other stuff. I played things like bells and hand percussion. On one tune, 'There Goes Everything,' I started stomping on a wood platform. On 'Le Ballet D'or,' I banged on piano wires. The tune also had a building tambourine part, which reminded me of what I used to do back in my classical days, playing the 'Nutcracker.' I was just set loose, musically."

The differences between the two Crows? "With Counting Crows, I'm more involved with everything," Jim admits. "I have more creative input and a say in the direction. Adam [Duritz] is the main writer in the band, but he'll bring in an idea and everyone will add to it. And while every idea might not be used, every one is listened to and tried. With Sheryl, one of the frustrations I had was that there were a lot of different drummers on her records. I would get my cuts, and that meant a lot to me, especially since there were guys in the band who *never* got to play on her records. But the bottom line is, I've always been a band person. With Counting Crows, we're all in it together."

Robyn Flans

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UPDATE NEWS

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Former Spyro Gyra drummer **Richie Morales** recently toured Russia with The Victor Bailey Group.

Julian Dorio is on the latest from The Whigs, *Mission Control*.

Vinnie Colaiuta, Dorian Crozier, Lee Levin, and Jeremy Lutito are on The Backstreet Boys' new disc, *Unbreakable*. **Aaron Spears** is touring with the band.

Rich Pagano, Joe Bonadio, Matt Johnson, and Shawn Pelton are on Dana Parish's *Uncrushed*.

Walter Williams, one of the founding members of legendary R&B group The O'Jays, has a new solo CD, *Smack Dab In The Middle*. It features

Buddy Williams and **Shawn Pelton** on drums.

Hawksley Workman produced and played drums on Jeremy Fisher's debut CD, *Goodbye Blue Monday*.

Brain and **John Dolmayan** share drum duties on System Of A Down singer Serj Tankian's solo album *Elect The Dead*.

Mark Sutor is on tour with June in support of their new album, *Make It Blur*.

Danny Frankel is on the new k.d. lang record, *Watershed*.

Tucker Rule is on the new CD/DVD set from Thursday, *Kill The House Lights*.

Yoshida Tatsuya is on *Bacchus*, the latest album by The Satoko Fujii Quartet.

Joe Crabtree is on *The Power Of Eternity*, the new album by Wishbone Ash.

The Cover, Queensrÿche's new—you guessed it—covers album, features the band's long-time drummer, **Scott Rockenfield**, on tracks like Pink Floyd's "Welcome To The Machine," U2's "Bullet The Blue Sky," and David Crosby's "Almost Cut My Hair."

De'Mar Hamilton is on the reissue of Plain White T's sophomore album, *Stop*.

Zach Lind is on *Chase The Light*, the new studio album by Jimmy Eat World.

Jay Bellerose is on Lisa Loeb's new CD, *Camp Lisa*.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Mike Gibbons of Badfinger was born on 3/12/49, **Karen Carpenter** on 3/2/50.

3/12/66: **Dave Getz** joins Big Brother & The Holding Company and debuts at The Matrix in San Francisco. Two years later, on 3/8/68, it's opening night at the former Village Theatre, renamed the Fillmore East in NYC, and Janis Joplin is the featured attraction with headliners Big Brother & The Holding Company.

3/15/69: Tommy Roe (with **Hal Blaine** on drums) has the number-one song on the charts with his single "Dizzy."

3/14/82: Metallica (with drummer and co-founder **Lars Ulrich**) makes their debut performance at Radio City in Anaheim, California.



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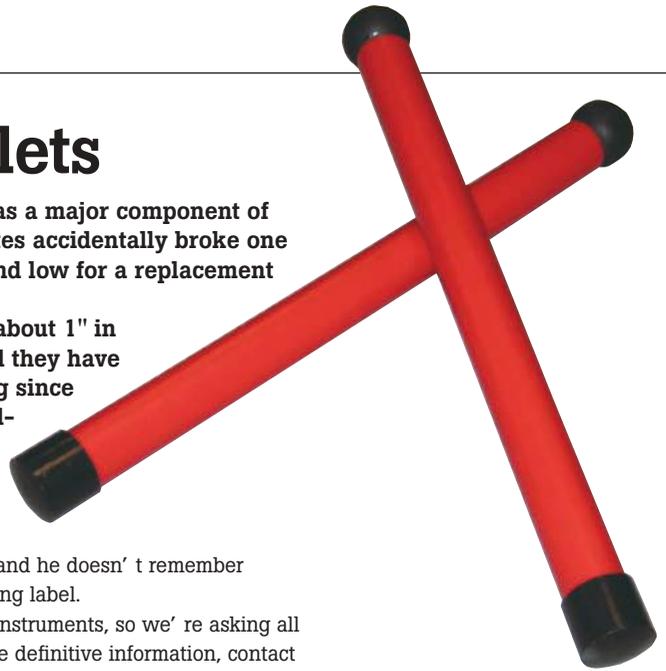
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Mystery Shaker/Mallets

For years I've used a set of tube-like shaker mallets as a major component of my sound. They held up well until one of my bandmates accidentally broke one of them while working out a beat. I've looked high and low for a replacement to no avail, so I'm hoping you can help.

The shaker/sticks are fairly thick red plastic tubes about 1" in diameter and 12" long. They're filled with beads, and they have a rubber mallet head on one end. The labels have long since worn away, so I have no idea who made them originally. Any info on these would be greatly appreciated.

Leon Daniel

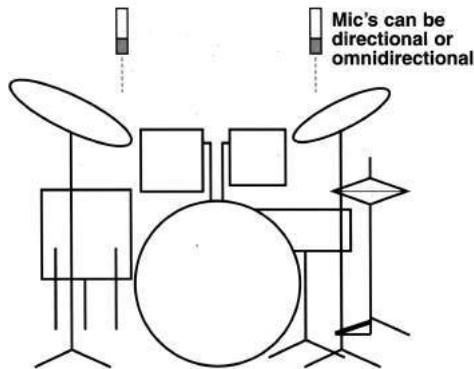


As chance would have it, MD managing editor Adam Budofsky has a pair of shaker/mallets exactly like the ones you describe—and he doesn't remember where they came from, either. Like yours, they have no identifying label.

We've been unable to pin down the origin of these unusual instruments, so we're asking all MD readers for assistance on this question. If anyone can provide definitive information, contact senior editor Rick Van Horn at rvh@moderndrummer.com. We'll run your answer, and you'll receive an MD cooler for your efforts!

Overhead Mic Placement

Spaced Pair (AB) Miking



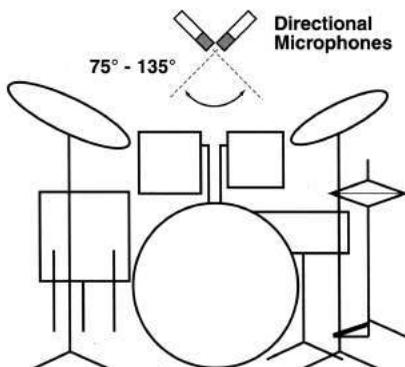
This arrangement gives good separation and strong stereo imaging. Check for phase problems by summing to mono.

Please help clarify overhead microphone placement for me. I recently purchased two Audix 1245-A Micro series mics, on their carbon fiber MicroBooms. I've read an extensive list of placement suggestions, including both microphones together facing out, and both facing in. Some suggest placing one mic between the hi-hat and the snare, and the other at the transition point between the rack and floor toms. Is there a placement that would serve as an all-purpose location for general use in my small home studio?

Mitchell Tobias

We forwarded your question to MD's studio guru, Mark Parsons. He replies, "Any of the placement options you mention will give you results that might work for you, depending on a wide range of variables. Having said that, in your situation the most universal setup would be to use the mics as 'traditional' overheads (in conjunction with a kick mic) rather than as quasi-close mics.

Coincident Pair (XY) Miking



This arrangement yields a natural stereo image with no phase problems because all sounds arrive at each microphone simultaneously.

"I've used the Audix MicroBooms (with 1290 mics, which are similar to your 1245s) and had very good results with various overhead techniques: a spaced-pair array (sometimes called AB), coincident pair (XY), and near-coincident pair. The spaced-pair (one mic over the left side of your kit and one over the right, with several feet between them and both pointing down) can give you a wide stereo image, but it can also give you phase problems. The coincident pair puts both mics together over the kit (the capsules are as close to being in the same space as possible, hence the name), with the mics at about a 90° angle to each other. Near-coincident placement has the mics spaced 6" to 12" apart, angled down and out towards the drumset as with the XY placement.

"Advantages to the latter two methods—besides a realistic representation of the drumset—would be good mono compatibility and mitigation of the phase issues that can occur with a more widely spaced pair. So in terms of a starting point, I'd begin with the near-coincident pair method, with an additional mic on the kick. However (and you knew this was coming), the best thing is to simply experiment and see what works for you, your drums, your room, and your music. Good luck!"

Cymbal Repair

I have a Zildjian K Custom ride cymbal with a crack that extends in from the edge for a few inches. It was an expensive purchase, and it's one of my favorite cymbals, so I'm reluctant to just write it off as ruined. I seem to recall a story that MD ran some years back about a craftsman who does customizing and repairs on cymbals. Is he still in business, and, if so, how can I contact him?

Milan Lassiter

The craftsman you refer to is Mike Skiba. He was profiled in a Shop Talk story in the March 2003 issue of Modern Drummer. Mike is definitely still in business, working out of his shop in Brick, New Jersey. You can contact him by email at bubbalooster@aol.com.



Cymbal repair expert Mike Skiba

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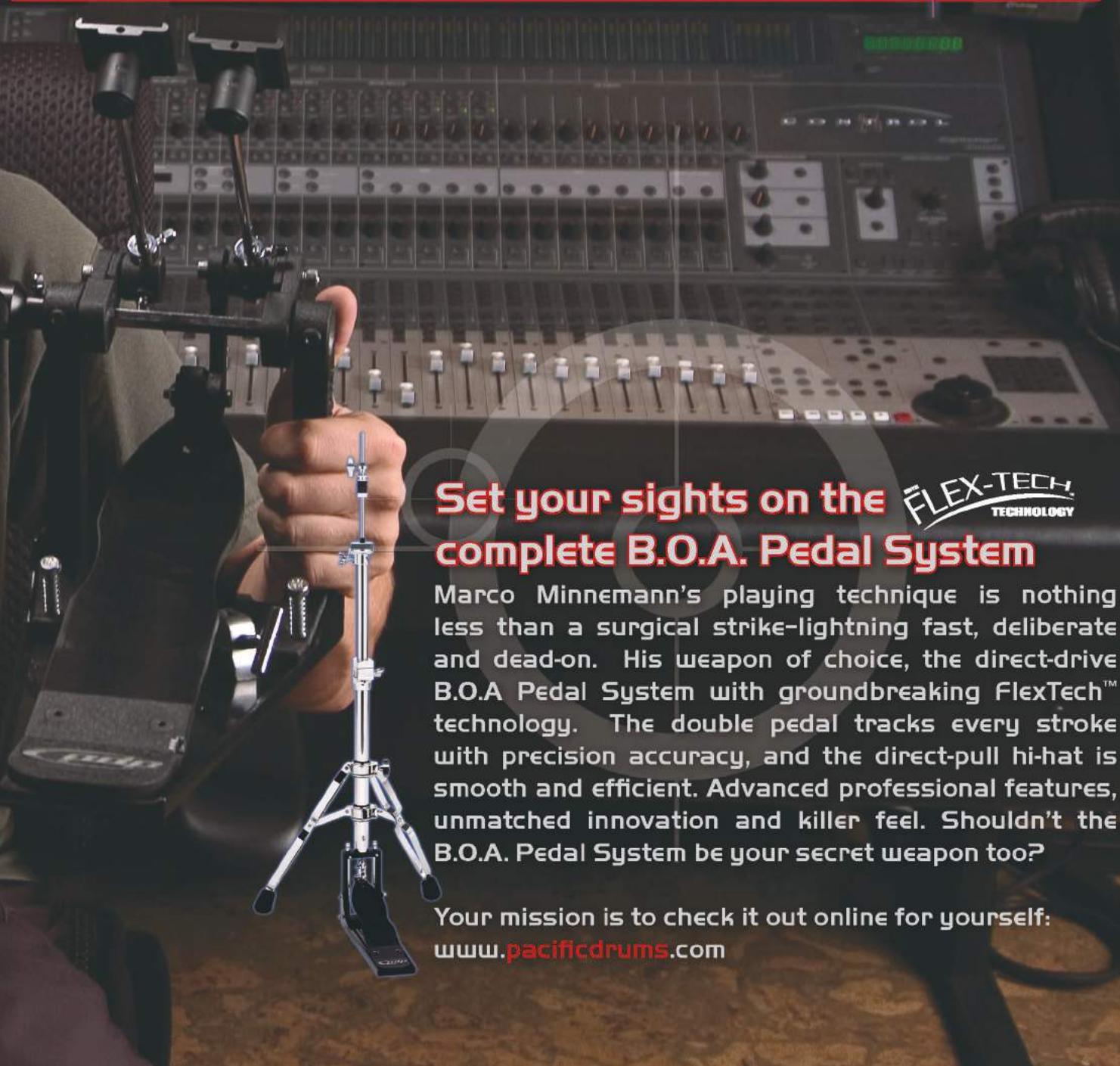


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Ludwig Legacy Classic Kit

>> The Sound Of History

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Recreates classic Ludwig '60s acoustic character
- Rock sizes produce a huge sound
- Drums can sound even better with different heads

I can sum up the character of Ludwig's new Legacy Classic series in seven words: Ringo Starr's drums were made like these.

Actually, so were Ginger Baker's, Hal Blaine's, and those of dozens of other top drummers from the 1960s and early '70s. In a nutshell, Ludwig has designed and crafted the Legacy Classic series "to recreate the classic tone of the world's most famous drums."

Drum Construction

The key characteristics that give Legacy Classic drums their historic quality are the shell construction and the bearing edges. The shells are what Ludwig calls "new and improved versions" of '60s-era reinforced 3-ply models. Like those original shells, the Legacy Classic shells are made from 1/16"-thick inner and outer plies of North American maple, with a core ply of 1/8"-thick North American poplar. The shells are fitted with 1/4"-thick maple reinforcement hoops.

The ply thicknesses on the Legacy Classics aren't drum-industry standard. So they have to be custom-created by Ludwig's wood supplier. Once the wood reaches Ludwig's factory in Monroe, North Carolina, it must undergo a special acclimation process in order to be bent in Ludwig's molds to create drumshells. Without this process, the plies would be too thick to bend properly and might split. So although Legacy Classic shells use less wood and are thinner overall than many other high-end drums, more labor is required to create them.

The wood for the maple reinforcement hoops must also go through the same acclimation process. When these hoops are fitted into the 3-ply shells, the result is a virtually custom-crafted drum series.

After the shells have been formed, they're given rounded, Class-Cut vintage-style bearing edges. This maximizes head-to-shell contact to bring more of the shell's resonance into the overall drum sound.

Legacy Classic drums come fitted with low-mass Mini-Classic lugs, traditional Keystone badges, and Ludwig's own Weathermaster drumheads. Toms feature heavy single-ply clear batters and medium-weight single-ply bottom heads; the bass drum comes with a clear Power Collar batter and a smooth white front head with a small Ludwig script logo. Rack toms are equipped with Ludwig's newly streamlined Vibra-Band suspension mounts. These have less mass than previous versions, which is a bonus in terms of resonance and appearance.

Two Legacy Classic shell-pack configurations (with no snare drum or hardware) are being offered. We got the model #LLC3424XX for review. It's a big rock kit that features an 18x24 bass drum, a 10x13



The classic '60s-era Ludwig drum sound has been replicated through the use of 3-ply maple/poplar/maple shells with maple reinforcement hoops and vintage-style bearing edges.



This Legacy Classic four-piece shell-pack configuration features a 24" bass drum and power-size toms. (The snare drum and stands are not included.) It's shown in the Emerald Fade Sparkle finish created for the line.

rack tom, and 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms. The other configuration (model #LLC3225XX) offers an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, and 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms. Component drums are also available.

The kits were originally introduced with two unique lacquer finishes: a high-gloss, hand-rubbed Emerald Fade Sparkle (which we received) and Rose/Copper Sparkle. Vintage sparkle wrap finishes in Champagne, Red, Green, and Silver have recently been added.

A Big Sound

The first time I played the Legacy Classic kit in MD's product testing room, my colleague Billy Amendola walked in, listened for thirty seconds, and then remarked, "That's a big drum sound. And it definitely has that classic Ludwig character."

What exactly is that character? To my mind, it's a loud and lively sound, with an emphasis on clarity. There's plenty of depth, especially considering our review kit's large shell sizes, and there's a certain amount of warmth provided by the thin maple/poplar shells



The Legacy Classic is also available in a five-piece shell pack. The kit shown here features the Rose/Copper Sparkle finish.

and vintage-style rounded bearing edges. But mainly there's attack and projection. The thing I've always felt about Ludwig drums (and I'm old enough to have played the original '60s-era models) is that they always put everything out there. Every bit of tone, every bit of volume, every bit of attack goes out of the drums and into the ears of the audience, or into the microphones. To use a cliché from today's political scene, the Ludwig sound is very "transparent." You get it all.

Head Case

All that being said, we did question the choice of heads for the Legacy Classic kit. Frankly, one can debate whether Ludwig's own Weathermaster heads meet the standard set by the major aftermarket drumhead brands. But even assuming that they do, the choice of heavy, one-ply clear tom batters seems strange. If historic authenticity is the goal, most drumkits in the late '60s came equipped with medium-weight, single-ply coated heads. If, on the other hand, Ludwig is trying to be more contemporary—looking for a deeper tonality and greater durability against the impact that drummers play with today—then the drums should probably be equipped with heavier-duty clear 2-ply heads.

To test our theory, we first fitted the toms with coated Remo Ambassador batters. The bigness of the drums remained, but the sound was a little dryer, with even more emphasis on stick attack. This came even closer to the classic '60s sound. Conversely, when we equipped the toms with two-ply clear Evans G2s, the tonal depth and overall warmth of the toms was enhanced. Bottom line: The Legacy Classic toms sounded good with their original heads. They sounded even better with different heads, with the choice of model depending on what acoustic character was being sought.

A Big Boomer

The bass drum was another matter. Its single-ply batter head with a self-muffling ring was similar to popular models from several manufacturers. Likewise, its smooth-white resonant head (also with a muffling ring) was comparable to other front bass drum heads. Both tuned up well, giving the drum lots of resonance and plenty of attack, with just enough control to eliminate the need for additional muffling, without reducing any of the drum's sheer bigness. After all, if you're going to play an 18x24 bass drum, you're not likely to be looking for a "tight, punchy" sound. This drum is about the big boom, and it delivers accordingly. If you want a little less boom and

a little more punch, a small hole in the front head will do the trick. (We tried it...and it did.)

In The Eye Of The Beholder

You can't look at drums as big as those on our review kit and not think "rock 'n' roll." And the kit's big sound certainly reinforces that impression. That being the case, the MD editors all sort of scratched our heads at the Emerald Fade Sparkle finish.

Of course, any drum finish is a subjective matter. And, in fact, we all liked the Emerald Fade's basic deep green sparkle. But that color fades into a very pale greenish-white, with just a hint of the sparkle visible. And the transition isn't so much a "fade" as it is a two-tone approach: The deep green turns pretty abruptly into the paler color, with just a soft edge in between them.

We wonder whether the Emerald Fade Sparkle will appeal to the sort of drummers likely to be drawn to a big rock kit like this—especially since the labor-intensive finishing process adds significantly to the cost of the drums. Honestly, we think the "vintage-style" sparkle wrap finishes will have broader appeal. (They're less expensive, too.)

The Bottom Line

The Legacy Classic kit sounds great, with an acoustic character that really does evoke the sonic heritage of its '60s-era Ludwig forebears. It's well made, and its thin shells make the drums light to carry despite their large size. And whether you like its finish or not, that finish is

beautifully applied. So what's the bottom line?

Well...it's all about the bottom line. Legacy Classic drums are undeniably expensive. The four-piece shell-pack we reviewed lists for \$5,699; the five-piece shell pack lists for \$6,599. Those prices are the result of all the special materials, construction processes, and labor that go into the creation of the drums. And, to be fair, they're not out of line with prices for ultra high-end drums from other manufacturers. Also, potential buyers can reduce the cost by selecting one of the vintage sparkle wrap finishes.

It boils down to desire. If you want drums that produce a historic sound while offering contemporary functionality and construction quality, the Legacy Classic kit offers that combination of features. How much is that combination worth to you?

THE NUMBERS

Legacy Classic four-piece shell pack (as reviewed)	\$5,699
Includes an 18x24 bass drum, a 10x13 rack tom, and 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms. No snare drum or stands. Hand-rubbed lacquer finish.	
Legacy Classic as above, with vintage wrap finish	\$4,595
Legacy Classic five-piece shell pack (not reviewed)	\$6,599
Includes an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, and 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms. No snare drum or stands. Hand-rubbed lacquer finish.	
Legacy Classic as above, with vintage wrap finish	\$5,095
www.ludwig-drums.com	



GEORGE WAY 5x14 STUDIO

HOW'S IT SOUND?

Drum builder Ronn Dunnett recently acquired the rights to the renowned George Way drum company. To celebrate the re-launch, four snare drum lines have been created: the Legacy (featuring a 3-ply shell with reinforcement rings), the Advance (reinforced maple), the Hollywood (chromed brass), and the Studio (4-ply maple/milkwood shell with 3-ply reinforcement rings). We were sent a 6 1/2 x 14 Hollywood and a 5x14 Studio for review. Although the Hollywood proved to be one of the best-sounding brass drums I've ever played (it ended up being used on every track of a recent recording session), we decided to take a closer look at the Studio, which is modeled after the original George Way/early Camco design.

Sonically, the Studio model has a lot of vintage character. In fact, my first reaction after playing the drum—which I had tuned medium with tight snare tension—was that it reminded me of Roy Haynes' classic

papery snare tone from his albums *We Three* and *Out Of The Afternoon*. And unlike most contemporary drums, which often sound very clean and pure, the Studio has a complex timbre with a lot of resonance. So if you don't like a snare with some "honk," you'll need to tame the overtones with a muffling ring or tape. Personally, I enjoyed being able to evoke such a wide variety of textures by adjusting where I hit the drum—it made me much more conscious of the *sound* I was creating with my left-hand comping. I also found a funky Billy Martin-type vibe when I tightened the head, loosened the snares, and went for off-center rimshots.

The George Way Studio snare is a classic-sounding instrument. Although it's not a drum you'd go to for super loud gigs or for a low-pitched fatback sound, it would work great in jazz, acoustic funk, or other medium- to low-volume situations.

The simple 845 strainer has the throw-off on one end and the tension adjustment thumb-screw on the other.



WHAT'S IT COST? **\$659**

www.waydrums.com

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



The Xs20 series represents a quantum leap forward in professional performance at a mid-price level.

Sabian “New Look” Xs20 Cymbals

>> It's All About The Grooves

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Medium-thin crashes and hats have good spread and penetration
- 18" China is musical and versatile
- All Rock weight models are loud and strong

When Sabian launched the Xs20 line in 2003, it was touted as the first mid-priced cymbal series made from professional-level B20 alloy and a “cast” bronze design. The line’s affordability was achieved by using a combination of machine and hand production steps to create the cymbals.

One of those production steps was minimal “line” lathing that gave the surface of the cymbals a somewhat flat appearance and contributed to a certain lack of nuance in their sound. According to MD’s July 2003 review, the Xs20s sounded bright and cutting, but they weren’t as sibilant or expressive as more heavily lathed cymbals would be.

Sabian has re-introduced the Xs20 series with what they’re calling “a new look”—the result of more defined “wide-blade” lathing. This lathing definitely gives the Xs20 series a more professional appearance. Were it not for the large printed logo, you probably couldn’t tell the new



Xs20s from Sabian's professional AA or Hand Hammered models. But has that lathing also improved the Xs20s' sonic performance? Let's find out.

Hi-Hats

Xs20 hi-hats come in 13" and 14" medium and 14" Rock pairs. (We were sent only the 14" size in each weight range.) As is common today, each pair has one cymbal that's a little lighter than the other (generally used as the top and bottom cymbals, respectively). The cymbals aren't actually marked as "top" or "bottom," but the weight differential is pretty easy to discern.

The medium hats were pitched medium-high. They were bright, but not clangy, with good projection and a respectable "chick"

sound. They offered no dark undertones or breathy nuances, so they wouldn't be the hats to use for a smoky jazz setting. But they would be quite usable in any pop, funk, or moderate-volume rock setting. In fact, except for their limited frequency range, these hats didn't sound "mid-priced" at all.

The 14" Rock hats took things up a notch in weight, power, and volume. And they took things down an equal amount in terms of any remaining subtlety or sonic nuance. These hats are all about projection, with decent sibilance, a strong "chick," and a terrific half-open "sloshy" sound. And let's face it: High-volume playing usually doesn't need hats with layers of undertones. Rockers want a strong, clear hi-hat ride pulse, and the occasional punctuating "bark." The Xs20 Rock hats would deliver these characteristics in spades.

Chinese Cymbal & Splashes

The sounds produced by the 10" and 12" splashes belied their size and thinness. They sounded robust, full-bodied, and a bit clangy, with quite a bit of sustain. (Surprisingly, this was more prevalent on the 10" model than on the 12"—probably because the 12" had a little more surface area with which to let the sound "spread.") These characteristics would make the Xs20 splashes effective in medium- to high-volume pop/rock settings, where the splash sound would need to be heard amidst a lot of sonic competition. But the cymbals lacked the airy delicacy that would make them useful in softer situations.

Conversely, the 18" Chinese cymbal had characteristics that might make it useful in almost any situation. Some drummers prefer extremely aggressive, trashy-crashy sounding Chinas. Others want some splashy China character, but with a bit more of the musicality of a traditional crash. The latter description seems to fit the Xs20 Chinese. It has a sharp crash tonality that's distinctly different from those of the other Xs20 crashes, but not so out of character as to be abrasive or caustic. It also has a bit more sustain than is often heard with Chinas—which may be good or bad, depending on your point of view. And jazzbos note: When turned right-side-up, the Xs20 Chinese served very respectably as a low- to moderate-volume pang/ride that could also be crashed to good effect. This is a very versatile cymbal.

Rides

The 20" medium ride seemed to personify the characteristics that Sabian uses to describe the Xs20 series: bright and cutting. As such, it's fairly one-dimensional, producing a basic ride sound that's clear, loud, a little clangy, and fairly high-pitched, with no undertones to speak of. (I could get a darker, deeper sound by playing the cymbal less than 1" in from the edge, but this quickly built up a roar as the edge started to vibrate.)

I was impressed with how well the stick attack sat clearly atop the rest of the cymbal's sound, at any impact or volume level. That sound was dryer with a wood-tip stick, and much clangier and more penetrating with a nylon-tipped model. So you could take your pick according to your need at the time. I was also impressed with the bell sound, which was bright and clean—especially considering that the bell seemed a little small for the size of the cymbal. Good sound...small target.

That was definitely not the case with the 20" Rock ride. It had a much bigger bell, with killer sonority and volume. In fact, volume is

what this cymbal is all about. Its overall sonic performance is just what you'd expect from a "Rock" designation: high-pitched, clear, pingy, loud—and just a lot of fun to play hard and fast on. Continuous riding created a high-frequency build-up with an underlying darker roar, but this never obscured the stick attack. Frankly, this cymbal was about as good a "Rock" ride as I've heard in any line at any price.

Crashes

I've saved the best for last. I was extremely impressed by the acoustic qualities of the 16" and 18" medium thin crashes, as well as the 18" crash-ride. They were the best of the batch in terms of sonic range and versatility. Like all Xs20 models they lean toward the bright side, with no dark undertones. But they had excellent sibilance and spread, with moderate explosiveness that wouldn't overpower the music, despite the high-frequency emphasis. The 16" crash had a relatively quick decay for punctuation; the 18" had a longer sustain that would support big chords.

As is often the case, the 18" crash-ride seemed better suited as a big, powerful crash than as a small ride cymbal. It certainly could be used as a very bright, clean-sounding ride at a low impact/volume level, but it's rare for that sort of sound to be appropriate in that sort of situation. On the other hand, it might be a good choice for use in thrashy, punky ride situations where riding on a regular crash might not produce enough rhythmic definition. It does have a big, domed bell, which could be used to good effect.

As a trio, the 16" and 18" medium-thin crashes and the 18" crash-ride made a very good melodic ensemble. They also worked very well with the medium hats, offering a consistent tonal charac-

ter that could serve in a wide variety of musical applications.

The 16" and 18" Rock crashes trade all-purpose versatility for power and projection. They aren't as sibilant or expressive as the medium-thins, but they're much more explosive, with higher pitches and more sustain. Just what the doctor ordered for loud stage situations.

Summing Up

The question with "mid-priced" cymbal lines is always: What's the target market? If it's exclusively young, rock-oriented drummers, that limits the focus to affordable cymbals that are long on volume and durability, but short on musicality. By default, this excludes a huge group of semi-pro and professional drummers—of any age—who play in a wide variety of styles requiring versatile cymbals, and who have an equal appreciation for affordability.

The re-vamped, wide-lathed, "new look" Xs20 series has something to offer to all of these drummers. If you're one of them, you owe it to yourself to check this new line out.

THE NUMBERS

10" Splash	\$122
12" Splash	\$125
13" Hi-Hats (not reviewed)	\$263
14" Hi-Hats	\$286
16" Crash	\$189
18" Crash, crash-ride, and China	\$216
20" Ride	\$256

Xs20 cymbals are available in regular finish only. All cymbal models are priced the same, by size. Cymbals are also available in several box sets, including a Complete Set that comes with a free hard-shell case.

www.sabian.com

Quick Looks

BEATO PRO I HARDWARE BAGS WITH WHEELS

by Rick Van Horn

Beato pretty much established the genre of roadworthy drum and hardware bags back in the early 1980s. Their American-made Pro I line features 3-ply construction using heavy-duty black Tolex and 5/8" foam padding. Drum bags have black fleece interiors; hardware bags have smooth, rip-resistant Tolex interiors. All bags feature heavy-duty stitching with nylon thread, nail rivets for reinforcement, oversized zipper pulls, and extra-strong web handles.

Beato's latest introduction is Pro I hardware bags with wheels. Of course, wheeled hardware bags aren't a new concept, but Beato has taken them further into the heavy-duty realm than have most other manufacturers. To begin with, instead of small, "luggage-style" hard plastic wheels set into two corners of the bag, the Pro I wheels are oversized neoprene skate-type models, set on a strong steel axle that spans the full width of each bag. The wheels sit well outside the bag itself, providing a "wide track" wheelbase that helps to keep the bag from tipping over while moving. Admittedly, this makes the bags look a little clunky, and it also makes them a little tricky to fit into tight storage spaces. But the wide track and oversized wheels also let the bags negotiate rough terrain, curbs, and other obstacles more easily than other wheeled bags can.

The other nifty feature of the Pro I wheeled bags is their reinforced bases. Some wheeled bags have no such base at all, and others have thin tag-board or composite bases that tend to fold up pretty quickly under a heavy load. The result is that when you pick up one end of the loaded bag to roll it, it sags in the middle, making it difficult to maneuver. Not so with the Beato bags. Their heavy rigid bottoms never flexed under a load.

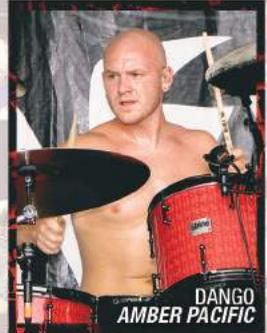
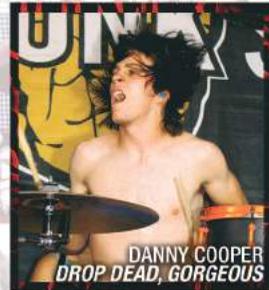
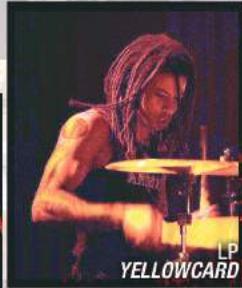
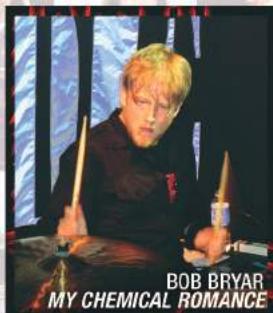
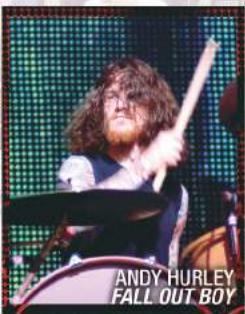
At first I was a little bothered by the placement of each bag's zipper, which runs down the middle of the top of the bag and just over each end. Frankly, this made the bags a little hard to hold open while taking hardware

out or putting it in. I would have preferred a zipper that went horizontally around the top edges of the bag, so it would open like a lid. But Fred Beato explained that the centrally located zippers (and the heavy-duty reinforced corners) gave the bags greater rigidity for rolling. After using the bags on several gigs, I came to appreciate what he meant. Each loaded bag moved more like a solid road case than a soft-sided container. (And I got used to getting my stands in and out of the bags fairly quickly.)

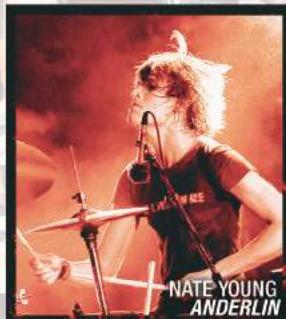
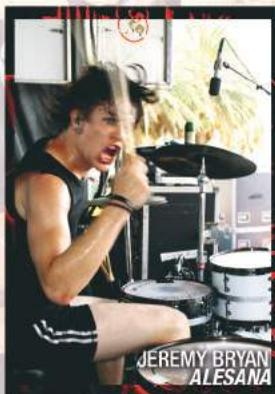
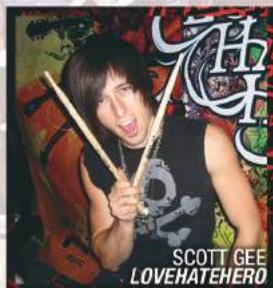
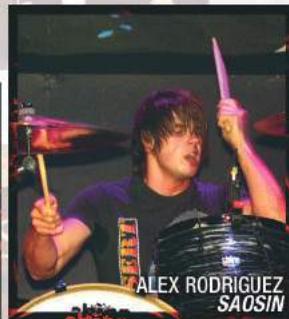
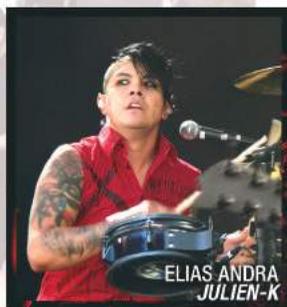
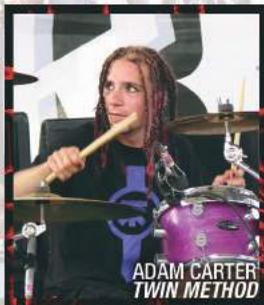
Pro I bags with wheels come in small (10" x 12" x 25"), medium (10" x 12" x 36"), and large (10" x 12" x 47") sizes. Their list prices (\$166, \$182, and \$194, respectively) are liable to be significantly discounted at most major retailers. And that's a nice thing, because one (or more) of them could very likely make your equipment-schlepping life a lot easier.

www.beatobags.com





SOME FAMILIES YOU'RE BORN INTO SOME YOU CHOOSE WELCOME TO THE FAMILY



DW Jazz Series Kit

>> Retro With A Twist

by Michael Dawson



This Jazz Series configuration, in Regal To Royal Blue Fade finish, includes the "Banana" tom mount and bass drum-mounted cymbal holder that were on our review kit. It's shown with the same 6000 series stands that accompanied that kit.

KEY NOTES

- Many sweet spots across entire tuning range.
- Kick Stand bass drum lifter allows you to hit the center of the head without lowering your beater height.
- Die-cast hoops add to the kit's focused and punchy sound.
- Ride mount has limited positioning flexibility.

After hearing DW artist Carl Allen demonstrate his melodic drumming concepts on some new Jazz Series drums during our interview for the November '07 issue of MD, we decided we'd better get a set into the office to make sure it wasn't just the master drummer's impeccable touch that made them sound so sweet. And with all due respect to Carl, we discovered that this certainly was not the case.

As the name implies, DW's Jazz Series drums are designed to achieve the tightly tuned, melodic tone that most jazz players are looking for. Most of the time, this type of sound is best achieved on vintage instruments that were intended to produce a warm, round tone at lower volumes. In response, the designers at DW took components of those coveted kits, gave them some modern tweaks, and reassembled them into their own version of the "perfect" jazz sound.

The Old With The New

Our review set, which came in DW' s unique Rainbow Twisted finish, consists of hybrid maple/gum shells (without reinforcing rings) with slightly rounded bearing edges. The configuration featured common jazz-sized toms—an 8x12 rack and a 14x14 floor—both of which came with coated Remo Ambassadors top and bottom. The snare was a 5x14, which is also popular among beboppers due to its quick response and dynamic sensitivity. The 16x18 bass drum, however, is deeper than most vintage-style kicks. The additional 2" of depth turned out to be a great modification, adding extra "oomph" to the tone, even when the drum was tuned up high.

The hardware on these drums is also a combination of retro concepts and modern engineering. The snare and toms are outfitted with die-cast hoops, which is an idea borrowed from the Gretsch handbook. The rack tom features DW' s slick, low-profile suspension system that' s unobtrusive and stays out of the way during positioning. The floor tom has standard leg mounts that are held in place with memory locks. And the snare drum comes with Dunnett' s R-Class throw-off, which allows the lever to be rotated 180° for optimal positioning.

The bass drum is outfitted with several features worth mentioning. The first of those is the height-adjustable Kick Stand. This unique piece of hardware, which is designed to elevate the batter side of the drum for a more centered striking point, slides into a metal bracket on the underside of the drum. The pedal then attaches to the lip of the Kick Stand, rather than to the drum' s hoop. That hoop features a scalloped cutout to allow the pedal to be positioned close to the head.

The Kick Stand has about 1 1/2" of height adjustment, which should give you enough headroom to bring the drum up to the right level. (Extra-long telescoping spurs support the front of the drum.) We were surprised, however, to see that

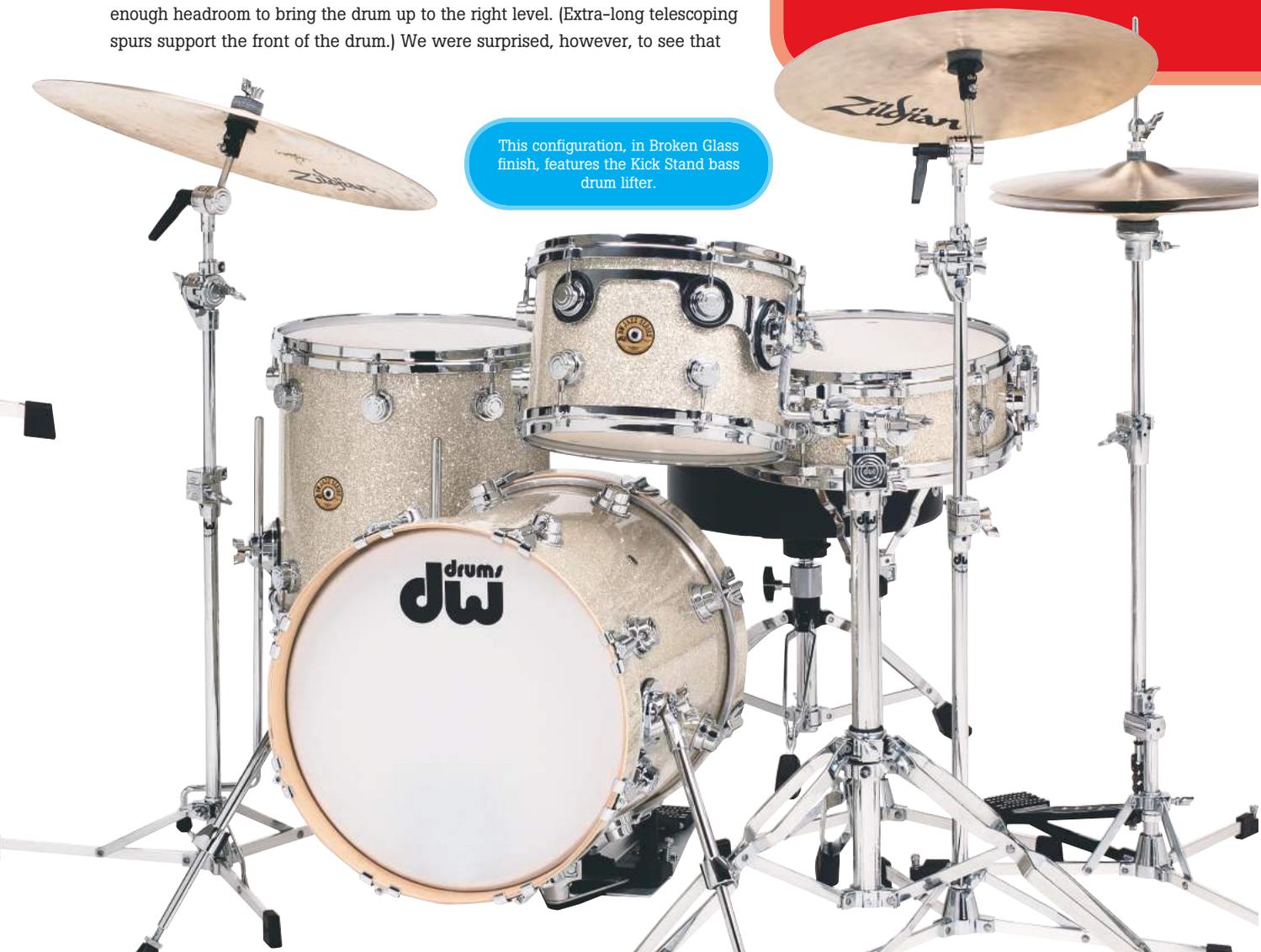
A Word About 6000 Series Hardware

Although not included as part of the Jazz Series kit, DW sent along a set of their flat-based 6000 Series hardware and a 9000 Series bass drum pedal to facilitate our review. The 9000 Series pedal is simply one of the best we've ever played. It's everything you'd want in a pedal: smooth, silent, powerful, fast, and stable. Enough said.

The 6000 Series hardware, on the other hand, is cool because of its low weight and simple functionality. But you might run into some positioning problems if you use the entire line. In particular, the flat base of the snare stand made it difficult to slide the drum under the rack tom without the stand legs coming in contact with the bass drum pedal. We had similar issues with the hi-hat stand. It wasn't impossible to get into place, but it did require some extra finagling.

The straight and straight/boom stands were much easier to work with. Both stands feature memory locks and a fine-toothed filter with a drumkey-operated filter lock. The boom stand's boom arm is quite short (about 10"), so it won't be able to fly too far overhead. But it did provide enough flexibility to position a crash cymbal over the ride mount. These cymbal stands would work well in conjunction with conventional tripod-based hardware because their flat bases can sneak under the legs of other stands.

This configuration, in Broken Glass finish, features the Kick Stand bass drum lifter.



This configuration features the Rainbow Twisted Exotic finish that was on our review kit.



there isn't a thumbscrew or memory lock to hold the Kick Stand in place. Although we didn't experience any slippage during playing, if you have to move your bass drum, the pedal can easily slide out of position.

The other two interesting hardware items on the Jazz Series are the tom and ride-cymbal mounting systems. The rail-style tom mount (dubbed the "banana" mount), is reminiscent of similar systems found on vintage kits, but modernized for better performance. The mount has multiple joints, which allows for greater positioning flexibility than was possible with its vintage predecessors. The vertical post can be angled toward or away from you. It can also be moved horizontally along the tube that's attached to the shell of the drum, and the tilter joint at the base of the vertical post can be adjusted. The knurled L-arm that attaches to the tom can also be moved around to adjust the angle of the drum.

Overall, the banana mount worked well. We were able to find comfortable drum positions fairly quickly. And once the mount was stabilized with the supplied memory locks, it stayed in place with minimal drum bounce. The drawbacks of this type of system include limited height flexibility (the drum was only able to go up to shoulder height), right-handed-only positioning, and potential slippage if the memory locks aren't tightened securely. The bass drum can also be pulled off balance if the tom is positioned all the way to the left.

The bass drum-mounted ride cymbal holder also has its pros and cons. The upside is that by being able to attach your ride to your bass drum, your setup is more compact and easier to transport than if you use a full stand. The downside is that there's limited positioning flexibility. The cymbal holder, which attaches to the shell of the bass

drum through a floor-tom leg bracket, can't go lower than shoulder height unless you rotate the arm to the side. But by doing that, you move the cymbal further away from you to the right. Those issues aside, the basic position that the cymbal arm does provide worked fine as a general ride-cymbal placement.

I Hear A Song Coming On

A guitarist friend of mine once said that he only purchases an instrument if he feels like there's a song waiting for him inside of it. I feel the same way about drums. Regardless of their quality, price, or reputation, if I feel inspired to play new ideas from the moment I sit behind a set of drums, I know I've found something special. The Jazz Series kit is one of those instruments.

The timbre of these drums was very consistent across the board, making them sound like a strong cohesive unit. Across all tunings, the pitch was pure and centered, and the overtones were slightly controlled. As a result, these drums tune up very quickly, with no need for muffling—unless you wanted to dry up the resonance even further. Each drum also had

a punchy attack that gave a lot of weight and presence to the sound. At high jazz tunings, this added much-appreciated body to the tone. At lower tunings, this quality added a strong gut-punch that would make any funk drummer smile. The 14" floor tom sounded especially strong when tuned just above the point of wrinkles in the head. The pitch wouldn't go as low as other "contemporary" drums, but for some reason it felt bigger and fuller.

When the bass drum was tuned up and left wide open, it had one of the purest jazz tones I've ever heard. And when I tuned it low and muffled it with a towel between the pedal and the batter head, I couldn't help but do my best Zigaboo Modeliste impression. It was that funky.

Final Thoughts

It didn't take long to discover that DW's Jazz Series drums are very special instruments (even in the hands of someone without Carl Allen's golden touch). Although they might appear to be a throw-back to the bygone bebop era, these are in fact top-notch contemporary instruments based on some of the qualities that made classic American drums so special. So if you're searching for that perfect vintage bebop kit, maybe it's time to give eBay a rest and head down to your local drumshop to give these bad boys a whirl. You might just find even more than you were looking for.

THE NUMBERS

Jazz Series (in Rainbow Twisted finish)

16x18 bass drum\$2,659.99
14x14 floor tom\$1,732.00
8x12 rack tom\$1,360.00
5x14 snare\$1,158.00

Prices vary with finish.

6000 Series Flush-Base Hardware

6710 straight stand\$116.99
6700 straight/boom stand\$132.99
6300 snare stand\$132.99

9000 Series bass drum pedal ..\$433.99

www.dwdrums.com



EPOCH HAS THE VINTAGE SOUND
THAT I'VE ALWAYS LOVED

LENNY WHITE

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Roland HD-1 V-Drums Lite

All In One, And Lots Of Fun

by Billy Amendola and Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Compact all-in-one design
- Reasonably quiet performance
- Limited positioning options
- Few "real" drum sounds



The HD-1 V-Drums Lite, complete with all options and ready to rock...quietly.

Roland's new HD-1 V-Drums Lite kit is based on the same technology that has made Roland's V-Drums electronic drumkits so successful. But it's designed to be much simpler to use. In fact, it's literally a "plug and play" instrument; you can be wailing on it ten minutes after you take it out of the box.

The HD-1 is specifically crafted to be incredibly quiet to play on, with newly designed bass drum/hi-hat pedals, cushioned

tom pads, and a snare pad with a tunable mesh head. It's also designed to be compact, with every component mounted on a single pedestal-style frame. Roland believes that between the HD-1's silence and its tiny footprint, it's ideal for apartments and other situations where acoustic drums can't be played. The whole kit can be folded up and put away in minutes, and it's light enough to pop it into your car (carefully) and take to a friend's house to jam.

The HD-1 is equipped with an input for connecting a CD play-

er, iPod, or other external audio device so that you can jam along to your favorite songs—listening to the kit and your audio source through headphones or an external amplifier. (Roland offers the compact, stylish, and moderate-volume PM-01 as an option with the HD-1 kit.) But while much of the HD-1's design is derived from concepts used in the V-Drums series, there's no sound modeling with this kit—all the sounds are sample-based. Which means you get what you're given.

The Kit Configuration

Physically, the HD-1 includes two pedals (one of which serves as a hi-hat or a second kick pedal), a mesh-head snare pad, three tom pads, two cymbal pads, and a hi-hat pad. In addition to the music-in jack, there are output jacks for a headphone and for an external amp, and a 5-pin MIDI Out connector. The unit is powered by a nine-volt AC-to-DC adaptor. (It would have been really cool if Roland could have made this kit battery-operated.) Accessories include a very easy-to-understand owner's manual and set-up guide, an additional DVD instruction

manual, a drumkey, and a screwdriver. ("Plug and play" indeed.)

Optional accessories are available at extra cost. These include the PM-01 Personal Drum Monitor, the DAP-1 accessory package (sticks, earphones, and a throne), and the TDM-1 V-Drums Mat (to help reduce vibration and prevent floor damage).

The HD-1's sound module/control box is mounted atop the pedestal frame, making it easy to see, reach, and operate. (You might need an extension cable for your headphones, though, in order to avoid having the cable stretch across the kit and in your way.) In addition to the buttons that select the drumkits, the box also features one knob that controls drumkit volume, another knob that controls metronome speed, and an on/off button for the metronome. By using a combination of the drumkit buttons and the metronome button, you can select one of three sounds—click, cowbell, or maraca—and one of three volume levels: soft, medium, or loud. (We would have liked an adjustable volume knob for the metronome.)

What the box doesn't have is a way to control the volume of your incoming music

track. That can only be done at the source. You then have to blend that incoming signal with the volume of the kit, using the volume knob on the control box.

The HD-1's all-on-one-frame design definitely provides a small footprint, creating a compact package that can be tucked into the corner of a bedroom or basement. However, this design also creates some positioning limitations. All of the arms holding the pads and cymbals open up to a default "locked" position that creates a pretty tight configuration. The 12" arms holding the hi-hat and floor-tom pads put the centers of those pads only 12" from the center pedestal horizontally. We found ourselves wishing that those pads could extend out a little farther to better replicate the spacing on a standard drumset.

Vertical positioning is likewise limited. While the drum and cymbal pads could all be set extremely low, the highest we could get a cymbal pad to go was 3' 6" from the ground, with the highest rack tom position about 9" lower, and the highest level for a hi-hat at about 2' 6". These heights would likely be fine for a young (and small) stu-



The HD-1's pedestal-frame design is compact, but as the minor differences in these two photos illustrates, it affords limited positioning flexibility for the drum and cymbal pads.

dent drummer, or for an adult who sits low. But they might be a problem for anyone who sits higher.

The mesh snare pad provides excellent playing response, and the rubber tom and cymbal pads are more than up to their respective roles (although none of those pads can be adjusted in terms of playing angle). So the HD-1 can offer a terrific way to develop or practice sticking skills, warm up for a session, or just generally work out on the upper part of a drumkit.

The pedals don't offer quite the same performance. As advertised, they are extremely easy to operate, and they're very quiet. In fact, playing them is almost like stepping on air. However, very few real bass drum or hi-hat pedals feel like that. And there's no way to adjust the resistance of the pedal springs to get a more realistic feel. Additionally, while the

design of the pedals lets them work fairly well for heel-down playing or for nearly vertical "stomping," they don't "rebound" the way a real pedal does, so they don't respond to the "glancing toe-step" most drummers use to create double beats. And finally, the pedals can only be positioned one way; their angle and spacing is not adjustable. Bottom line: For exercise, the HD-1 pedals are terrific; for genuine pedal-technique development, not so much.

Sounds

The HD-1 comes with ten sampled-sound "kits"—five basic kits, with a selectable variation of each one. There's no mixing or matching...what you hear is what you get. Problem is, what you hear seems to be targeted specifically at young drummers. There are only four even remotely traditional drumkits, with the "rock" version swamped in stadium-level reverb. (We would like to have heard a couple more "dry" kit variations.) Beyond those kits, there are synth-style sounds—including classic Roland 808 sounds—some dance/hip-hop samples, and one kit whose sounds seem like they were lifted directly from a mid-'90s video arcade.

The MIDI connection on the HD-1 would certainly provide access to an unlimited variety of additional sounds. It's 100% compatible right out of the box, with no tweaking of any kind required. The MIDI connection would also let you record your performance. These options would, of course, require that you either already have, or are willing to purchase, the necessary pieces of outboard gear—calling for an investment beyond the cost of the HD-1 itself.

The HD-1 also offers ten pre-recorded tempo-adjustable patterns, one for each kit and variation. These might be interesting to listen and play along to. But playing the patterns disables the pads, so that isn't an option. This essentially means that the patterns are there strictly for study and "inspiration."

We tend to think they'd get old for most players pretty quickly.

So Who's It For?

The HD-1 is loads of fun to play on, and its compact, self-contained design is well suited for use in tight spaces. As such it could be a source of motivation—and an outlet for budding musical enthusiasm—for a fifteen-year-old whose playing space is close to where the rest of his family hangs out. (Picture the kid wailing in virtual silence, while Mom & Dad contentedly watch Jeopardy in the next room.) The HD-1 could also be a terrific practice device for a college-dorm dweller, as well as an "exercise machine" for an experienced drummer who's interested in keeping up existing chops.

However, if the idea is to have a quiet instrument for a young student to learn how to play on, we'd suggest an entry-level electronic drumkit (like Roland's own TD3 SW) that incorporates a real bass drum pedal and a traditional hi-hat trigger or trigger pedal.

Cool though the HD-1 is, we wonder whether the fifteen-year-old kid, the dorm dweller, or even the experienced drummer mentioned above can afford it. Even discounted from its list price of \$999 to a likely "street" price a couple hundred dollars lower, the HD-1 isn't going to be cheap. Only time will tell how much drummers are willing to pay for fun, portability, and silence.



The PM-01 personal drum monitor is a cool-looking add-on, for times when you want your playing to be heard.

VITAL STATS

HD-1 V-Drums Lite	\$999
PM-01 personal drum monitor	\$149
DAP-1 accessory package	\$109
TDM-1 drum mat	\$109

www.rolandus.com

To hear some of the sounds from the HD-1, go to the multi-media page at www.moderndrummer.com.



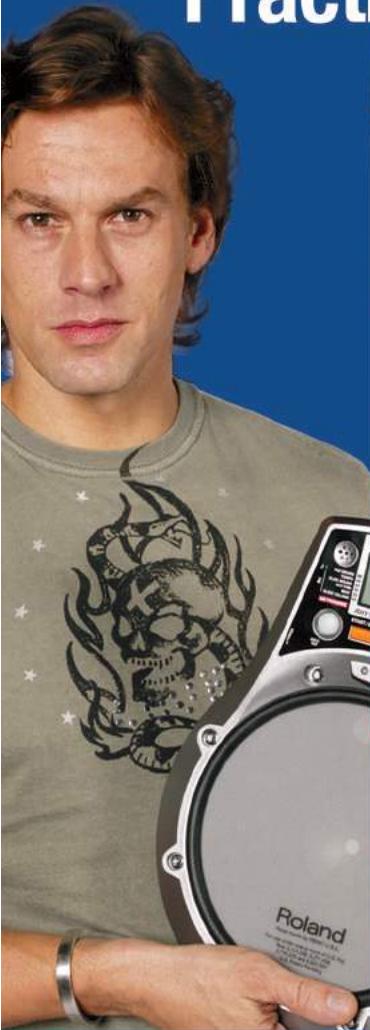
RHYTHM COACH:

Practice Like A Pro!

Roland



www.RolandUS.com



"The Rhythm Coach is absolutely incredible.

It is the most ideal practice system and tool that I've seen.

-Thomas Lang

"If you want to get better faster, this is the tool.

With the mesh head, sounds and different Rhythm Coach exercises, it's incredible for developing your chops, timing and accuracy."

-Johnny Rabb

"I was very impressed by the RMP-5.

I only wish that before I began my professional recording career, that I'd had something like this."

-Peter Erskine

"The Rhythm Coach should be a drummer's best friend.

This can change your whole perspective on practicing ...it's limitless."

-Travis Barker



RMP-5 expanded



RMP-5



RMP-3

Hear why the pros choose the Rhythm Coach at www.RolandUS.com

3

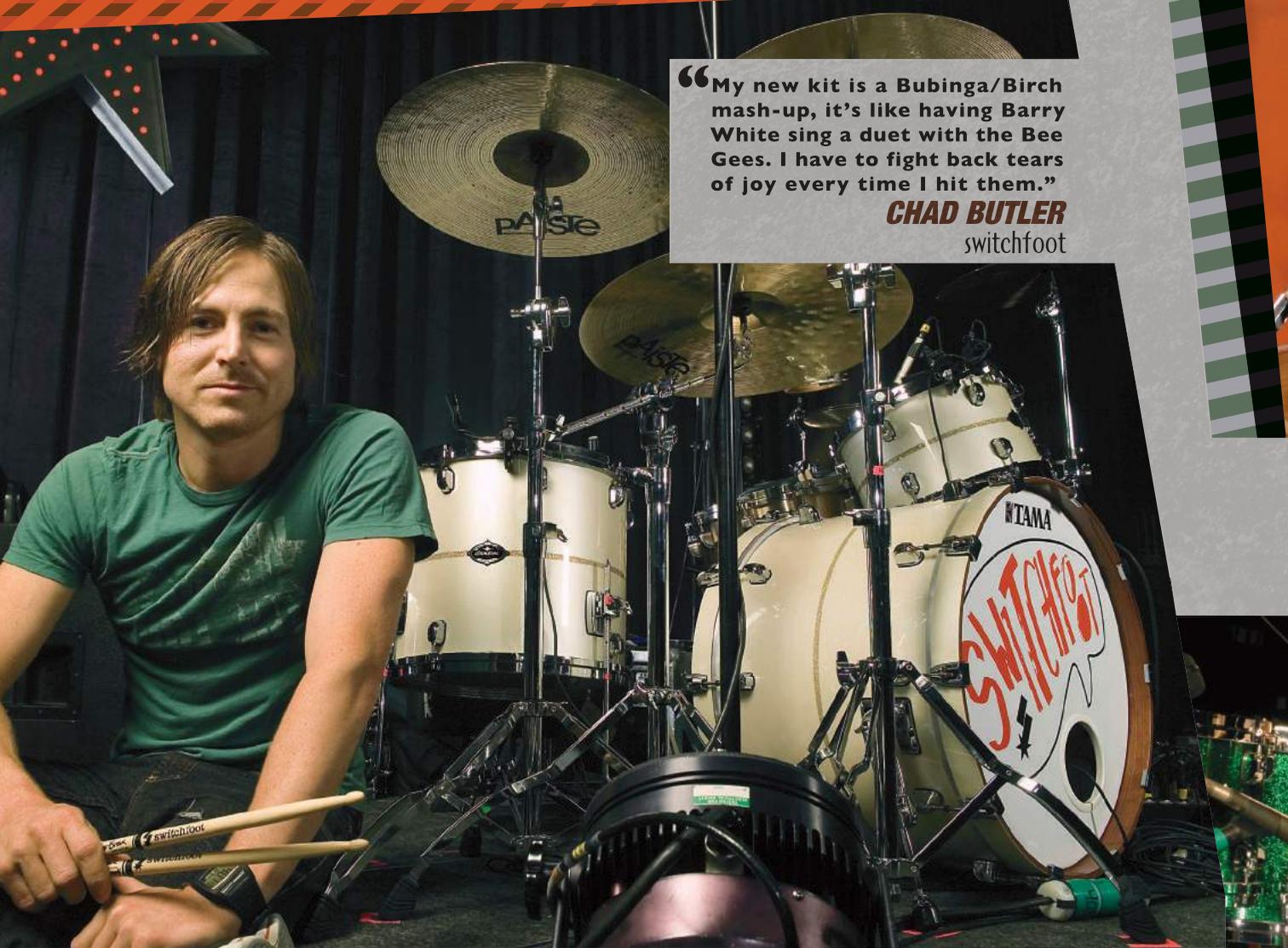
**GREAT
DRUMMERS**

2

**DIFFERENT
TONE WOODS**

1

AMAZING KIT



“My new kit is a Bubinga/Birch mash-up, it’s like having Barry White sing a duet with the Bee Gees. I have to fight back tears of joy every time I hit them.”

CHAD BUTLER
switchfoot

TAMA STARCLASSIC BUBINGA/BIRCH

These three pro drummers lay down the grooves for some of the biggest names in pop, prog and R&B, and they all do it sitting behind Tama Bubinga/Birch kits. Starclassic B/B’s combination of two high-end tone woods provides a powerful and unique sonic charge to their playing, no matter the style. Whether you’re at the top of the charts, touring or recording, Bubinga/Birch can cover the gig.

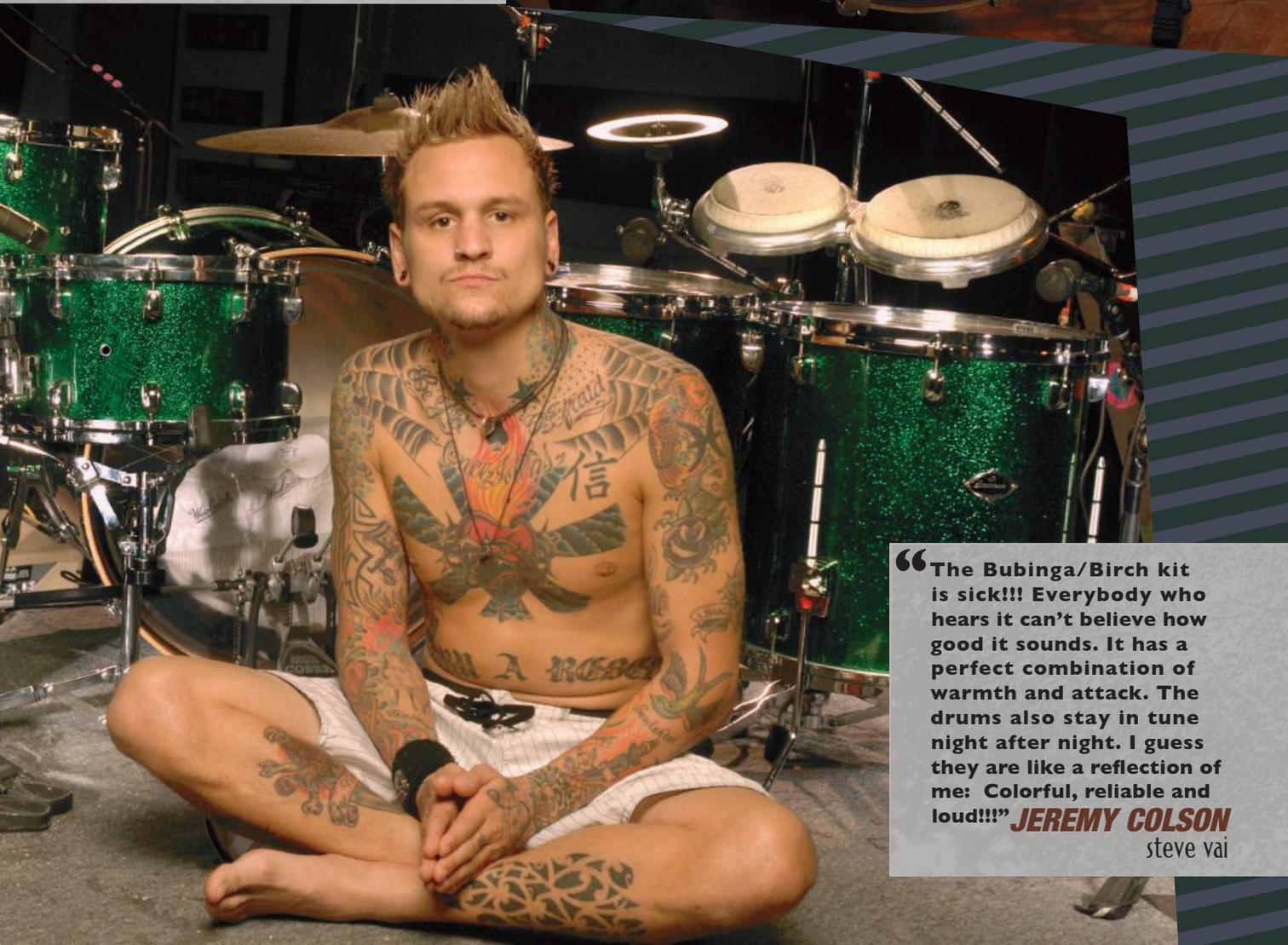


TAMA
tama.com





“I really like the sturdiness and warmth of the new Starclassic Bubinga/Birch drums. It’s a great combination and Tama has some of the best drums for R&B and jazz.” **“LIL” JOHN ROBERTS**
jill scott



“The Bubinga/Birch kit is sick!!! Everybody who hears it can’t believe how good it sounds. It has a perfect combination of warmth and attack. The drums also stay in tune night after night. I guess they are like a reflection of me: Colorful, reliable and loud!!!” **JEREMY COLSON**
steve vai

NOTABLE

NEW AND



>> YAMAHA DTXTREME III AND DTXTREME III SPECIAL KITS

Yamaha's new DTXTREME III and DTXTREME III Special kits both feature redesigned cymbals and kick towers, three-zone drum and cymbal pads, USB connectivity, and an advanced internal sequencer. The all-new sound module contains over 1,000 onboard voices and over 100

General MIDI voices. Optional memory can permit 512 MB of sampling. The Special kit version comes with a new Hex rack system, which locks drums and cymbals in place and offers custom-setup capability. www.yamahadrums.com

>> ZILDJIAN 22" K LIGHT RIDE AND 15" AND 16" HI-HATS

Zildjian's 22" K Light ride and 15" and 16" K Light hi-hats add more options for rock and pop drummers choosing the darker sounds of the K Zildjian cymbal range. The traditional-finish, thin 22" K Light ride (\$585) features a "smoky" sound combined with excellent stick definition and overall control. The 15" (\$656) and 16" (\$726) K Light hi-hats offer high volume and lots of wash for a "sloshy" feel. They feature a traditional finish with a medium-thin top cymbal and a medium bottom cymbal.

www.zildjian.com



>> SABIAN CHOPPER AND ALU BELLS

Sabian's Chopper is an innovative multi-application percussion effect designed to deliver tightly focused white-noise accents and rhythms. The Chopper consists of three loosely riveted-together bronze discs, two of which are cut into propeller-like shapes. It's available in 8" (\$219), 10" (\$252), and 12" (\$273) sizes.

New Alu Bells feature dome shapes with a narrow striking edge. Each is individually created using sand-casting methods for a unique look and a rich musical tone. Alu Bells are available in 7" (\$109) and 9" (\$131) sizes.

www.sabian.com



>> MAPEX KITS IN KRUSHED GLASS GLITTERS

Mapex offers three new Krushed Glass glitter coverings—Crystal Krush, Copper Krush, and Cosmic Krush—on Saturn and Orion shells in six-piece Studioease component-pack configurations. That pack includes an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a 5½x14 snare drum. Hardware is sold separately.

www.mapexdrums.com

Saturn Series
Studioease kit in
Cosmic Krush finish



>>TAMA STARCLASSIC BUBINGA CORDIA KIT

Tama's Starclassic Bubinga Cordia drums feature eight inner plies of bubinga (for a rich, warm sound) and one outer ply of cordia (for an attractive look). Kits are available with chrome-plated, black nickel-plated, or brushed nickel-plated drum hardware, die-cast hoops, and the Star-Cast Mounting System. More than sixty individual drum sizes are offered. Prices range from \$660 for a 6x13 snare drum to \$2,130 for a 20x22 bass drum.

www.tama.com



>>GIBRALTAR HYBRID MOUNTING POD

Gibraltar's new Hybrid Mounting Pod lets you triple your cymbal mounting space without adding additional tripods. The 24" Pod, with matching chrome clamps, mounts to any existing cymbal stand, employing air space instead of floor space to add cymbals and auxiliary percussion.

List price is \$125.
www.gibraltarhardware.com





>> MEINL 30TH ANNIVERSARY PEDAL CAJON

Meinl's 30th anniversary pedal cajon features a rubber wood body and a bubinga frontplate for deep bass tones and cutting highs. The frontplate has a slight curve (Ergo-Shape) that follows the natural contour of the hand for added comfort when playing. The foot pedal allows the player to change the setting of the snare wires without interruption while playing a rhythm with both hands.

www.meinlpercussion.com

>> MEINL MB8 SERIES CYMBALS

Meinl has designed their new Mb8 series using B8 alloy and high-tech computerized hammering to create crystal-clear cymbals with penetrating cut and explosive attack. Their full bodied-sounds are recommended for high-volume musical environments. Cymbals are available in a full range of individual models, as well as in pre-packed sets.

www.meinlcymbals.com



>>GRETSCH ANNIVERSARY KITS

Gretsch is celebrating its 125th anniversary with three limited-edition kits. The Rock Legend set features 6-ply Gretsch-formula maple shells in traditional rock sizes, with 30° bearing edges, Silver Sealer interiors, round Gretsch badges, triple chrome-plated hardware, and a Millennium Maple Gloss finish, at a list price of \$7,995.

The Progressive Jazz kit features 6-ply USA Custom shells in classic jazz sizes (including a 14x20 bass drum and a 4½x14 snare), round Gretsch badges, vintage T- rods, and a Cadillac Green finish with gold-plated drum hardware, at a list price of \$6,145. The Progressive Bop kit offers similar construction, but features a 14x18 bass drum, a 5x14 snare, and chrome hardware, at a list price of \$5,950.

www.gretschdrums.com



Rock Legend Kit



Progressive Bop Kit



>>HAMMERAX LIQUICY CYMBALS

Hammerax's Liquicy cymbals are designed to provide "astounding vibrato and phase shift qualities." The cymbals can be struck on the edge with sticks, mallets, or hands for eerie fluttering crashes and vibrato effects. Various sweet spots can be ridden on for a mellow tone with fluid undertones. Mounting the Liquicy upside down speeds up the vibrato/phasing speed. Each cymbal comes with removable rivets. List prices range from \$50 to \$750.

www.hammerax.com

>>PRO-MARK PAD BAGS

Pad Bags from Pro-Mark feature a practice pad permanently affixed to the exterior of the bag, eliminating the need to carry a separate pad. The bags are available in small (PB10, \$79.95) and large (PB20, \$99.95) sizes. The PB20 is equipped with a sturdy shoulder strap.

www.promark.com





>>TRX 18" CRASH-RIDE AND COMBO PACK

New 18" Crash-Rides from TRX combine the sound and performance qualities of both cymbal styles. They're available in DRK, MDM, ALT, and BRT series to suit all contemporary music applications. List price is \$350. In addition, TRX Crash-Ride Combo Packs that include 18" and 20" Crash-Rides, a pair of 14" hi-hats, and a free cymbal bag are being offered while supplies last.

www.trxcymbals.com

>>TOCA WORLD PERCUSSION ITEMS

Toca offers Latin-style Custom Deluxe timbales in Black Mirror finish with brushed nickel-plated hardware. Their 6x14 and 6x15 steel shells have five tuning lugs each, allowing for a strong cascara sound. The drums come with a cowbell bracket and a heavy-duty tripod stand, at \$520.

Toca's Dominican-style 11x14 Professional Tambora is made of 2-ply Asian wood in natural finish, with low-profile Traditional rims and high-quality bison heads. A shoulder strap and a beater are included, at \$345.

The Brazilian-style Professional Cuica has a 10x11 aluminum shell with black powder-coated hardware and a natural goatskin head. It comes with a shoulder strap at a list price of \$195.

www.tocapercussion.com



THE REFERENCE SHELF



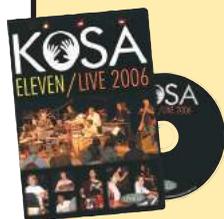
DOUBLE PEDAL GOLD

by Joe Morton
(Hudson Music)

In this book/CD package, drummer and educator Joe Morton presents challenging exercises that provide double-pedal players with a straight-forward yet incremental method for devel-

oping double-pedal technique. The exercises apply single and double strokes in 16th- and 32nd-note bass drum patterns. Over twenty solo compositions for the drumset incorporate the techniques learned in the book. The companion CD features examples of many of the exercises and solos, demonstrated by the author. List price is \$24.95.

www.hudsonmusic.com, www.musicdispatch.com



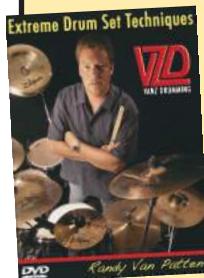
KOSA ELEVEN/LIVE DVD

Various Artists
(Hudson Limited)

This DVD contains over three hours of instruction, interviews, and performance highlights from the eleventh KoSA International Percussion Workshop & Festival. Produced

by KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza in association with Hudson Music, the DVD offers a participant's perspective on the KoSA experience by presenting highlights of the August 2006 event. Featured artists and instructors include Memo Acevedo, John Amira, Clayton Cameron, Kenwood Dennard, Jamey Haddad, Bernard Purdie, Antonio Sanchez, Ed Soph, and Glen Velez. Also featured is a fiery duet featuring conga master Giovanni Hidalgo and brush specialist Clayton Cameron, as well as interviews with Jim Chapin, Dom Famularo, and *Modern Drummer* senior editor Rick Van Horn. List price is \$29.95.

www.hudsonmusic.com, www.musicdispatch.com



EXTREME DRUM SET TECHNIQUES DVD

by Randy Van Patten
(Vanz Drumming)

This DVD is designed to provide the tools drummers of varying skills need to take their drumming to the next level. Veteran drummer/teacher Randy Van Patten offers an innovative way of applying techniques to the

drumset for drummers of all levels, along with an approach to breaking down challenging rhythms that makes them easy to understand. Van Patten also focuses on developing hand technique and building stick control, and applying those skills to the drumset. List price is \$24.95.

www.vanzdrumming.com

AND WHAT'S MORE

PRO-MARK's Drum Roll is a gauze-type material that can be applied to any striking implement, or directly to the fingers of hand drummers. The material sticks to itself, but not to the surface to which it is applied. It's available in red, blue, purple, and black at \$11.25 per roll.

www.promark.com



If you're looking for a fun way to dress up your drumkit, **PINTECH's** Rubber Ducky triggers fit the bill.

They fit atop any contemporary cymbal tilter, offering humorous, colorful, and resilient targets—as well as professional-level triggering response. List price is \$35.

www.pintechworld.com



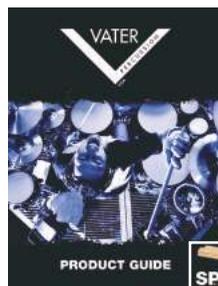
Adrian Young has redesigned his **ZILDJIAN** Artist Series drumstick for 2008. The back half of the 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ "-long by .585"-diameter hickory stick is black, with Adrian's name printed in signature "No Doubt" text in a silver checkerboard graphic. The front half is white, with a black nylon tip that provides extra durability and clear projection. List price is \$16.15.

www.zildjian.com

FIDOCK AUSTRALIAN CUSTOM DRUMS makes wood snare drums from individually selected Australian timbers, including blackwood, mountain ash, fiddleback, and bubinga. Each drum is cut from the same piece of wood for a fat, articulate sound.

The stave-construction shells are very thin for maximum tone and resonance, with reinforcement rings for added strength. Steam-bent wood hoops are mounted low for increased stick contact for rim clicks and rimshots. Drums come with Trick GS007 throw-offs, Puresound mounting wires, and Evans heads, in 5x14 (\$1,399) and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 (\$1,499) sizes.

www.fidockdrums.com.au

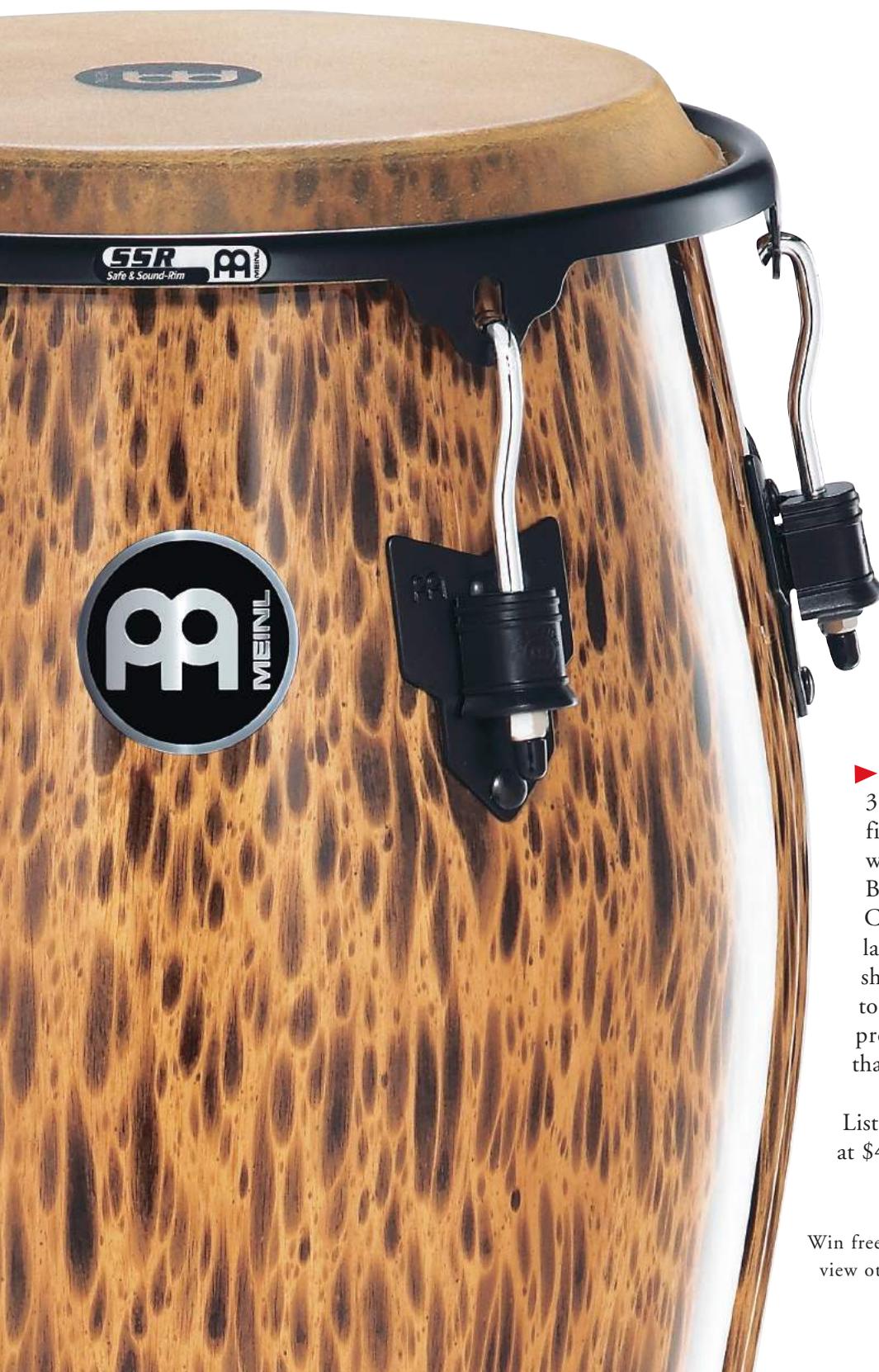


VATER has just released a forty-page Product Guide, the largest in the company's history. It includes complete product info and photos for every Vater product, from drumsticks and brushes to accessories and marching items, as well as over two hundred artist photos, a Vater history timeline with photos, and more. The new catalog can be requested through www.vater.com, or at any Vater dealer.





THE 30th ANNIVERSARY LEOPARD BURL
CONGAS FROM MEINL



► To commemorate our 30th year of crafting the finest quality instruments, we introduce the Leopard Burl finish. These Marathon Classic series drums have a larger than life sound with sharp slaps and giant bass tones. Each drum includes a professional basket stand that's height adjustable.

List price for one drum starts at \$400.

Win free gear. Post your own video and view others at meinlpercussion.com

GEORGE KOLLIAS Nile • NEIL SANDERSON Three Days Grace



Hear more at sabian.com

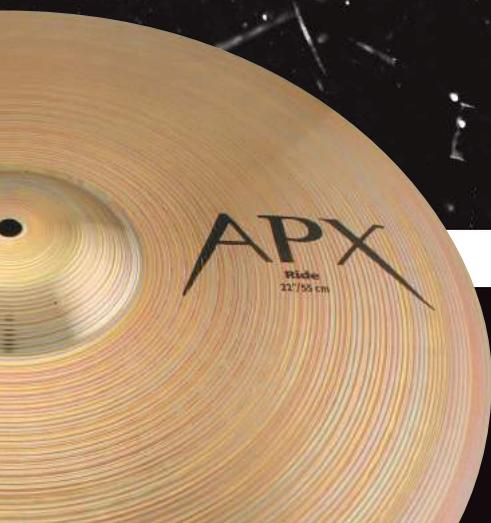
APX Modern Cut



JOHNNY KELLY Type O Negative • RICH BEDDOE Finger Eleven

WE BREAK SOUND BARRIERS.

We're a guitarist's worst nightmare. With the high-decibel design and super-bright, ferocious cutting sounds of APX, we rip through rock-heavy grooves and blistering power chords. With APX, nothing gets in our way.



BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

ALEX VAN

Practically joined at the hip to his brother Eddie, nephew Wolfgang, and David Lee Roth, Alex Van Halen has finally returned to the road with the band that bears his name. It's been four years since the last Van Halen tour, but in their time the band has traveled a million miles. Van Halen has always been more of a pure rock 'n' roll act than anything else. Mega-hits like "Jump," "Dance The Night Away," "Panama," "Runnin' With The Devil," "Pretty Woman," and "Hot For Teacher" are hard-core party anthems for a generation that ignored disco and punk. For those loyal fans, Van Halen constituted a rite of passage, a fun-loving band that partied as hard as they rocked—and their ability to rock was never in question.

As Eddie Van Halen strangled his guitar through all manner of hammering, slashing, and maniacal speedball eruptions, brother Alex laid down a bombastic groove of titanic proportions, typically on a colossal drumset fortified by double bass drums, Octobans, and percussion. And while he often cited Ginger Baker and Buddy Rich as seminal influences, Alex's drumming was always larger than life, thrusting through Van Halen's music with the energy of an angry tank, matching Eddie's blitzkrieg style with equally assaultive note choices.



HALEN

BASHING & CRASHING IN THE HERE AND NOW



STORY by KEN MICALLEF • PHOTOS by CHRISTOPHER OTAZO

A

lex Van Halen never cited John Bonham as a pure influence, but the sound was always there.

Perhaps more so than any drummer from the early 1980s to the present, Alex Van Halen inherited the Bonham mantle. Of course, Alex's double bass drum machinations were purely of his own design, as were his typically mammoth drumsets. But the spirit of Van Halen's drum work was, like Bonham, built from the ground up, with the deeply entrenched ability (his dad was a big band musician) to swing a rock groove like a tornado tearing down a city street.

Now reunited on the road with original lead singer David Lee Roth, and playing their quintessential hits for the first time in twenty-two years, Van Halen has restored a sense of what real rock 'n' roll can be when played by a band of oversized personalities.

"We grew up together," Alex says from a New York hotel room. "Dave, Eddie, and I were the main architects of the band. The bonds you make when you're younger...well...there's a different kind of dynamic in those relationships. The creative thing was always a tension between the three of us. It's fortunately still there and hasn't become stagnant. That's what keeps it alive."

What keeps it alive might also be what tears it apart. Rumors flew hot and heavy around Van Halen's 2007 tour, and with Roth back and original bassist Michael Anthony gone, the group dynamic was said to be in a convulsive state. But calling their 2007 tour "A moment in time and space all in one place," Alex Van Halen hit the stage of the Meadowlands, New Jersey arena as though it was still 1984.

Van Halen is not a grizzled tribute act, but a hard-won touring band whose music still sounds vital and fresh. Alex will allude to the inevitability of a new record, but he lives in the here and now. Consequently the drum solo that follows "Pretty Woman" is not some nostalgic flashback, but a nearly freeform improv epic that shows off both his bass drum technique and his organizational skills.

Alex Van Halen is a superior drummer today to the one who played the galloping double bass drum intro to "Hot For Teacher" (his kicks are cleaner), or the pile driving flam/bass drum rolls of The Who cover "Magic Bus" (his stickings are higher, his technique more supple). His wrists are like pistons, his legs like bionic battering rams.

"I read some old Buddy Rich interviews," Alex says, in reply to a question about technique. "When asked, 'Do you warm up before you play?' Buddy said, 'Yes, I take my hands out of my pockets.' No matter how questions get answered, it boils down to this essence: When you make music you try to be as in the moment as possible. Of course, you rehearse. But there's enough room to make every night different."

Though rumors about Eddie's health and temperament abound, when Van Halen took the Meadowlands stage, all thoughts of former bass players and past problems faded away. And at the center of the storm, in touch with the past but living in the present, Alex showed maturity mixed with equal parts good humor and unabashed, over-the-top exhilaration.

Drumming as perfect therapy and spiritual release in the here and now? Alex Van Halen's got it locked.





Ed And Alex: Making The Band, Cracking The Neck

MD: It's been a long while since the last Van Halen tour. What did you do to get back in road shape?

Alex: Ed and I play every day. So I didn't have to get back in shape. Ed has the 5150 Studios on his property in Studio City; we have a routine. It's the one forced discipline that we have. We play once a day, every day. We play for a couple of hours, sometimes less, sometimes more. Sometimes things evolve. Ed has ideas, and often something I'm playing will trigger an idea. But there's no goal in mind. It's not, "Let's pretend to be creative and make a record."

MD: What's your setup at the studio? How many bass drums?

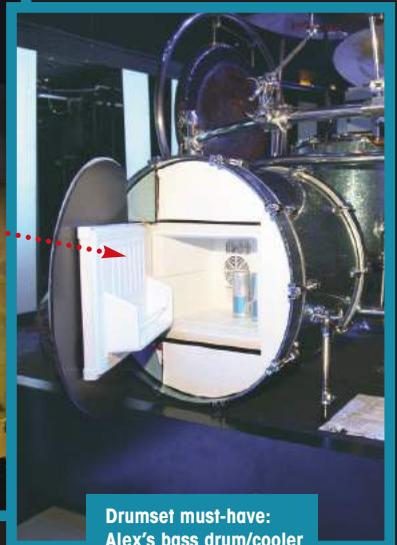
Alex: The only reason I use two bass drums at all is because my right foot just isn't fast enough for some of the stuff I like to do, especially some of the shuffles. When it comes down to what you really, really need when you're playing, you use your hi-hat, snare, ride, and kick drum. Honestly, I think the more gear you have, the less creative you'll be.

Normally in the studio I use a snare, a kick, a hi-hat, and a cymbal—and maybe one tom. When you're trying to be creative, I've found that a smaller setup—and varying it up—helps. Otherwise you fall into the same old patterns. And you can be distracted by too much stuff.

MD: Your technique is very supple and flexible, and your wrists are so loose. At the Meadowlands gig you played like you had rubber bands for arms. Also, your sticking is very high off the drums. Is that the result of staying loose? What



ALEX'S MONSTER KIT



Drumset must-have:
Alex's bass drum/cooler

Drums: Ludwig Legacy Classic Maple (custom built)

- A.** Octobans (with ddrum triggers)
- B.** 4x13 Black Beauty piccolo snare
- C.** 6 1/2x14 snare (wood, die-cast top hoop, triple-flanged bottom)
- D.** 8x12 tom (on R.I.M.S. mount)
- E.** 9x13 tom (on R.I.M.S. mount)
- F.** 16x16 floor tom
- G.** 16x18 floor tom
- H.** 16x26 bass drum (with custom "side-port" drum)
- I.** 16x24 bass drum (converted into refrigerator)

Cymbals: Paiste

- 1.** 20" 2002 crash
- 2.** 15" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
- 3.** 19" 2002 crash
- 4.** 20" 2002 crash
- 5.** 24" Giant Beat ride

- 6.** 20" 2002 crash
- 7.** 20" 2002 China
- 8.** 22" 2002 crash
- 9.** 38" symphonic gong

Percussion: Latin Percussion

- aa.** rock cowbell

Hardware: Ludwig, DW 5000 legless hi-hat stand, Tama Iron Cobra bass drum pedals

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

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else figures into your approach?

Alex: It's in part because I've had problems with tendinitis. To be supple when you play, you have to be relaxed. I do Shodokan martial arts just to stay relaxed while I'm exerting myself. Every little bit of tension creates a problem. It's such a cliché They tell you to relax. But actually doing it is tricky. You have to be relaxed.

MD: What got you into martial arts?

Alex: It stems from an injury; I fractured my neck twenty years ago. Ten years ago, it became a problem. In fact, I was walking around with a neck brace. I had to keep that damn thing around my neck. It kept my neck in alignment. If it got out of alignment, my arm and leg would go numb. My neck was being strangled by the disc tissue.

MD: I imagine the doctors said you shouldn't

be playing the drums.

Alex: Of course! [laughs] It started in '95, when I was at Wolfgang's birthday party at Disneyworld. I collapsed for no apparent reason. Long story short, it went back to my herniating four discs and fracturing all the bones in my neck. It was caused by a water skiing accident. After the accident, I was paralyzed for an hour, then everything came back, no problem. Then ten years later, because my body compensated for so long, it just locked up.

MD: Didn't you ever feel any prickly pains?

Alex: Oh, yeah. I just ignored it. But when I collapsed, it was the beginning of our "Balance" tour, and that wasn't fun. So I began studying martial arts, working on posture and the Alexander technique, which shows you how to use your body correctly.

My favorite position for drumming was always a cigarette in one hand and a drink in the other. [Alex mimics a hunched-over posture and traditional grip.] And checking out the women. [laughs]

Bashing And Crashing

MD: You initially played traditional grip?

Alex: Oh yeah, but the guitar and bass were so loud I had to change to matched. Ed and I began by playing jazz; our dad would take us to clubs and we would sit in with jazz groups. I can't explain it other than to say those early experiences are very deeply rooted in my DNA. I understand the relationship between music and an audience and how it works in the dynamic of an evening.

MD: You can hear the jazz influence in your playing, because once again, it's loose yet



propulsive at the same time. Your looseness surprised me; your drumming was supple and effortless, which we don't always equate with hard rock or proto-metal drumming.

Alex: It didn't always sound like that. You go through changes. The '80s were different from the '90s. When Ginger Baker was asked what the drummer's role was in a band, he said it was "to make the other musicians sound good." He didn't mean it as an arrogant statement, but I now know what he meant. You want to fit in with the music. You could be a Buddy Rich, but you can't do all those things when you're playing a simple song. You have to play what's appropriate for the tune. Jeff Porcaro understood that. He knew how to make things move without sticking out as though he was trying to solo.

In the '80s, our music was a little more bombastic. We tried to position ourselves as being unique and to show our best qualities. All those different elements led me to crash and bash.

MD: If you were bashing and crashing in the '80s, how would you compare that style to what you're doing now?

Alex: Oh...refined. Back then we didn't want anyone to know that we had gone through classical training and that our main instrument was the piano. Jazz was what we really started

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ALEX VAN HALEN

with, and that's a lot different from rock 'n' roll.

I read an interesting article with Steve Smith where he talked about the difference between straight time and the idea of a pulse. That was something I always understood but couldn't articulate. The point is that my brother and I began as a two-piece, and the whole idea is that you want to groove together. When we were putting a song together, because we had a classical background, we knew that you use dynamics and rhythm changes to your advantage. The idea of trying

to create strict metronomic time is nonsense. When you come to a part that needs a moment, you take a breath and slow down. Then you ramp it up and bring the volume up.

When I listen to our early records, the time fluctuates, because the music breathes. Instead of having it in a box, it's an organic thing. Most of it you don't even notice because you're caught up in the music.

MD: But Van Halen probably used a click on its last few albums.

Alex: I learned how to do that. Instead of playing to a click, you think of it as playing

along with another guy in the band. You can play "around" it.

Bouncing Back To The Universe

MD: Do you follow a practice regimen, and does that lead into your pre-gig warm-up?

Alex: Before the show I just kind of zone out and "ticky tack." I play through the rudiments. One show I was sitting backstage with the drummer for Kenny Chesney, and he showed me an exercise I had never seen before. You play a shuffle with your left hand, the quarter note and two dotted 8ths on your right hand, and then add triplets with the right foot, but only the last two strokes of the triplet. You can play the first note of the triplet with your hi-hat. That's a blast.

MD: Is that one way you keep it interesting for yourself?

Alex: Being in a band is more than just music. From the very beginning it had a lot to do with The Beatles and how good they were at their publicity machine. I thought A Hard Day's Night was for real. The impact that music can have on the fabric of how people perceive things as being popular, how that resonates on a larger level—that's something that always fascinated me. How can this band be something bigger than just the four of us? That takes a certain give and take. It's not about me and my space, it's about us.

MD: Are you saying that you're more concerned about the band overall than working on your technique?

Alex: Yes.

MD: But as a drummer, you have to keep your chops up.

Alex: I know that. [laughs] It's ninety percent practice and the other ten percent is...talent.

MD: So playing the drums is just second-nature to you, like putting on a pair of jeans?

Alex: Well, Ed and I both played piano, but I gravitated to the drums. When my dad's band would practice at the house, I would jump on the drums. They felt very natural to me. If the drummer couldn't make it to my dad's gig, I would fill in.

MD: So how long do you warm up now before a show?

Alex: Thirty minutes. I usually play on a pillow. I don't like a pad. I like something with no rebound.

I had the pleasure of meeting and taking a lesson with Jim Chapin. He sat down at the kit and showed me a few things, but I really just wanted to vibe off of him. He's eighty years old, but still excited and interested—he's alive.



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When he completed the lesson, I said, "Thank you very much." And he said, "That'll be eighty dollars." [laughs] I paid him and gave him a ride.

MD: What did Chapin focus on in the lesson?

Alex: Just Moeller technique. I probably didn't study Moeller as much as I should have, but I do it.

MD: Does Moeller figure into your very high sticking?

Alex: A little bit. And working on tension & release. I've been doing this for forty years, so you want to make sure nothing breaks. I play more German than French grip.

MD: Are you still actively trying to push your drumming forward?

Alex: Well, I'll let Vinnie do that. [laughs] I'm kidding. For me, to try to explain what drumming and rhythm is all about, well, it's beyond the mechanics. It's beyond the rudiments. It's beyond whether you lean a little this way or that way. It's beyond whether a guy plays Latin in 4/4—we call it "white Latin" if you're not playing it the way it's meant to be. It's all different variations. But underneath it all is the pulse, and beyond that is your own experience of what you're doing.

If you're expressing yourself, it's bouncing

back to the universe, so to speak—whether that's applause from an audience or your own satisfaction with what you did. That's what it's about. If you don't enjoy playing, then it becomes work. I love that line of Charlie Watts'. When asked how he was enjoying the tour, he said, "It's bloody hard work!"

MD: Is that how you feel?

Alex: In 1995, yes, but not this tour. When you have physical problems and you're trying to make it through without breaking, yes, it's hard work.

MD: Are there things you do now to make sure nothing breaks?

Alex: There are things I don't do anymore. [laughs]

Tone Chasing

MD: Is this a strong band or a fragile band? We hear stories about Eddie's health and temperament on the road, and his relationship with David Lee Roth...

Alex: None of it is true.

MD: So everything is solid and straight-ahead?

Alex: That's not true either. I preface everything by saying that we were in high school when we first got together. You put Ed, Dave, and me in a room and one of us is going to come out bloody. And that's what makes it great. That element is still there. Music is an emotional thing. I'm not saying you need to be overbearing or disrespectful. But I am saying that our nature is such that we tend to overlap in how we get things done.

MD: And you're probably better at dealing with personalities within the band than in '85, when Roth left.

Alex: The biggest irony is that we're all on the same page. We're only trying to make things better. It reminds me of those infamous tapes you hear of Buddy Rich screaming at his band. He only wanted them to be better—that's all.

MD: Getting back to drumming for a minute, are you at all interested in keeping your double bass drum work on par with the drummers of today? Do you listen to some of the young double bass firebrands, like Joey Jordison, Chris Adler, or Jason Bittner?

Alex: I like a challenge, but to me, it has to fit in with the music we're playing. Otherwise there's not much of a point to it. But strictly from a mechanical standpoint of someone being able to do that, I am impressed. Absolutely.

MD: But you're not concerned with trying to adapt that technique to Van Halen?

Alex: Not today. Though if I presented that to Ed he would write something based on that.

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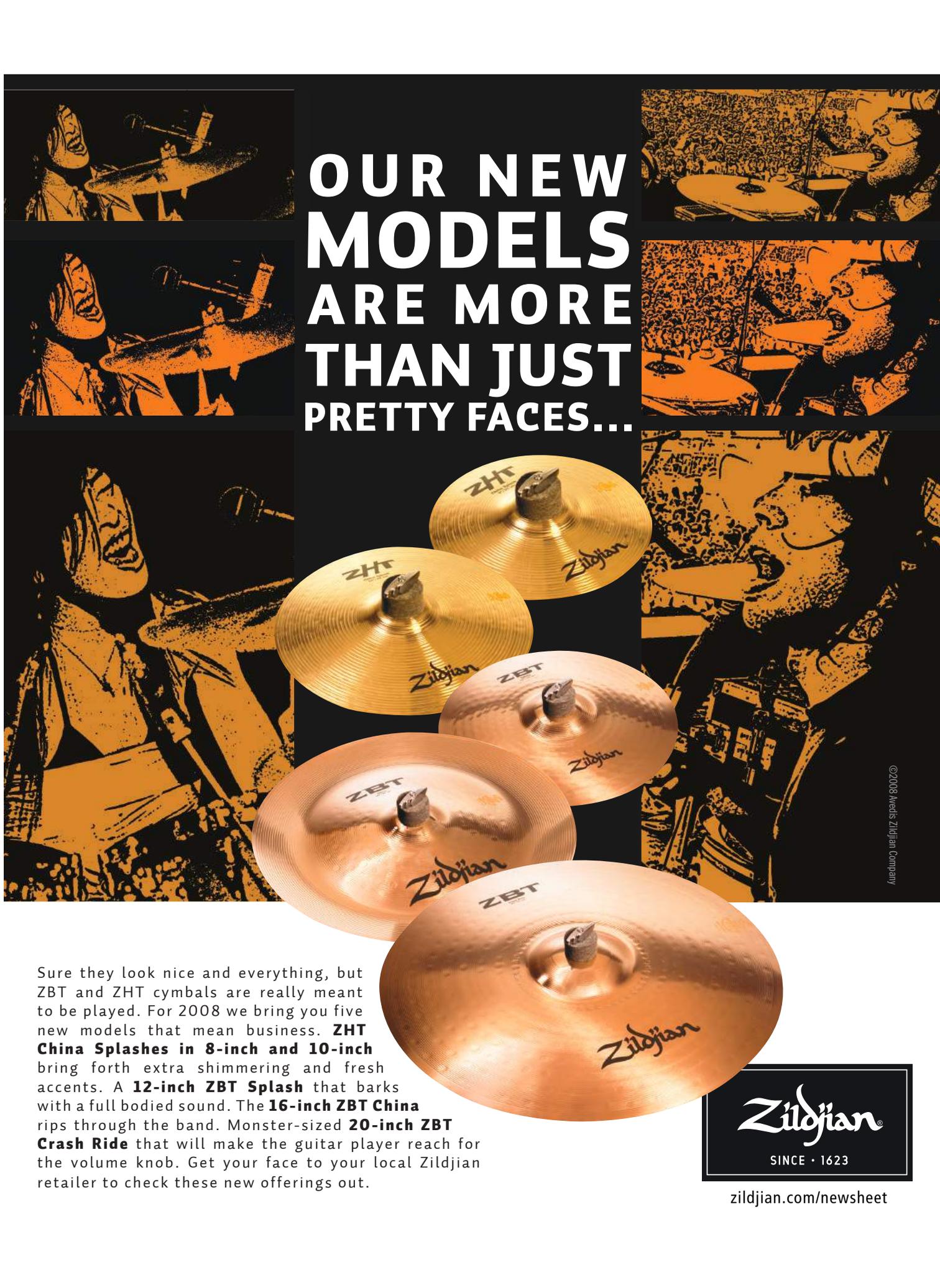


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Alex during soundcheck at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, New Jersey (11/3/07).

MD: Were you a big fan of John Bonham? Did you dissect his playing?

Alex: What I really liked is that Jimmy Page spent time to make the drum sound an integral part of the recording process. Ed and I have always been tone chasers. The sounds and the textures of sounds...that's what we've always tried to find.

MD: Your snare drum and bass drum sounds are unique.

Alex: That's part of it, but also how those sounds fit into the song. An extreme example would be "When The Levee Breaks." Led Zeppelin stumbled on that by accident. Andy

Johns, who had recorded that song and also recorded one of our records, told me that Zeppelin were playing in the hallway of Headley Grange. They had forgotten to turn on the close mics, and all they heard in the control room were the ambient mics, and it worked for the song. They always paid a lot of attention to the drums, and that's why those are some of the best-sounding records for drums.

Often on your earlier records, it's all on the clock. I still remember my first recording experience using a 26" bass drum and a 6¹/₂" snare. The first thing the engineer asked me to

do was remove the bottom tom heads and the front bass drum head. I was speechless.

"You're out of your f@#*ing mind." Ten minutes later, the drum heads were off. It took me 'til 5:00 P.M. to get the heads back on, and Ed helped me with it. It was a fight. Engineers have a certain way, their trip. But for me, you're asking me to take the sound out of my drums.

MD: How does that figure into your tuning on the tour?

Alex: We basically run everything flat. I don't want any EQ. We use Shure SM57s on the kick drums as well as a Shure Beta 91 to add some

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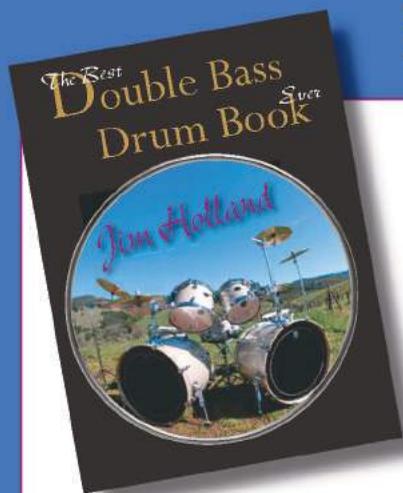
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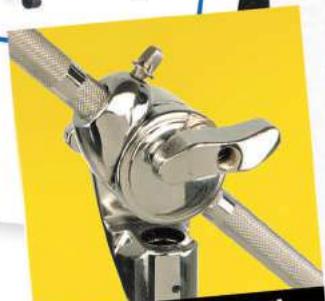


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ALEX VAN HALEN

bottom if necessary. We use SM57s on the snares and Sennheiser clip-ons for the toms. Overheads are two AKG C414s and two Shure KSM32s.

MD: How do you direct your drum tech, Scott Oliver, to tune the kit?

Alex: We do an hour-long soundcheck for every gig. That's when I tune them up. As Buddy Rich would say, "You don't tune them, you tension them." In my bass drums, I want punch. If it gets too high-pitched, the bass drum will resonate too much. So I tune the bass drums to where it stops doing that. I use felt beaters because I can't take the chance of a wood beater going through a head during a show. But I use wood in the studio.

MD: Your double bass tour kit looks as if you have extra bass drums attached to your main drums. Is that for sonics or looks?

Alex: The outer drums resonate. There's one big bass drum, joined to half of another bass drum. The smaller drum is attached to the main drum and it rings. It gives a more balanced sound.

I didn't want four bass drums, but I wanted more than two. This is my playground. If I want to make square drums, or use one hundred drums, I'll do it. At the time we put the set together, the second drum tech, Johnny

Douglas, had some input.

MD: How does this kit differ from your older ones?

Alex: This is the best-sounding kit I've ever had. It has fewer drums than some of my older kits.

As for the sound of the kit out in the house, I depend on the soundman. Most of these guys just get a "tick" sound and low end. They save the rest of the frequency range for vocals, bass, and guitar. It's easier to mix. Wrong.

MD: Your snare drum has always sounded like a rocket.

Alex: That's a Ludwig wood drum. I've always played a Ludwig steel drum, but my drum tech brought in the wood snare one day and it sounded great. I don't tune it super tight; I find the sweet spot. If you go too high, it'll sound like corn popping. Too low, and it won't sound good either.

Years ago engineers used to use a lot of tape on the drum to quiet the resonance, but not anymore. It became a problem because all the grace notes got lost. And it sounded like a box. You got that one note you liked, that crack. But everything else? Nothing.

MD: Do you muffle the snare drum at all?

Alex: I run all of the drums wide open.

MD: You can hear that in the kick drums; they

sound like canons. But how does that change in the studio?

Alex: It's all the same. And I play with the same volume and dynamics in the studio. When we record, it's like The Stones. They just start playing. If the third take is the right one, then that's the one. Ed and I just play until it feels comfortable.

For us, the recording experience is not outcome driven. We're not looking to have anything at the end of the day. But at the end of the day we will have something.

MD: Are there any other drummers, old or new, who inspire your drumming today?

Alex: I listen to everybody. You gravitate to the old stuff that brings back the memories of your youth. But music is an ongoing thing, it's in constant flux.

Running From The Industry

MD: What's on your iPod?

Alex: What's an iPod? [laughs]

MD: Isn't it great that kids can have instant singles downloaded to their iPods?

Alex: I think it's destroyed the whole idea of having an album. To have a collection of songs that are somewhat connected, but not. The idea to have a cohesive piece of work to be representative of a certain period of your life,

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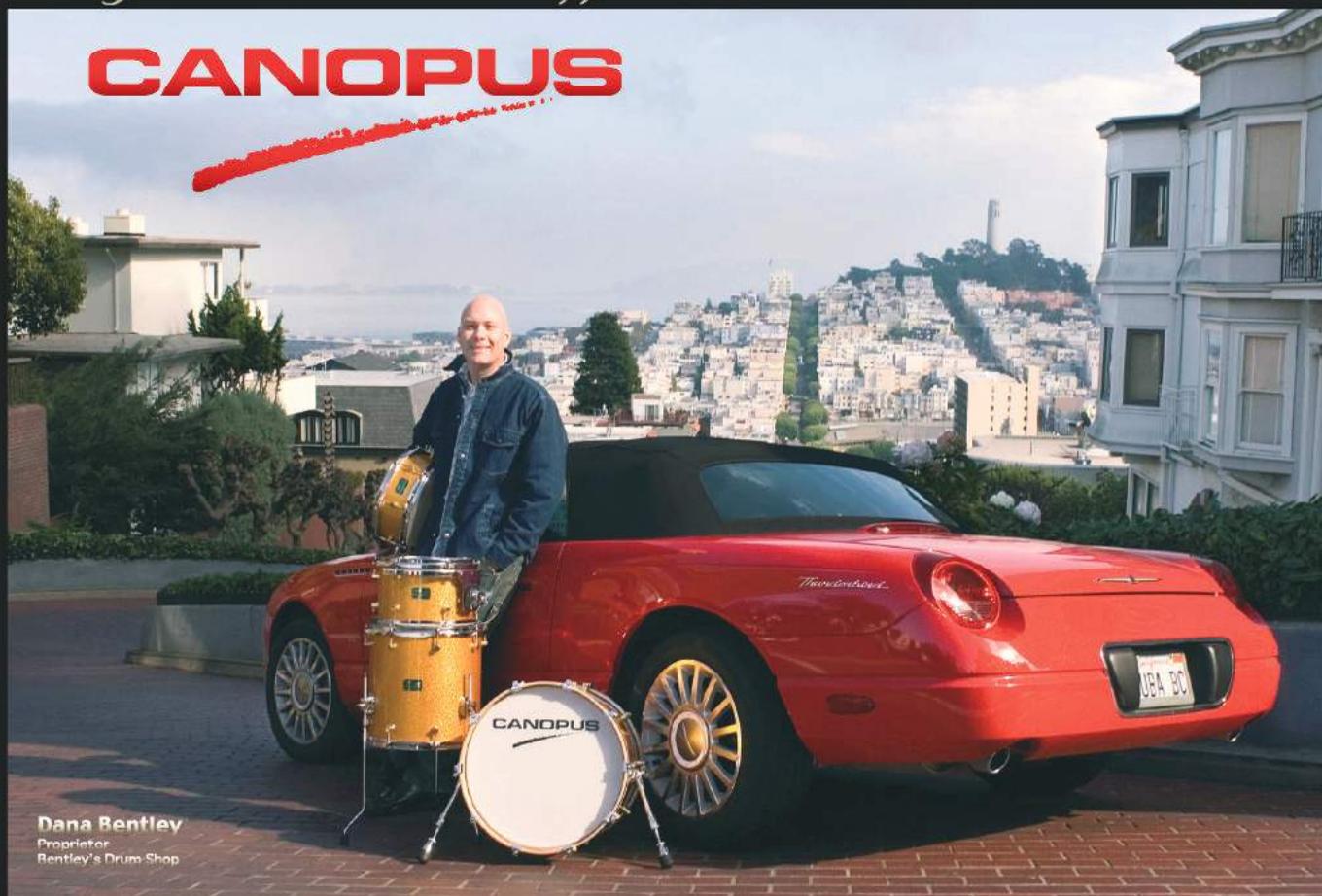
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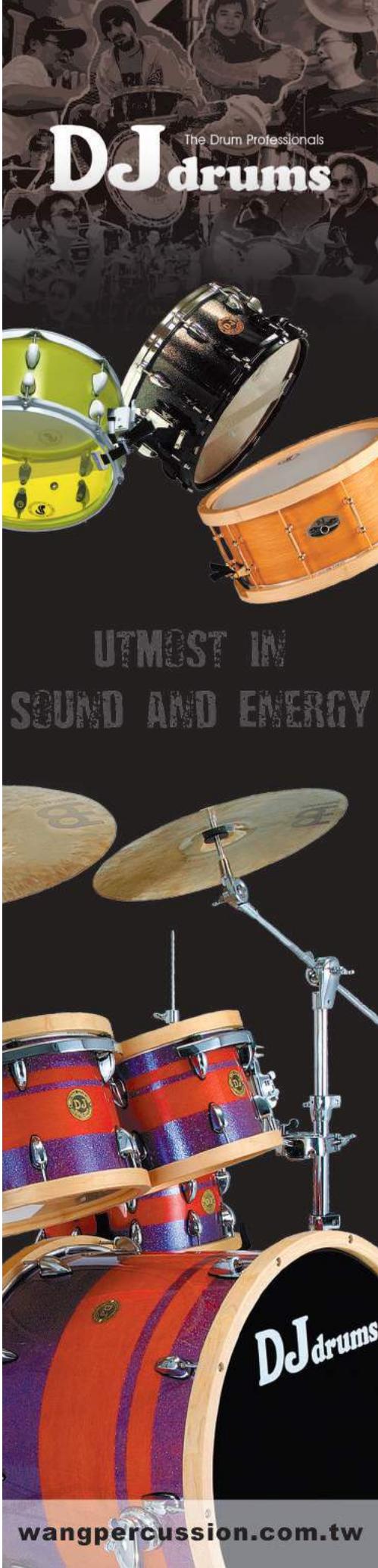
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those things that have depth and add meaning to what you do, aren't there anymore. This is a disposable society and everything is a one-minute wonder. And that's unfortunate, because the next generation will do the same thing. Who do they have to learn from?
MD: The industry seems to be in shambles, but a band like Van Halen can still sell out stadiums across the country. Perhaps people are hungry for that kind of band identity.
Alex: Eventually the pendulum will swing, but unfortunately everything is economically driven. When the intellectual property is threatened, then somebody will do something. The industry was looking the wrong way when it happened. And it doesn't do the artist any good. The artist is always the low man on the

totem pole.
Our dad played in big bands, and when the big bands went down, a lot of people were out of work. I thought, "How does that affect me?" But now you have a similar thing happening. The good thing that will come out of it is that the people who really want to make music and understand the connection between music, people, and the big picture will continue to do that.
In the '70s, when we were trying to get signed, we weren't in fashion. They wanted disco and punk. Twenty different labels turned us down. So we just played and put on our own shows, and we drew thousands of people. If you like playing, go out and play.



ALEX VAN HALEN

Family Affairs

MD: How does the groove differ between having Wolfgang and Michael Anthony on bass?

Alex: I would never compare anybody to anybody.

MD: Why not?

Alex: Because there's always one winner and one loser, and that's not what it's all about. That's like comparing Dave Weckl to Vinnie Colaiuta. Dave is Dave and Vinnie is Vinnie. The only competition belongs in sports. But I gotta say, Wolfgang is an old soul. The guy has a groove you'll not believe. It's hard to hear in a live show, but you will when we make a record. Wolfgang is a player. It goes back to what Steve Smith said about defining the difference between time and pulse. The pulse now is so deep. I can't explain it, but you can feel it.

Eddie would tell you the same thing: If Wolfgang couldn't cut it—son or no son—he wouldn't be on the gig.

Timekeeping And "Toad"

MD: Van Halen always played on the edge of the beat. Have you worked on ways to steady the time from the old days?

Alex: As I said earlier, we grew up on classical music, and we learned that when you

need something to propel the music and you only have two instruments, once you've used dynamics to take it to the next level, you give it a nudge. It won't hurt. Our time is elastic. As long as Ed and I are playing together, it's cool.

MD: Do you approach time any differently now?

Alex: If something needs a push, we push it. Like Vinnie said to me when I saw him on tour with Sting, "You guys always sound like you're chomping at the bit." And that's a good thing.

I'm the first to admit that I push the beat. But we're not there to re-create a song. We're there to put you on fire. We're there to get the audience involved with what we're doing. It's not a one-way street. The audience is part of it. But we're not looking backwards, we're looking forward.

MD: Do you have room to improvise during the shows?

Alex: Yes, but I don't want to clutter things up. We want the 2007 version of the songs that we played in 1984. We don't play them in the same way. That would be a disservice to us, and a disservice to the audience. We're not there to replay a record. This is who we are today, playing those songs that haven't

been heard for twenty-three years. That's a long time for these songs to be sitting idle.

MD: Your solo at the Meadowlands combined three different themes, using double bass drum patterns and single-note rolls between your hands and bass drums.

Alex: I can't remember exactly what I played, though I am playing some single bass drum notes alternating with the floor tom. It's blocked out in three different sections. The first part is my tribute to Ginger Baker, my memory of when I first heard "Toad." My take on it is understandable. It's in 4/4, but the time flops. Baker was a master of that. My solo comes out of "Pretty Woman," and starting off with the Ginger idea just felt natural. If we'd come out of "Hot For Teacher," which was the original plan, I would have played something different. Everything is organic.

The second part of the solo is where I throw an old flanger on the drum sound. I do whatever I feel at the moment. Then it builds up and I do a tempo change from fast to slow to fast, which draws in the crowd. Then the last part is something taken from a Latin piece, comprised of the songs we didn't do live, like "Out Of Love Again." I took little pieces of older songs and asked Steve Porcaro to orchestrate them. He put some NIN sounds in there, too. The part over the prerecorded track is all odd meter, using different stickings that I can't explain because I go by the melody. Even Steve had a little trouble because it's not in a straight meter.

MD: Finally, you mentioned earlier that you're a natural drummer. Does that really mean that you don't need to practice to stay on top of your game?

Alex: No, I have to practice. And I should have practiced more when the band first started. Steve Smith is very dedicated, and he has great insights. If I was just starting out, I would talk to Steve.

There's a certain camaraderie between musicians. We don't talk about it; nobody wants to know about the hours you've spent practicing in a closet—well, drummers do, but some people don't. But my main point is, in music, you can't do it alone. It's a team effort. I'm hanging around with guys I've known for thirty-five years. How many people have done that or even gotten along with somebody for that long? You can't do it alone.

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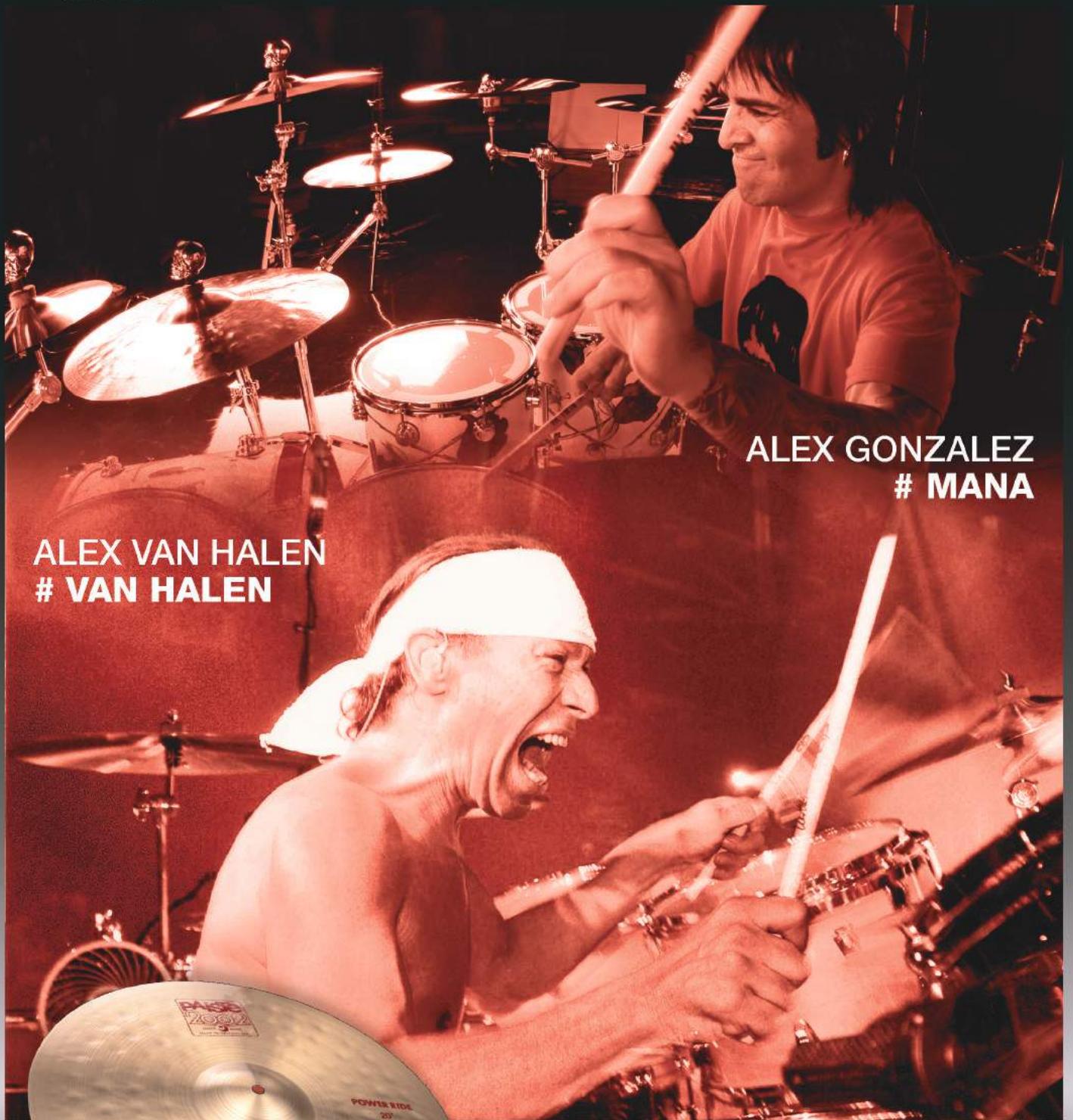
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BRILLIANCE & PROJECTION

Alex Van Halen

The Early Years

by Ed Breckenfeld



MUSIC KEY

open	○	R.C.	✱	C.C.	✱
H.H.	○	T.T.	✱	S.D.	○
F.H.	○	B.D.1	○	H.H.	○
w/foot	○	B.D.2	○	Add 1	○
		T.T.	○		

As Van Halen fans celebrate the long-awaited return of original singer David Lee Roth, this month's *Off The Record* casts the spotlight on drummer Alex Van Halen. Though younger brother Eddie's groundbreaking guitar techniques have brought him more fame through the years, musicians and fans alike know that Alex is a top-notch player in his own right. Let's examine his best moments on some of Van Halen's biggest David Lee Roth-era songs.

"Runnin' With The Devil"

Van Halen (1978)

This hit from Van Halen's first album has all the band's trademarks in place: Roth's signature screams, a great guitar riff from Eddie, and Alex's bedrock beat. Notice his semi-open hi-hat accents on the backbeats, which add depth to the groove. (0:29)

At the end of the song Alex accents every beat, first with a floor tom/snare drum tradeoff separated by ride-cymbal off-beats, and then with grabbed crashes. (3:23)

"You Really Got Me"

Van Halen

In the chorus of Van Halen's cover of this Kinks classic, Alex seems to be paying tribute to a drummer from another celebrated British band. This crash cymbal-heavy beat and triplet ruff was one of Who drummer Keith Moon's staple moves. (1:15)

"Dance The Night Away"

Van Halen II (1979)

The pre-chorus of this single from the second Van Halen album is built on dramatic accents from the band. After simply

stating the accents in the first bar, Alex sets up the accents with fills in the remaining measures. (1:25)

4
♩ = 128

Musical notation for 'Beautiful Girls' by Van Halen II. It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 128. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accents (>), and rests (∅) across the staves.

"Beautiful Girls"

Van Halen II

Built around another compelling guitar riff from Eddie, this track swings hard in a half-time feel. Alex uses the traditional jazz ride pattern while catching offbeat accents in the pre-chorus groove. (0:38)

5
♩ = 102

Musical notation for 'Unchained' by Fair Warning (1982). It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 102. The notation features triplet patterns (3) and accents (>) throughout.

"Unchained"

Fair Warning (1982)

Alex handles the odd-time section of this track by locking in with Eddie's guitar riff as he negotiates the changing time signatures. The end of the sequence features more of Alex's favorite grabbed crashes. (0:42)

6
♩ = 137

Musical notation for 'Hot For Teacher' by MCMLXXXIV. It consists of four staves of music in 6/4 time with a tempo of 137. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accents (>), and rests (∅).

"Jump"

MCMLXXXIV (1984)

This massive hit features another interesting pre-chorus sequence, with Alex alternating between the ride, hi-hat, and snare in a repeating three-note pattern. (0:57)

7
♩ = 129

Musical notation for 'Jump' by MCMLXXXIV. It consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 129. The notation features a repeating three-note pattern and various accents (>).

"Hot For Teacher"

MCMLXXXIV

Now we come to Alex's best-known beat. His incredible performance on this track ranks up with the best drumming of the era. In his opening solo sequence, Alex layers a triplet pattern on a deep tom (or low-pitched Simmons pad) over a classic double bass shuffle. (0:06)

8
♩ = 256

Musical notation for 'Jump' by MCMLXXXIV. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 256. The notation features a triplet pattern (3) and a double bass shuffle.

When Alex launches into the main groove, he plays double strokes on the ride cymbal to fill in every other triplet over the double kick shuffle. Check the tempo of these grooves—he's flying! (0:23)

9
♩ = 256

Musical notation for 'Jump' by MCMLXXXIV. It consists of one staff of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 256. The notation features a triplet pattern (3) and a double kick shuffle.

Alex brings the band out of the song's breakdown sections with some quick, flashy licks. This one is from the second breakdown. (2:14)

10
♩ = 256

Musical notation for 'Jump' by MCMLXXXIV. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time with a tempo of 256. The notation features a triplet pattern (3) and a double kick shuffle.



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STORY BY ROBYN FLANS • PHOTOS BY ROB SHANAHAN

maná is a true rags-to-riches story. Fueled by an intense passion for music and a belief that music can transcend the boundaries of language, the Mexican rock band has sold more than twenty-two million records and collected eight Grammy Awards. They also just completed a sold-out arena tour of the US—including an unprecedented (for a Latin band) four nights at LA's Staples Center, in support of their most recent release, *Amar Es Combatir*.

For star drummer Alex "El Animal" González, the passion for music stirred very early in life, at the age of four. Sure, many drummers can recall beating on pots and pans around that age, but this kid was actually *playing* the drums. No question, González was a prodigy. He began taking the instrument seriously and found himself a teacher at the age of *five*. To say that he was motivated is an understatement. While kids his age were out on the playground, Alex was practicing. And it paid off.

By the time González was fifteen, he was in the first incarnation of Maná. Years of sleeping in a van, eating bread and milk, and playing for small audiences finally paid off when their 1994 album *Donde Jugando Los Niños* broke big, becoming *Billboard's* Latin Pop Album Of The Year, selling over a million copies in Mexico, and being certified gold in the US. And beyond the popular success of the group, the individual members have been recognized for their abilities on their instruments—particularly González.

So for Alex, this is exactly how he visualized his life would be, back in the day, sitting in his bedroom pretending to play for an arena full of fans.

Maná's ALEX GONZALEZ

A Passion For Drumming

**“PASSION, BEING YOURSELF,
PUTTING YOUR
HEART AND SOUL
INTO THE MUSIC—
THAT’S WHAT’S
IMPORTANT TO ME.
PEOPLE FEED
OFF OF THAT.”**



MD: You began playing drums at a ridiculously early age.

Alex: I got interested because I saw The Beatles on television. They made such a huge impact on me that I said to myself, "That's what I want to do for the rest of my life. In those days, I didn't have a drumset, so when I would go with my mom to the supermarket, I would bring home cardboard boxes and put them around my room like they were different-size drums. I had play drumsticks.

The first kit that I got was thanks to a kindergarten teacher who was a friend of my mom. She saw me at the house playing on the cardboard boxes and saw that I had rhythm accompanying the music. She

said, "I have a drumset that my father gave me that I would love to give to you."

I'll never forget that day. I remember it was a Sunday afternoon, and it was unbelievable when I saw her taking out the drums. They were red sparkle. I didn't know how to set them up! But then one day I saw this African-American kid walking down the street with a pair of sticks and I went up to him and asked, "Will you give me lessons?" I took him into my house, he met my mom, and for \$1.10 he gave me half-hour lessons, two times a week. He showed me how to set up the drums and how to tune them. He got me going, and I would say in about a month I started playing on my own to records.

My parents always told me I could play the drums and practice as much as I wanted, but I had to keep up in school. I spent more time in my room practicing than playing outside with my friends. When I was nine, my mom insisted that I take drum lessons, so I went to my first drum teacher. I got into Carmine Appice's Realistic Rock and began to learn to read. It was difficult for me to sit there going over rudiments without having music behind me or pushing a band, which is what I wanted to do. I was always practicing to records. The influences I had as a kid were Ringo Starr—I was playing a lot of Beatles records—The Who, and Led Zeppelin. John Bonham and Keith Moon

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Drums: DW Collectors Series Maple with custom art by John Douglas

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- B. 6x13 timbale (Latin Percussion Tito Puente model)
- C. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare (aluminum)
- D. 9x12 tom
- E. 12x14 floor tom
- F. 14x16 floor tom
- G. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. 18" 2002 Power crash
- 2. 16" 2002 China
- 3. 8" Signature splash

- 4. 14" 2002 Crunch hi-hats
- 5. 19" 2002 Power crash
- 6. 6" 2002 cup chime
- 7. 8" New Signature Mark I Dark Energy splash
- 8. 10" 2002 splash
- 9. 21" Signature Dry Heavy ride
- 10. 20" 2002 Power crash
- 11. 14" 2002 Crunch hi-hats
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- 13. 18" 2002 Power crash

Percussion: Latin Percussion

- aa. Cyclops tambourine
- bb. Rock cowbell

Hardware: DW, including a 9002 double pedal (light spring tension, hard plastic side of beaters)

Heads: Remo coated Emperor X on snare batter with Ambassadors snare-side (top tight, bottom medium-tight, Moon Gel for muffling), Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, Renaissance P3 on bass drum with coated Ambassador on front (DW pillow for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth Alex Gonzalez signature model (hickory with nylon tip)

Electronics: Roland R-8, V-Drums (home studio)

Microphones: Shure SM-98 Beta, SM-91 Beta, SM-81, Beta 52, Beta 57, SM 57, KSM 137, Crown 311-E wireless vocal mic, Ultimate Ear UE7 monitors



were huge influences on me. KISS was another.

Around 1981, I heard a song on the radio called "Don't Stand So Close To Me," which was my opening to the fusion of reggae and rock. There had been a lot of new wave things going on, and I really enjoyed Clem Burke from Blondie, who reminded me of Keith Moon. But when I heard The Police, that was it! I found out about Stewart Copeland and bought all the records up to that point.

Copeland became a huge influence on me, and when I got into him my technique really started to evolve. There was so much going on—the stuff he was doing on the hi-hat, the stuff he was doing with the ride, with the splash cymbals, the rhythms, the tuning of his snare drum, how high-pitched and how much "crack" it had. I never got to see him live, but when I got to see videos, it opened up a whole new world. I saw how hard he hit the drums—it was just insane. That was a big turning point in my drumming.

MD: Can you tell me about some of your more advanced practice sessions as you got older?

Alex: In 1982, I would come home from school, go straight into my practice room, put on any album by The Police, say Reggatta De Blanc or Ghost In The Machine, and play to the record and imagine I was onstage with The Police. I would try to imitate what I was hearing, even though I didn't really have any idea if I was doing it right or wrong. At least I knew, time-wise, that I was following the music correctly.

I would also sit at the drums and make things up. I remember listening a lot to Rush. I'd hear "YYZ," that amazing solo that Neil Peart played, and I would try to pick up on things and even do it my own way. I think I was born with a good ear and

could imitate drummers without much difficulty. I don't know if I was technically doing them correctly, but what I played sounded the same to me.

The other thing that helped a lot was when video started coming out. I remember buying the Synchronicity Live concert in '83 and seeing Mr. Copeland playing live. Around that time I was also getting into Terry Bozzio. I got to really love his drumming by way of Missing Persons, and then I began to investigate his musical past.

MD: I read that you moved when you were fifteen, which was an important time in your life.

Alex: My parents got divorced, my mom remarried, and we moved to Mexico City. I was ready to finish ninth grade in Miami, and she said, "Why don't you come down to Mexico? You're welcome to stay, and if you can't adjust to the culture, you can always go back and stay with your dad in Miami."

I enrolled in a private school in Mexico City. It was very difficult to adjust, but at the same time it was very interesting. I was listening to other music and meeting different types of kids. I went to visit cousins in Guadalajara, and that was more relaxed than Mexico City, which feels as intense as New York City. I was asking around about bands, because I had a band in Miami when I was twelve that played some parties, and I wanted to be in a band in Mexico. One name always popped up—Sombrero Verde, which translates to Green Hat. I always thought the name was terrible, but everybody told me it was the most important band in Guadalajara and that they sounded a lot like The Police, but in Spanish. I couldn't find their records, though.

So I went back to Mexico City, and a week later an ad came out in the music section in the newspa-



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behold, it was the number for Fher Olvero, the lead singer of Sombrero Verde.

I met Fher, we talked, and in the afternoon we went to a recording studio where there were about seven other drummers waiting to audition. They were a lot older than I was, which was a bit overwhelming. I was still a kid, fifteen years of age. I was very excited, though, because I'd always wanted to be part of a good band. So when Fher asked me if I wanted to play first, I said, "No, no, no, I want to be the last one," so that way I had the opportunity to hear the songs and see how the competition was.

per saying, "Popular band looking for drummer between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, with more than nine years of experience." My mom was thinking about it for a week, realizing

that if they were a professional band with albums and touring, that would mean I would have to leave home. But my mom eventually told me about the ad, and I called. Lo and

When it was my turn to play, I remember the guitar player turned around and gave Fher the thumbs-up. We finished and he said, "Let's play some reggae." I like improvising. We did

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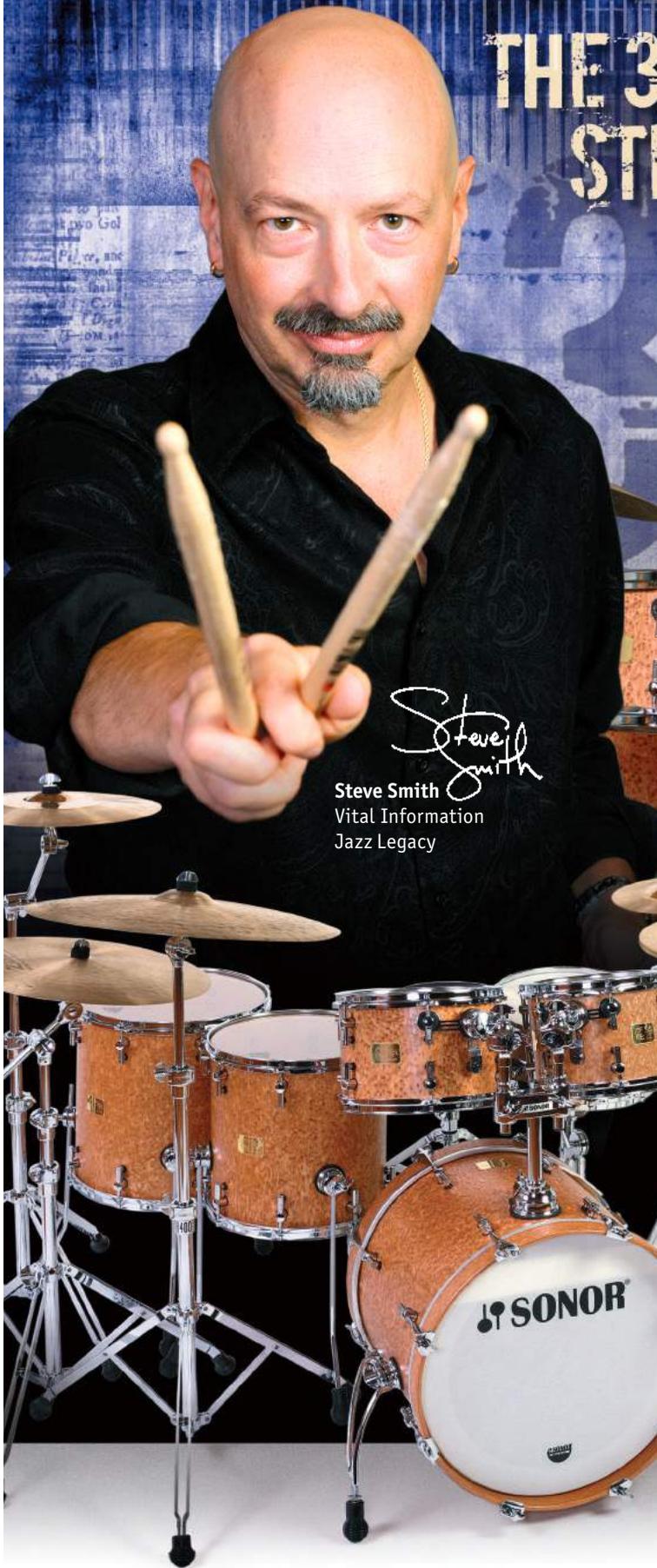
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ALEX GONZÁLEZ

that for a while, and at the end of the afternoon, he said, "I like the way you play. If you want to do this, you'll have to go to Guadalajara to play with the band and get their approval, so learn these songs." So I did.

I played the three songs they had asked me to learn from their albums, and it was awesome. It was just like people had told me—like The Police, but in Spanish. So I got the gig and it was, "Mom, I got the gig and I'm so happy, but I have to move to Guadalajara." That was a difficult decision for my mom. How are you going to let your fifteen-year-old kid live in another city by himself? But she had met Fher and his parents and sisters, and I moved in with them. I had a room next to the rehearsal room, and I was paying for my room and board from whatever gigs we would get.

MD: And you struggled for a long time.

Alex: Yes. Sombrero Verde lasted until mid-1986. I was with them from '84 to '86, and then some band members left. Then Fher wanted to put together a new band that would also mix reggae with rock, but that would be even broader and mix Latin and world beat with different styles. So we formed a new band together with the standing members of that band, and it turned into Maná. We released our first album in 1987.

MD: From what I've heard, it was a terrible first recording experience.

Alex: But we learned from it. We realized that we needed to have control and produce the material. So when we signed with Warner Bros. in 1989, we insisted that Fher and I would produce our music from that point forward. That has helped us to develop our style and our sound, because we have an idea of what we want to hear in the studio.

MD: Around that time you were considering leaving the band?

Alex: Yes, at the beginning of 1990, I told Fher, Look, things aren't happening here. I've always had a dream of becoming a successful drummer. I know it sounds cliché but I wanted to be a rock star. If it wasn't going to happen in Mexico, I wanted to make it happen somewhere else. I wanted to move to LA.

The scene in LA was exploding at that time, and I decided to leave the band and move there. Fher asked me to give him a few months to find another drummer. Fortunately, one of our songs, "Rayndo El Sol," began to get airplay. All of a sudden we were offered all sorts of gigs. Things began to take off.

When we would play live, that's when people would be blown away. A lot of bands can sound amazing on record, but when it's time to

play live, that's where the real deal is, and we were getting a lot of positive comments from our live show. That has continued to this day.

MD: Speaking of your live show, your drum solo is considered a staple and a highlight of a Maná concert. Talk about your soloing concept.

Alex: As a kid, there were solos I loved. Of course, the first was "Moby Dick" by Zeppelin and then "YYZ" by Rush. I'd listen to these solos over and over again, and they became like a song to me—with different sections and different parts. I thought about that. For part one you start off with something like an intro, from there you improvise, and then you go to part two and then part three.

Also, we have always been heavily involved in our own stage production. I work very closely with the lighting director so that the entire production enhances what I'm playing in my solo.

I've always said I'm a drummer who plays for a band, and at the same time, I play to have a good time. I'm not there doing my thing to impress drummers or compete with anybody. Music—and drumming—is not about competition. Passion, being yourself, putting your heart and soul into the music—that's what's important to me. People feed off of that.

When I'm playing my solos, no one in the

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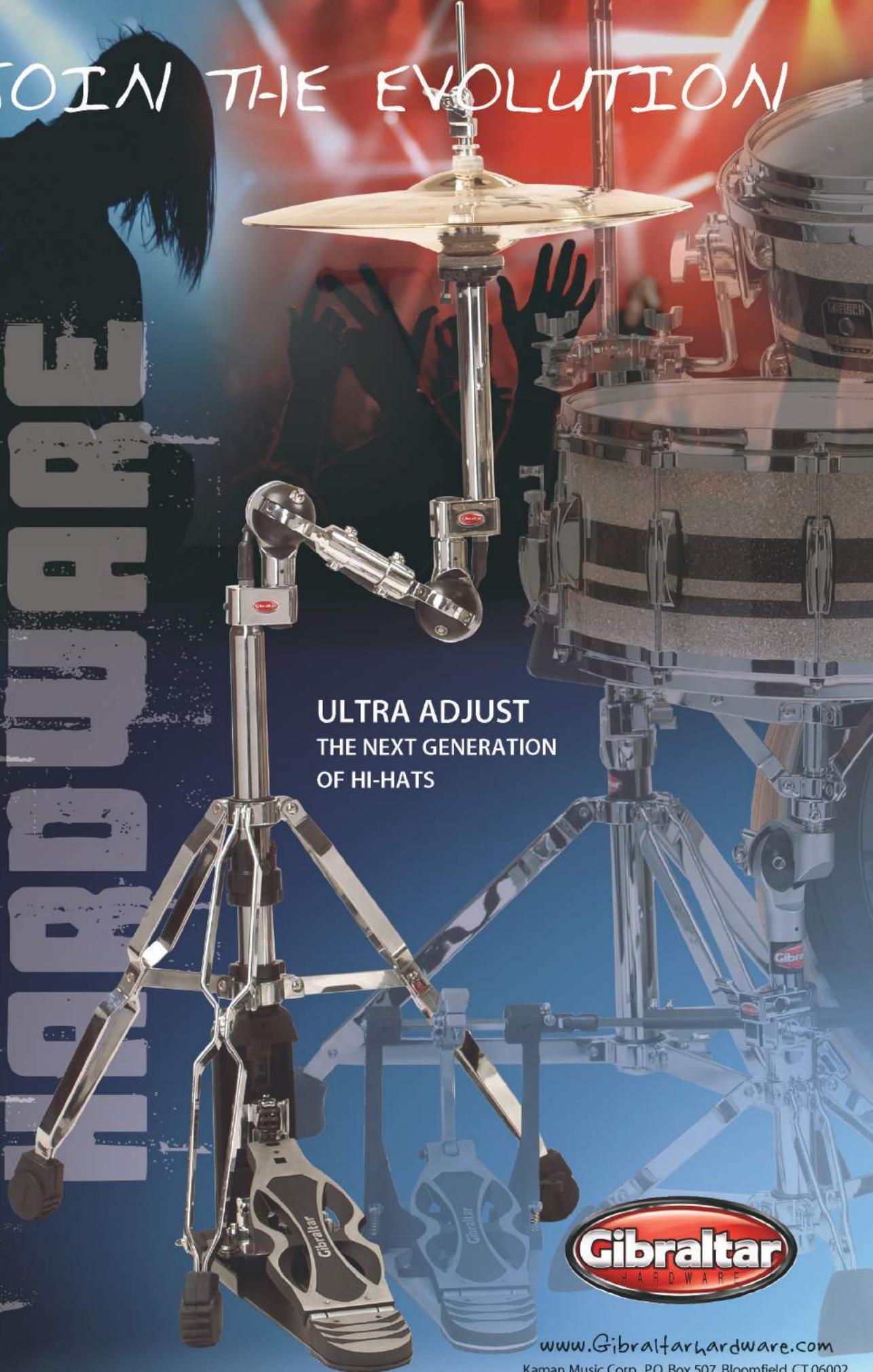


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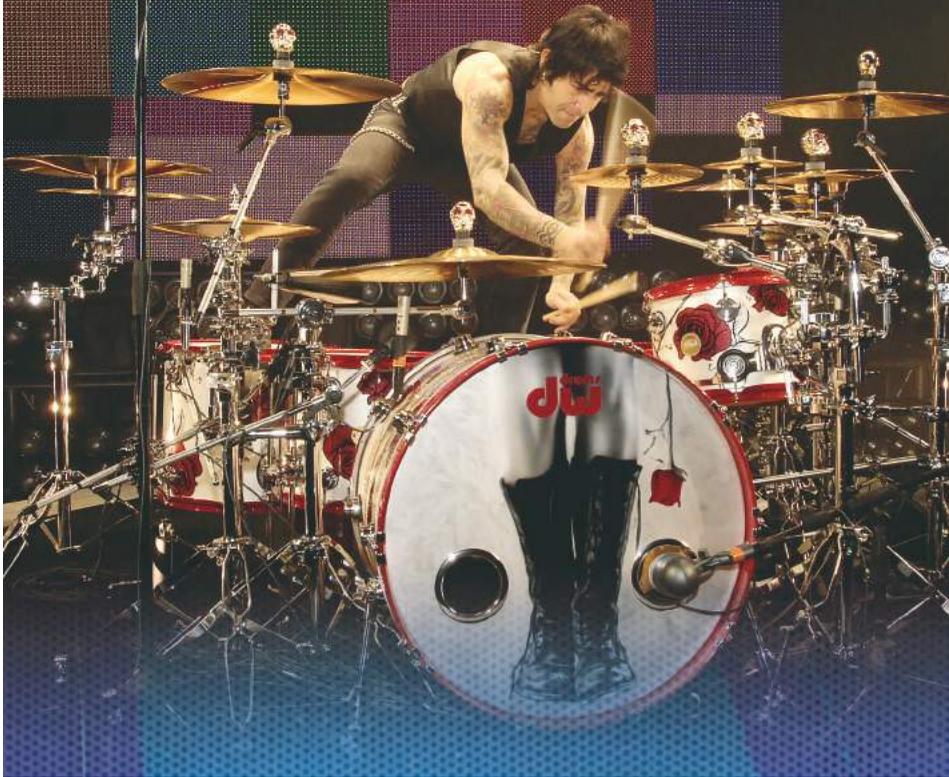
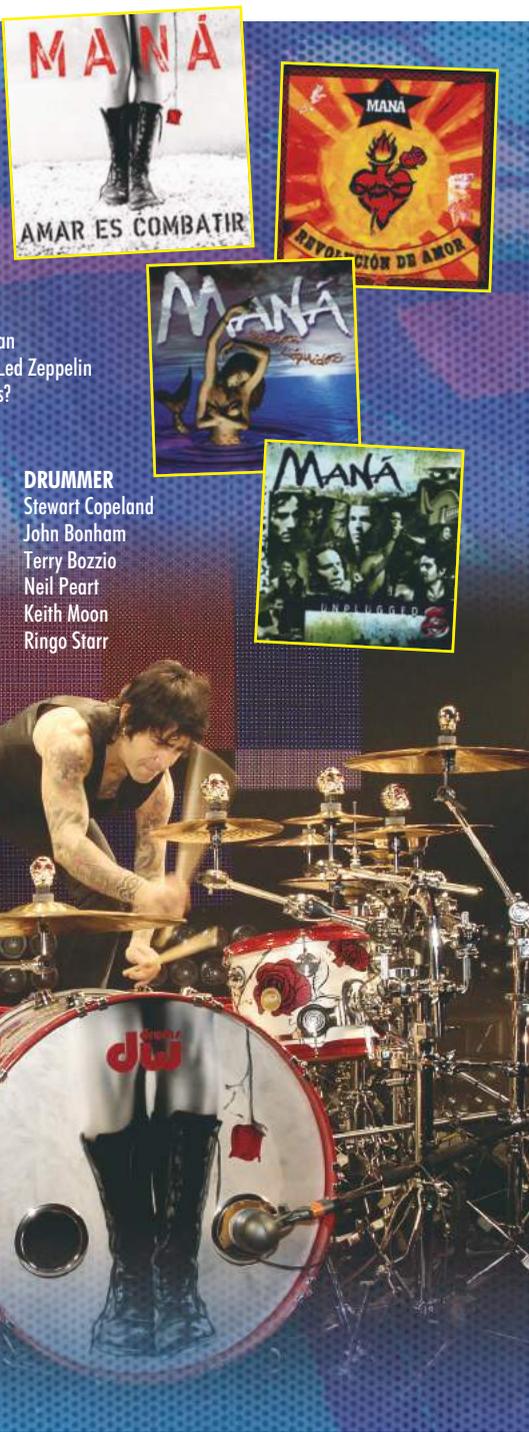
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Maná	MTV Unplugged
Santana/Maná	Supernatural
Maná	Sueños Líquidos
Maná	Cuando Los Angeles Lloran
Maná	Encomium—Tribute To Led Zeppelin
Maná	Donde Jugaran Los Niños?

FAVORITES

ARTIST	ALBUM	DRUMMER
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Missing Persons	Spring Session M	Terry Bozzio
Rush	Exit Stage Left	Neil Peart
The Who	Who's Next	Keith Moon
The Beatles	all	Ringo Starr



audience leaves to go to the bathroom or to go get a beer. It's an intimate moment between me and the audience. I'm not there to impress anybody. I'm just there to please them.

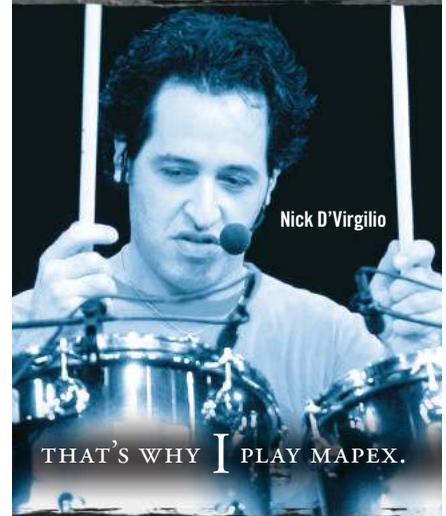
It's sad that there are people in the drumming community who criticize other drummers. I have the same admiration for someone playing in a hotel lobby as I do for a Terry Bozzio or a Vinnie Colaiuta. If I see a drummer playing with passion, I admire them for what they're doing.

MD: All of that passion that you play with must be tough on you physically. How do you prepare for the physical demands of a Maná tour?

Alex: Two years ago I got into pilates. I also found a personal trainer, because I wanted to get into really good shape for this tour. I started exercising—a lot of cardio, running, bike, and pilates for stretching and toning.

Before I perform I do certain stretching exercises, not only for my hands and feet, but for my body in general, because I am a very physical player. I attack my drums very physically. You have to be careful not to pull a muscle or hurt yourself. I'll do fifteen or twenty minutes of stretching, and from there I'll warm up on my Vic Firth practice pad using marching sticks. I'll play through the basic rudiments—single

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Nick D'Virgilio

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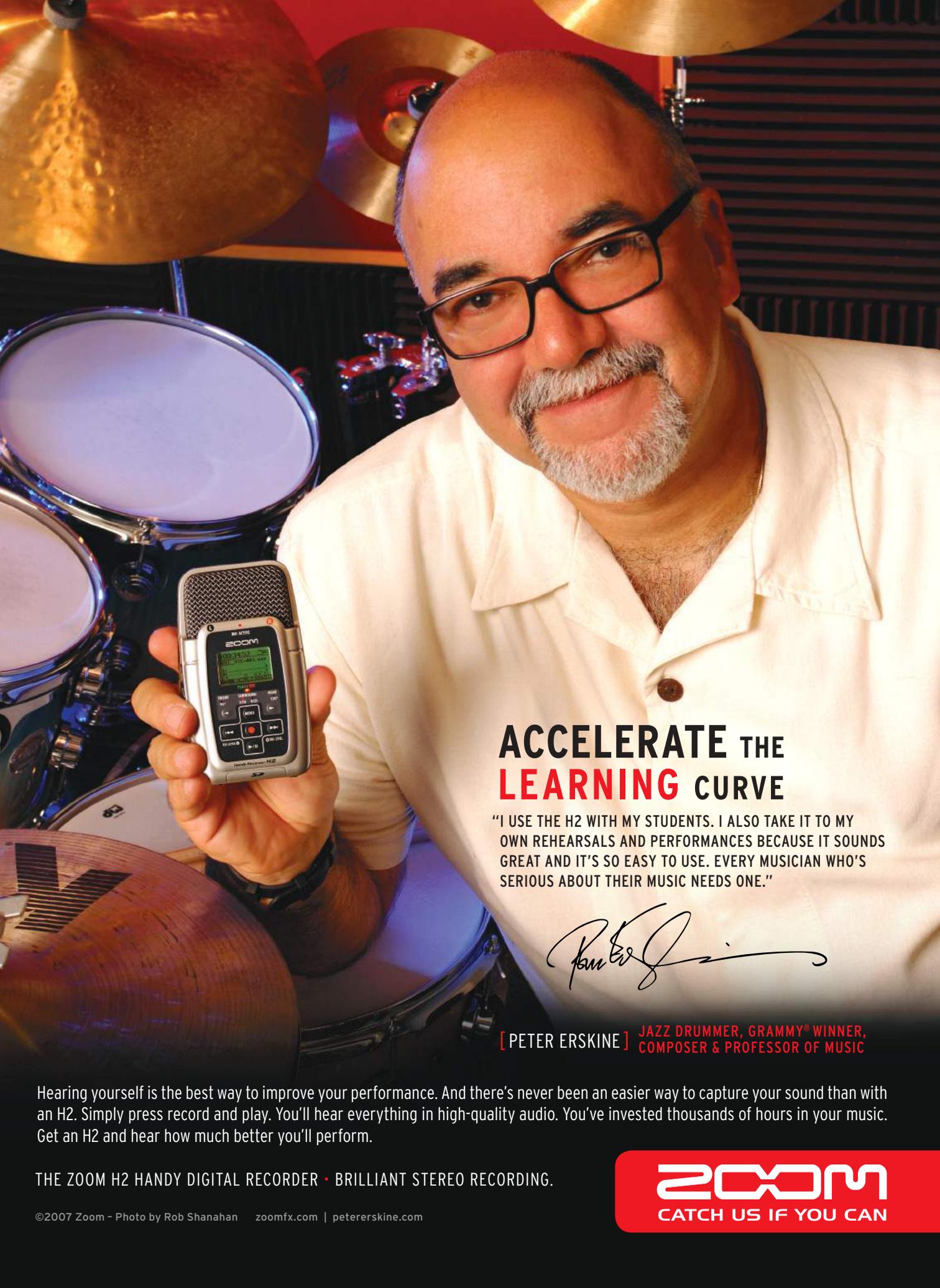


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ALEX GONZÁLEZ

strokes, double strokes, paradiddles, accent patterns—and build them up to a very fast speed, but without overdoing it. Then I'll just do simple hits to loosen my arms and joints.

MD: You also sing onstage.

Alex: That's something pilates has helped me with also. It shows you that the center of the work is from your abdomen. Even for posture, instead of putting all the pressure on your back, you're putting all that work on your stomach. I've learned how to breathe better because of that. For singing background and for the two songs I sing lead vocals on, that helps me a lot.

One of the things I can recommend for drummers who like to hit hard is to be as relaxed as possible. I don't want to say it's cheating, but I don't hit rimshots. I always hit dead center with the tip of my stick on the snare and the toms. The technique I have is a slapping technique. I don't put pressure on the heads, I play off the drum-heads—the cymbals, too.

I grew up admiring drummers who would hit the drums hard, but in a very artistic way. I remember seeing Tony Thompson, God bless him, and how he would attack the drums. It was beautiful, like seeing poetry in motion. The same thing with Bonham, Copeland, and Bozzio. It's very physical, but very musical, and that's what I try to apply to my style.

As long as you're relaxed, you won't hurt yourself. I went to a specialist for bones and muscles before this last tour began. He recommended that after playing I get an ice bag to put on each hand for ten minutes. He said that would bring down the swelling after I played. I did that on this tour and it worked. I never woke up with my joints hurting.

MD: Let's talk about Amar Es Combatir, your latest album. What was the biggest challenge while making it?

Alex: Well, when we finished our last tour, in December of 2003, we were really burned out as a band, physically and emotionally. We had been working non-stop for twelve years. It wasn't fun anymore because of all the pressures of touring and recording, so we stopped and asked, "Why did we become a band in the first place?" It was all about having fun and creating music, going on the road, and enjoying the shows.

So we decided to take a year off. We told our manager and our record company not to call

us, unless it was to say hello. We wanted to be with our families, travel, and enjoy the success. In my case, I produced a band. I wanted to give back, because music had given so much to me.

When Maná finally got back together, we were excited to move forward. And we made some changes. One of the things we wanted to change was the recording scenario. We had mostly recorded in LA. We decided to record in Miami and use a new engineer, Tom Russo, and to try to find new sounds and make a more varied album.

From the making of the demos to the recording process, it was the most fun, relaxed, and creative album of our career. It was scary at the same time, because we hadn't released an album in three and a half years. Would it be successful? But when the record came out, it debuted at number 4 on the Billboard top 100 chart, which is a first for a rock en Espanol band.

MD: What about your playing on the record?

Alex: I felt like I did a lot of cool things, as far as the drumming is concerned. I didn't use a 24" kick, which I normally do. I tried a 22". I tried deeper snare drums. And I even did one song, "Ojala Pudiera Borrarte," where I used brushes on a cardboard box and on a leather sofa to create different sounds and patterns.

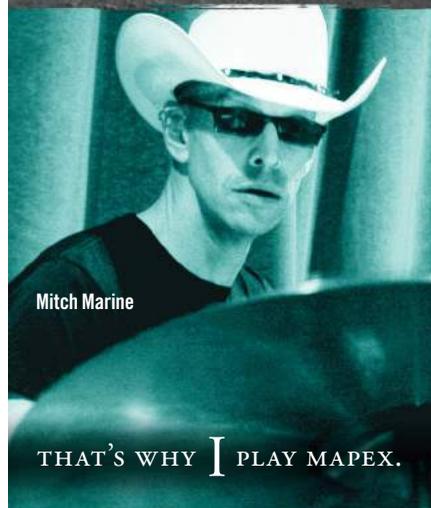
We recorded all analog, which we've always done, and we wanted to stay away from using Pro Tools for editing things like drum parts. I think if you have good time, leave it as is. Human beings are not perfect; we're not machines. That's why they call it rock 'n' roll—it has that push and pull.

It was unbelievably fun doing this album, and the results were so gratifying. We won Best Rock Performance for a Latin rock band in the American Grammys. That was overwhelming. We also hit a huge milestone on this tour: We sold out four Staples Center shows in LA, which had never been done in the history of Spanish music. The only artists to achieve the same were U2, The Eagles, and Neil Diamond. We also sold out three shows at Madison Square Garden, and that means so much to me because that's where Zeppelin filmed The Song Remains The Same.

The bottom line is, all of this is because of our fans. We have the most loyal fans in the world, and I'm so grateful to them. We feel so blessed. All of the hard work has paid off.

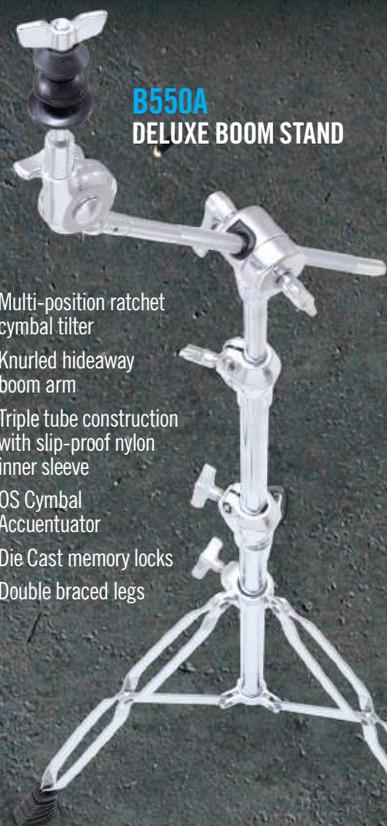


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I spend a lot of time refining my parts to come up with a great performance."

—Jason Bittner
(May 2007)

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photo by Chad Lee

SEETHER'S JOHN HUMPHREY

A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME

Like many musicians who view “the show must go on” as an unshakeable work ethic, John Humphrey, drummer for platinum-selling heavy metal band Seether, learned to live and perform with chronic pain for years without letting it hinder his playing. “I’ve had back problems nearly all my life,” the drummer admits, “due to a condition called deteriorating disc disease.” But steady lower back pain that started out “fairly mild” became acute by 2003, prompting Humphrey to seek a more specific medical diagnosis. “I had an MRI, which showed that one disc—the L5 disc right above the tailbone—was slightly bulging. For drummers, that disc pretty much marks the axis of movement for your appendages, and it takes the brunt of your weight and motion.”

To cope with the pain and to help relieve pressure on certain nerves, John began receiving epidural steroid injections. “With some basic pain medication,” John continues, “I was able to go about my routine. The downside was that medication numbed the pain to the point where I didn’t even feel normal. During shows I felt like the injured football player who medicates himself just to get through the game. To get through a ninety-minute set, I was doing just about anything I could.”

Seether’s popularity and commercial viability grew exponentially in 2004, the year they had a mammoth hit with the song “Broken,” which featured a duet with Evanescence vocalist Amy Lee.

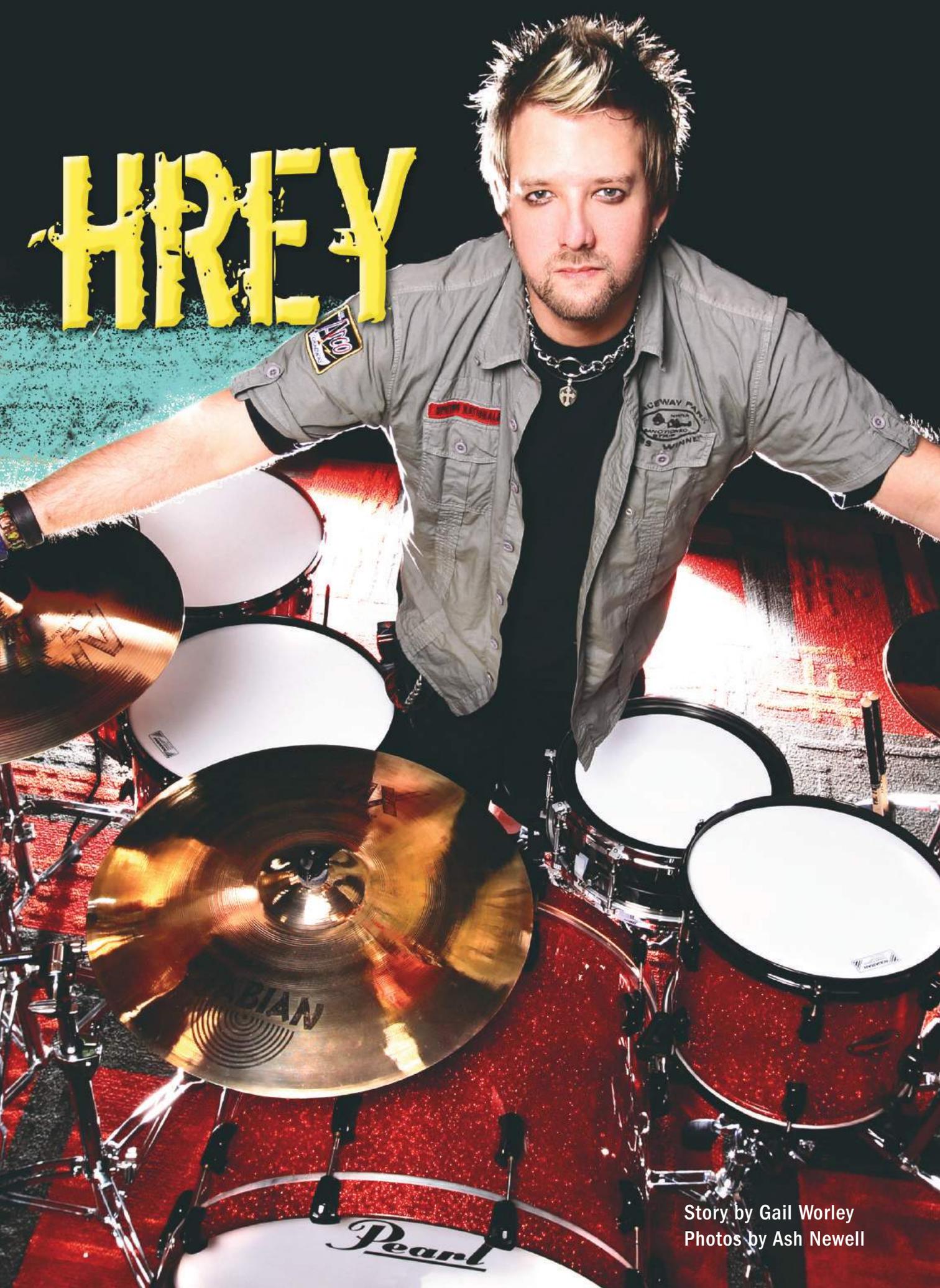
“We were supposed to record a second album at that time,” John explains.

“Instead, what we did was repackage Seether’s debut album, *Disclaimer*, with four or five bonus tracks, which I recorded, and re-released it under the name *Disclaimer II*. After that we went on a year-long tour with Evanescence. In 2005 we recorded and released *Karma And Effect*. We had hit songs, we were on television, and we were touring the world. I couldn’t take a break.”

Unable to take any time off, the drummer’s condition soon went from bad to worse. John knew he could no longer ignore the message his body was sending him. “Although my upper body was strong and my hands were not affected,” he remembers, “eventually my right leg, which is my bass drum leg, became very weak because the damaged disc was pinching my sciatic nerve. I had problems playing things with a single foot that I’d been doing since I was fifteen; I couldn’t even play simple exercises or jogging 16th notes. By the end of the last tour I had to use two feet to play those parts. That bulging disc eventually became a crushed, collapsed disc. By 2005 I knew I needed surgery.”



HIREY



Story by Gail Worley
Photos by Ash Newell

Humphrey, who has played professionally for seventeen years, spent nine years with the band The Nixons, and joined Seether in 2003. Although doctors never pinpointed the cause of his collapsed disc, two decades behind the kit likely contributed to John's condition.

With his solid, hard-hitting attack and creative knack for adding percussive nuances to the song, John convinced vocalist Shaun Morgan at his audition for Seether that he was the perfect drummer for the band. "It's very important when you walk out on stage to know that your drummer is going to be in time," says Morgan. "From that first day, I felt that John's playing was the coolest thing I'd ever seen, and his timing was spot on. He nailed everything even without a click track. I've always been a big fan of hard-hitting, pounding drummers like John Bonham and Dave Grohl, and one of my favorite things about John is that he hits *really* hard. It's not so much about showing off as it is about putting everything you have into it. That's what John does."

In the fall of 2006, after finishing a major tour, Seether took an extended break to write material for a new album, and the band and management agreed that John needed to use the time to get treatment. "I checked into the hospital and underwent the six-hour surgery in late December," John recalls. The drummer spent Christmas of 2006 in a walker, but started on a promising road to full recovery.

By mid-June, after six months away from the band, John was ready to re-join Seether (which also includes bassist Dale Stewart) in the studio to begin recording the group's fifth album, *Finding Beauty In Negative Spaces*. Producer Howard Benson, working with Seether for the first time, wasn't even aware that the drummer had undergone back surgery. "I can often tell how good a drummer is by the way he makes the room in our studio sound," Benson offers. "A good drummer will make the room *explode*. John is a great rock drummer with a very straightforward approach to hitting and playing drums. He knows what his abilities are, and the best drummers are those kinds of guys."

"Studio drumming is simpler than most people think," Benson continues. "John is very much like a session player, because his playing is simple, direct, and has a great pocket. If I were going to compare him to one of the greats, I would say his style of drumming is similar to Josh Freese, because he gets his style across in a way that doesn't interfere with the song." The drummer completed his tracks for the CD's fifteen songs in just three days.

Shortly after recording his parts for the album, John Humphrey spoke candidly with *Modern Drummer* about his surgery, finding rejuvenation in the recovery process, and taking his playing to the next step with *Finding Beauty In Negative Spaces*.



"THE SIX MONTHS AFTER SURGERY WAS THE LONGEST BREAK I'VE EVER TAKEN FROM PLAYING. NOW I FEEL REFRESHED."

MD: Who are your primary influences, and how do aspects of their style show up in your own technique?

John: I've never been a drummer who says, "Now I'm going to work on the curvature of my arm and the exact distance from which I'm going to strike the snare drum in relation to...whatever." My technique is about me being a heavy hitter. It's never been anything that involves working on each individual stroke. I like power drummers who have a presence in the band, like Tommy Lee and Dave Grohl. These guys are deliberate and put their drumming stamp on a song, or on their band in general. Of course, I'm an apprentice of John Bonham, the guy who created the blueprint for all of this. Bonham laid the groundwork as far as what a drummer's role should be in heavy rock music.

I'm also a big fan of Steve Smith. I saw Steve and Dave Weckl do a clinic when I was in high school, and I think some of that crept into my playing. You know, you

take a little bit from everywhere and you evolve into your own playing style.

Alternative rock took over in the '90s, when I was with The Nixons. That's when I was most influenced by Grohl and was riding the crash cymbal a lot. In that type of music there's often an explosion in dynamics between the verse and chorus, which is a lot different from just bashing your way through it.

MD: What did your post-surgical rehabilitation involve?

John: It took three months post-surgery before I could even get to the point of rehabilitation. The surgery involved a full lower lumbar disc fusion, where the disc is removed and the cartilage area is replaced with a donor bone. That takes about a year from the date of the surgery to fully heal. Initially, a physical therapist brought in a walker right away after the surgery and taught me how to stand and walk again, because the entire upper body weight is pressing onto this area. I went through

about three months of just walking to regain my strength. Following that was a regimen of physical therapy, maybe three days a week.

To strengthen my weakened leg, I'd walk in the shallow end of a pool, because the resistance of the water is good for those muscles. Once I felt strong enough, I started playing drums again at home. I have a Roland V-Drum set and I played that while I was going through rehabilitation.

The six months after surgery was the longest break I've ever taken from playing. Now I feel refreshed, and I feel like I'm playing better than ever. I have a different outlook on things. I've even been adding stuff to some of our older songs that we'd played so many times that they'd gotten monotonous. I don't know where that was coming from.

I use a double pedal, and the band immediately commented that my playing was much better, and that my bass drum

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- 5. 21" AAX Stage ride
- 6. 20" AA medium crash
- 7. 18" AA Chinese
- 8. 18" Saturation crash

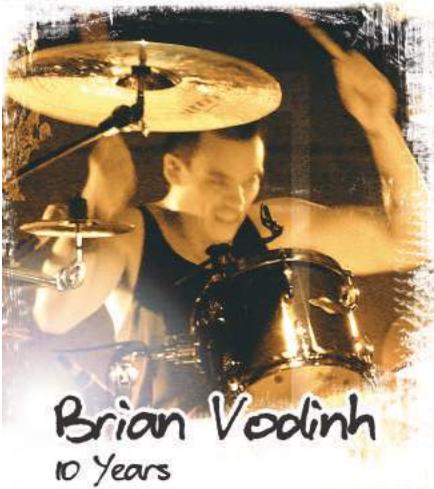
Hardware: Pearl, including a Power Shifter Eliminator double pedal

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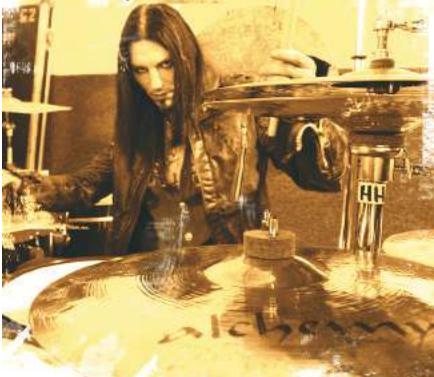
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HUMPHREY'S HIT RECORDINGS

ARTIST

The Nixons
The Nixons
The Nixons
Seether
Seether
Seether
Seether

ALBUM

Foma
The Nixons
Latest Thing
Disclaimer II
Karma And Effect
One Cold Night
Finding Beauty In Negative Spaces



FAVORITES

ARTIST

Mötley Crüe
Van Halen
Queens Of The Stone Age
Elvis Presley
KISS
Soundgarden

ALBUM

Mötley Crüe
Fair Warning
Songs For The Deaf
Aloha From Hawaii
Alive
Superunknown

DRUMMER

Tommy Lee
Alex Van Halen
Dave Grohl
Ronnie Tutt
Peter Criss
Matt Cameron

foot was almost machine gun-like. Before, I just didn't have the speed or dexterity. I didn't realize how weak it had become until towards the end of that last tour, when I was using two legs to do what I would usually do with one. When I was practicing at home before I came out to LA to rehearse for the recording, I noticed right away that my leg was stronger. The surgery had very successful results. I really feel like it's a whole new ball game, a new chapter to my career.

MD: Do you have any tips for drummers on how to prevent back problems?

John: I admit that I hate the word "exercise." It's not something I'm generally

into, but it's definitely become a part of my life. I do a routine of core exercises at the beginning of every day—sit-ups and crunches, plus leg lifts, which work out the lower abdominal muscles. I also do a lot of swimming. My physical limitations involve really common-sense stuff, like not lifting heavy objects, adjusting my posture, and taking a lot of strength from my abdominal muscles rather than using my back.

As far as playing, that's not affected at all. The greatest safety precaution you can take is strengthening your core abdominal muscles. The stronger your core is, the less pressure your back has to absorb.

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Heart And Soul

Seether Vocalist Shaun Morgan On John Humphrey



“We recorded the first Seether album with Josh Freese, who is obviously phenomenal and always in the pocket. Although Josh has been part of countless projects, something about the way he plays is very characteristic. John is the only other drummer whom I’ve felt is the same way behind the kit. He’s my favorite drummer I’ve ever played with.”

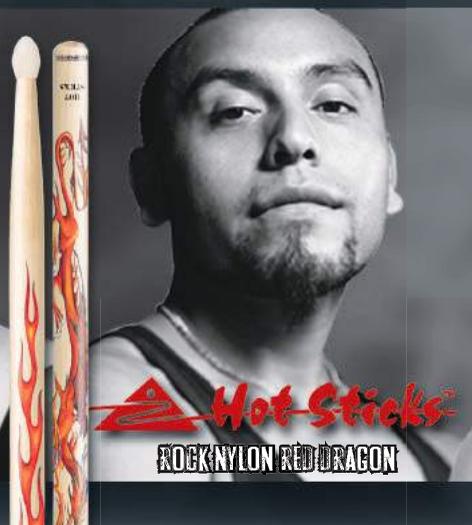
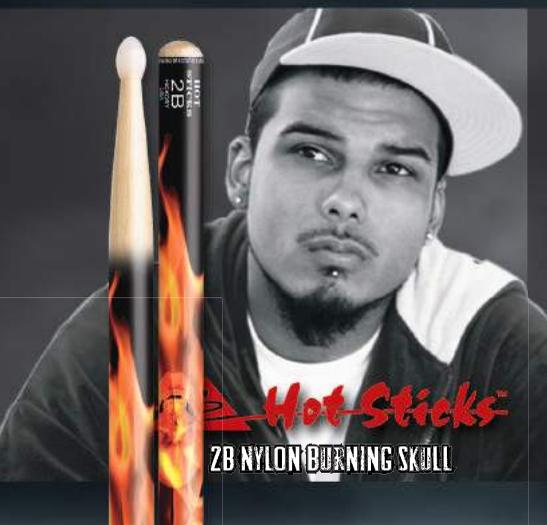
“John was a vital part of the creative process with these songs, and his ideas for the album were very innovative. I love a drummer who writes hooks on the kit—subtle tom hits or little cymbal accents here and there—and he’ll just throw those into the middle of something. I’ve never encountered that with another drummer, and these parts become so important to each song. It’ll maybe be just two rimshots, but he’ll make it sound really cool, and he’ll put it in the oddest place. I love his creativity as much as his playing. There were a few things on this new album that were a bit left of center musically, but John loved that, and he nailed everything in the studio. He surpassed all of our expectations.”

“I know a lot of people who have a hard time accepting compliments. It just so happens that John is *most* critical about what he’s best at. [laughs] I think he was a little concerned that his surgery would hold us up and we’d find someone else. Brian Tichy did help us out with some shows, but Brian always knew that John was coming back. I’m so used to the music industry, where guys think they’re so good at what they do, that it’s kind of bizarre to be playing with a guy like John, who’s so humble. We’ll play festival shows, and other drummers stand behind him and *freak out* because he plays with so much passion. John puts his heart and soul into every show.”



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MD: What was it like getting back into the studio after your recovery?

John: The band was very cautious about letting me rest if I needed any breaks, but that didn't really happen. Howard was easy to understand, as far as what he wanted, but Seether's music isn't brain surgery. There were a couple of songs where busy drum parts worked. There were also songs that we considered for possible singles, so Howard wanted me to lay back and let the focus be more towards the lyric and the melody, and to support what's going on rather than busy it up with a lot of fills.

Howard knows the protocol with our genre of music, and what's desired as far as the drummer's performance. There were songs where I got to integrate more of my playing style, put my stamp on it, and add cool things in the song, which makes it exciting for me. There were also very simple, straightforward songs where I'd go to the school of Ringo Starr—lay back and let the song go where it needed to go.

MD: On which song did you turn in your favorite performance?

John: "Like Suicide" was one of those challenging drum songs; it has a small double bass jog at the end. If you listen to "Because Of Me," the first song on Karma And Effect, it's like the next phase of that song. Fans will know what I mean by that. I wrote that drum part very early on, and it was one of the first songs we worked on.

We've charted the song's evolution on our MySpace page. It starts with us in the practice space. Then it goes to the first day of tracking, with me playing a huge, long fill in the middle

section of the song, between the toms and double bass. I was sure that Howard would take that out, but he loved it and he let it stay. I figured that if I went in and executed it successfully, there wouldn't be any reason to complain.

MD: Have you encountered situations in the studio where hitting so hard creates a problem?

John: Yes. I've learned that sometimes when you think you're really sending power through the mics, you end up choking the drums or cymbals because you're playing too hard. Recording is a completely opposite philosophy to playing live. The art of making the drums sound really big without playing with excessive force involves using a lot of compression in the studio. In order to give the drums a big sound, you do have to lay back a bit.

Some drummers have difficulty maintaining consistent control. I'm very fortunate that I'm able to strike the drum the same way over multiple takes. That way, if they do need to make edits, everything lines up and doesn't sound like fourteen different attempts within one song.

I love to see that "arms behind the head" thing visually, but it doesn't really translate onto a CD. At times Howard encouraged me to watch what I was doing by suggesting that the cymbals were not in balance with the drums—that they were getting very "washy" or "crashy" and I needed to pull back. Otherwise it was reassuring to know that from one take to another I could make that adjustment.

MD: I understand that you nailed your parts

pretty quickly...

John: The songs are all very new. I've been worried that I'll have to listen to the album to know what these songs should sound like when we hit the road. [laughs] The bulk of Finding Beauty In Negative Spaces was based on Shaun throwing out ideas on the fly. The music isn't like Dream Theater, with changes in time signatures all over the place. It's pretty much 4/4 or 3/4 or 6/8 rock. Maybe there's a shuffle here and there, but it's pretty straight-ahead. The songs call for what they call for, and they seem to write themselves sometimes.

This time it almost felt like I was a session guy, working very fast. In some cases we'd do a song and I wouldn't even listen to playback. I would do two or three takes, they would go, "Great, next!" and I'd move on. Before I left they were tracking guitars and I listened back to "Like Suicide," which I thought sounded awesome. My drum tech even said, "This is the best stuff you've done."

I'm excited for everybody to hear this record. I feel really good about it, even though, honestly, when listening back once the CD is completed, I go right to my parts and critique what I'm playing. It's funny, though, because my kids love the band, and they listen to our stuff in the car all the time. When I'm with them, that's probably the only time I can escape into their mindset and appreciate music the way I used to when I was first listening to records, rather than dissecting every part.



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The advertisement features three drummers, each with a pair of Hot Sticks drumsticks. The first drummer on the left is a woman wearing a beanie, with leopard-print drumsticks labeled "5B WOOD LEOPARD". The middle drummer is a man wearing a cowboy hat, with black and white flame-patterned drumsticks labeled "5B NYLON BLACKFLAME". The drummer on the right is a man with long hair, with wood-grain drumsticks labeled "ROCKWOOD SUPERBAD". Each drummer's name and the drumstick model are printed in red and white text at the bottom of their respective panels.

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MARCUS GILMORE

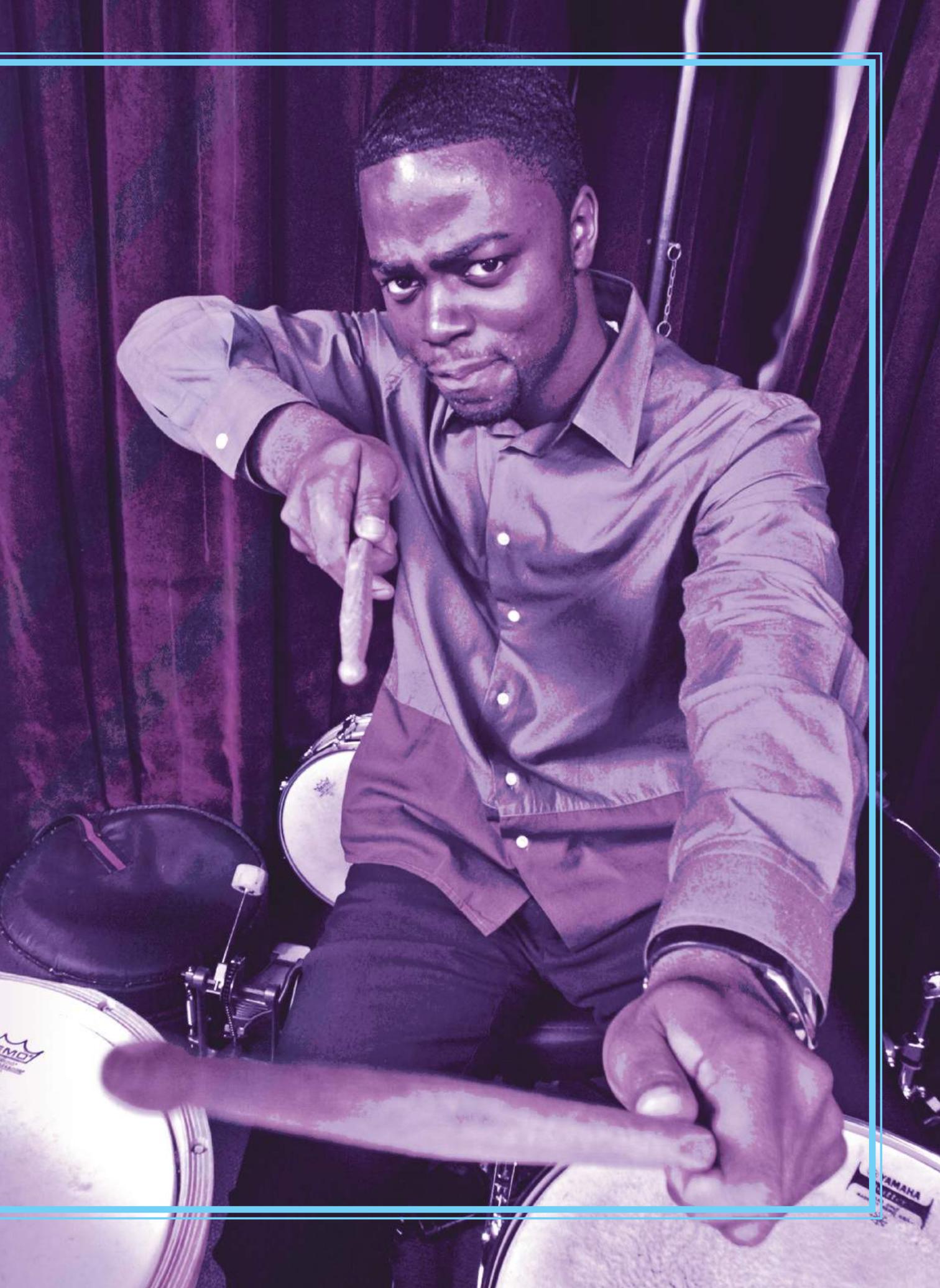
JAZZ FIREBRAND

**Story by Bill Milkowski
Photos by Paul La Raia**

There was a moment three years ago (May 2, 2004, to be exact) when a seventeen-year-old Marcus Gilmore must have seen a glimpse of his future. There he was, in Bern, Switzerland—his first time in Europe—taking a week off from high school to play a jazz festival with Clark Terry & The Young Titans Of Jazz. Gilmore's path became clear at that point. He was going to be a professional musician. But the drummer says he in fact had a firm grasp on that concept several years earlier.

"By the time I was in third grade, I knew in my mind that I wanted to be a drummer," maintains the native New Yorker. "Because I specifically remember this Martin Luther King celebration in school where the teacher asked us to all make shirts of what we wanted to be when we grew up, and mine was about being a drummer. As a matter of fact, that shirt probably still exists somewhere in a closet in the house where I grew up."

Of course, being the maternal grandson of jazz drumming legend Roy Haynes might have given Gilmore his proclivity toward drums. Regardless, it's his talent alone that has led Marcus Gilmore to be considered one of the most gifted young drummers on the New York scene. Blessed with an abundance of chops, flawless time, a penchant for intricate subdivisions, and a remarkable sense of independence on the kit, Gilmore also exhibits rare poise and a quiet intelligence on the bandstand—a natural-born drummer indeed.



Buzz-Building And Chick

The buzz on Marcus had been spreading within musician circles since the summer of 2004, when he began playing in an adventurous quartet led by the innovative pianist-composer Vijay Iyer, a graduate of the Steve Coleman school of fractured rhythms and idiosyncratic time signatures. Marcus' s ability to nonchalantly navigate the intricacies of Iyer' s knotty compositions—documented on 2005' s provocative and widely acclaimed Reimagining (Savoy Jazz)—instantly marked him as a talent deserving wider recognition.

During the summer of 2006, Chick Corea recruited Gilmore for a European tour during which he premiered a new piano concerto for quartet (with Hans Glawischnig on bass and Tim Garland on reeds) and symphony orchestra. Corea, a fine drummer himself, had been aware of Marcus' s drumming prowess back in 2001, when he invited the fifteen-year-old to sit in at the Blue Note nightclub, where he was performing with his Bud Powell Tribute Band featuring Roy Haynes.

Commissioned as part of the year-long Mozart Year Vienna gala celebrating the immortal composer' s 250th anniversary, Corea' s " Piano Concerto #2" is an imposing six-movement work that has very strict requirements for the drums. " Chick noted all the drum parts," Gilmore explains. " He had the ride cymbal, the hi-hat, the bass drum, the snare—everything written out. But once I internalized it, I was able to be loose with it. There were specific things that I knew he wanted, and he would tell me so. But he definitely left a decent amount of musical freedom for me to put my own thing over it. So that was pretty cool. I just had to learn the overall structure and all the hits. But

Chick specifically told me that he wanted me to memorize it and not perform it verbatim from the page. We had a few days' rehearsal with the orchestra, and we rehearsed as a rhythm section before we went over to Europe. So I had a decent amount of time to get everything together.

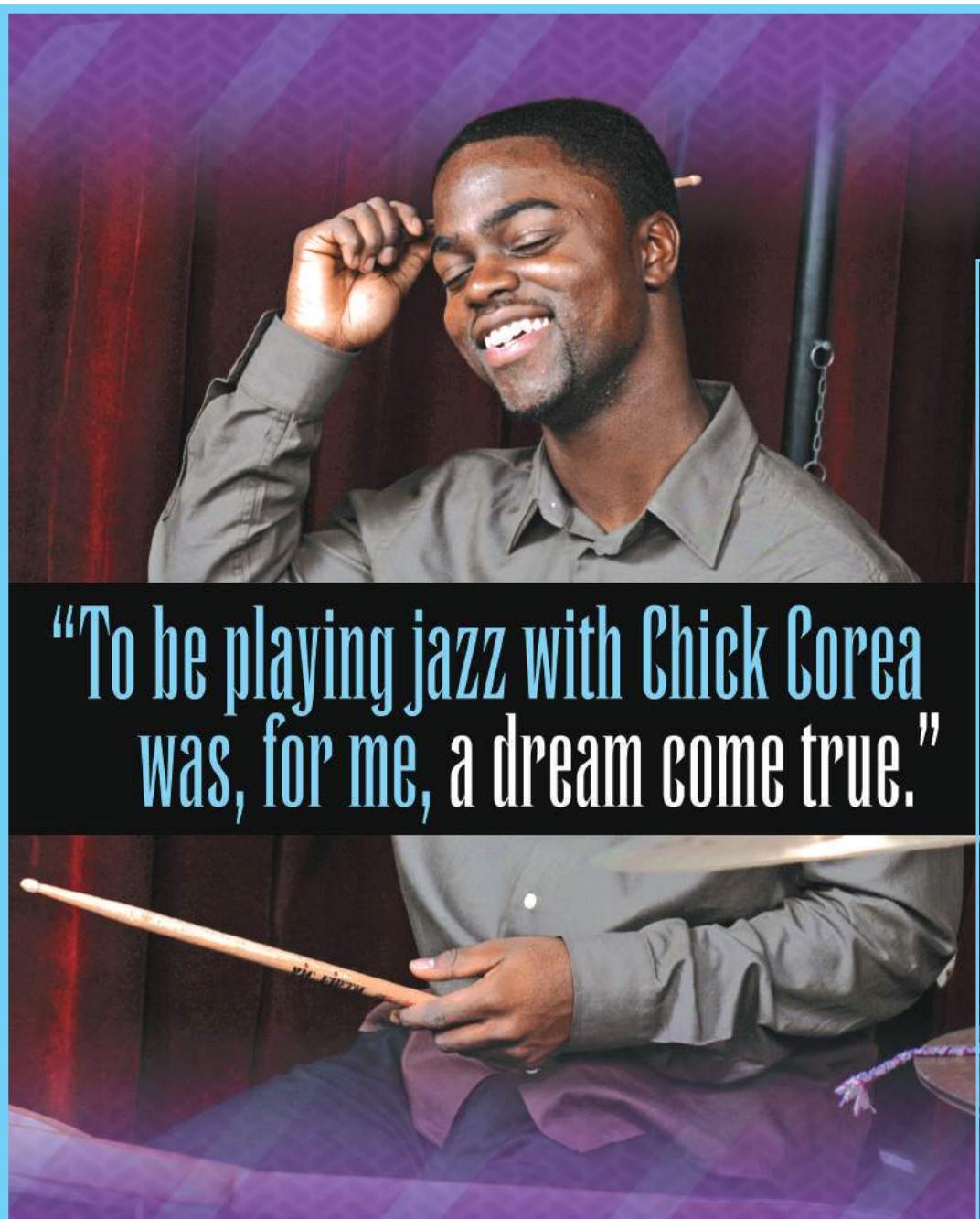
" It was an awesome experience playing with Chick," Gilmore adds. " At the end of that tour we got to do some quartet hits, which was amazing for me. To be playing jazz with Chick Corea was, for me, a dream come true."

Adventurous On Records

Following that gala summer tour with Corea, Gilmore played on a string of ambitious, genre-defying recordings. First up was Full Circle (RKM), an experimental

' electric Miles meets electronica' recording by his trumpet playing uncle, Graham Haynes, the son of Roy Haynes and co-founder (with Steve Coleman) of the Brooklyn-based M-Base cooperative of the 1980s. In November of 2006, Marcus played on Coleman' s Weaving Symbolics (Label Bleu), then in January of 2007 he supplied the slamming, big-as-a-house, Bonhamesque backbeats on trumpeter Christian Scott' s hip-hop-meets-indie-rock-meets-jazz album Anthem (Concord).

Now the floodgates have opened wide, and at the age of twenty-one Gilmore has become highly in-demand for his precise chops, propulsive power, slick swing factor, and interactive flair on the kit. He recently performed with singer Cassandra Wilson at the Tranquility Jazz Festival in Anguilla,



"To be playing jazz with Chick Corea was, for me, a dream come true."

and he can be heard on upcoming recordings by the great Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba (Avatar, Blue Note) and the New Orleans-born trumpeter Nicholas Payton (TBA, Nonesuch). There's also a recording with Vijay Iyer, Tragicomic, due out soon. And if that weren't enough, Gilmore has also been gigging with acclaimed trumpeter Dave Douglas in a special quintet in tribute to Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy.

From His Perspective

Meanwhile, it turns out, that Gilmore is also a budding composer. In November he premiered a newly commissioned work, "American Perspicacity," at the Jazz Gallery in Manhattan as part of its ongoing Composer's Series. "It's my take on a series of recent events that everybody knows about, along with some personal insights,"



MARCUS GILMORE

explains Marcus. "I'm writing about these situations from my perspective and basically creating different outlets for the musicians to play over."

Along with a crew of fellow Young Lions, including David Bryant on piano, recent Thelonious Monk Competition winner Ambrose Akinmusire on trumpet, Dayna Stephens on tenor sax, and Dave Robaire on bass, Gilmore presented eight evocative vignettes to appreciative audiences at the Jazz Gallery over two days. From a rhythmically charged reflection on recent weather patterns ("Indian Summer"), to his somber, haunting meditation on the recent Jena 6 civil rights case in Louisiana ("Jena"), to an uptempo burner addressing the perennial issue of cab chasing ("Cab"), Marcus distinguished himself as an accomplished composer whose crisp, polyrhythmic attack on the kit was part of the fabric of a larger whole. His musical impressions of electoral politics ("Contender") included a tongue-in-cheek quote from "If I Only Had A Brain" by pianist Bryant, while his chamber-like "Tech" had him shifting time signatures seamlessly.

But perhaps Gilmore's most impressive showcase on this particular evening at the Jazz Gallery was "Urgency," an evocative piece with harmonic allusions to Wayne Shorter's "Fall" that highlighted the drummer's remarkable command of polyrhythms and his ability to make rhythms meld into each other, like the merging images in an M.C. Escher painting. With a rapid bass drum pulse, intricate counter-rhythms on the snare and tomtoms, a kind of clave figure on the ride cymbal, and another ostinato on the hi-hat, it appeared at one point that Marcus was sending out separate Morse code messages with each limb. And he juggled all these rhythms throughout the metrically challenging piece without dropping a beat.

Identifying His Approach

This 21st-century, post-M-Base, post-Matrix drumming aesthetic doesn't swing in quite the same way as Gilmore's grandfather does. Roy Haynes's approach to the kit, after all, was informed by the big bands, the dancers at the Savoy Ballroom, and, later, Charlie Parker and Bud Powell and the

pulse of the beboppers on 52nd Street. And while Marcus might have assimilated some of those influences through osmosis, just from hanging out with his grandpa and going to see him play, he has brought other impulses to bear on the kit in developing his own unique rhythmic vocabulary.

Gilmore was born on October 10, 1986, and grew up in the Queens neighborhood of Hollis, located at the end of the F-train line. "I had music all around me growing up," he recalls. "There was a piano in the house, and I was always playing around with it. Once I actually took a piano lesson from Jaki Byard, who lived right down the block. My mom [Leslie] grew up there and already knew him from when she was little, so she took me over there and said, 'Teach him how to play piano.' She always wanted me to play piano, I think, because it's her favorite instrument. My father [Randy Gilmore] played saxophone, and I remember he would have rehearsals in the house sometimes. He produced records too, so he'd have his computer with all kinds of music files. And he was one of the musical directors at the church we were going to

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when I was really young. My mom would sing, my sisters would sing. everybody did something musical in the family.”

Marcus also had the towering influence of his famous grandfather hovering over him while growing up. “ He would take the family out to concerts when he played in the city. I remember one time when I was five or six, he took us all to see him play at Grant’ s Tomb uptown. My sisters were there, but they weren’ t really absorbed by what was happening as intensely as I was. They were more like, ‘ Yeah, grandpa’ s playing. Whatever.’ But I remember the music really caught me at that young age. It really grabbed my attention. Everybody on stage seemed to be having a lot of fun, and different things were happening at the same time in this mosaic of energy and good vibes. That captivated me.”

Marcus’ s parents noted his interest in music and started him out on bongos. When he was ten years old, grandpa Roy came over with a full set of drums for the youngster. “ And it wasn’ t like a



MARCUS GILMORE

beginner' s kit, it was one of his own kits," he recalls. " My father was so amazed by that. I remember him saying, ' Wow, I can' t believe Marcus has a professional kit.' And soon after that my mother enrolled me in this Saturday program at Juilliard, where I underwent classical training and learned how to read music. It' s a very intensive environment, and I just soaked it all up. And that' s really where it started to blossom for me."

The School Of Coleman

Marcus calls his time spent at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts (made famous by the movie Fame) a major turning point in his young life. " That was a great situation for me. The networking was ridiculous. I met so many talented people there. The alumni list for Music & Arts High is amazing. I mean, the list goes forever—musicians and actors and visual artists who are all well known now [from Liza Minnelli and Marvin Hamlisch to Alicia Keys and Suzanne Vega, along with the likes of Al Pacino, Wesley Snipes, and Adrien Brody]. And they always come back to the master classes. So that was a great environment. At that time, it was really the premiere music and arts school in New York City, so

you had kids from all over trying to get in. Going to that school definitely changed my life. If I went to a regular high school I wouldn' t be doing half of the things I' m doing now."

His two important mentors at LaGuardia High were tuba virtuoso Bob Stewart, the school' s jazz director and former sideman to such giants as Charles Mingus and Gil Evans, and drum instructor Gary Fogel. And, of course, there was another important mentor, named Roy Haynes. " Well, yeah, he always gave me advice," says Gilmore. " But in terms of training, it was never really a thing where he would give me an exercise or something like that. He just thinks on a different wavelength, and you get a lot out of just hanging with him, whether you' re talking about music, sports, or anything. You can relate anything that he says to what you' re trying to do in music. And this is true not only with my grandfather but with most of the older musicians that I' ve had the pleasure to work with. They' re all great storytellers and so full of wisdom about music and life, and that all makes a big impact on you."

During his high school years, Marcus formed his first group, The Jazz Gents. As a sophomore, he did one week of workshops and gigs with Steve Coleman at the late,

lamented Lower East Side nightclub Tonic. " He had a series of gigs and workshops there for a couple of months," Marcus recalls. " We' d do a workshop during the day on Wednesday and then a gig on Thursday night. I hadn' t been doing that many gigs at that time, and I didn' t have that much time to rehearse with the band before the gig. It was probably my first really serious gig, so I was really nervous. But I guess it worked out somehow."

Gilmore had met Coleman through his uncle Graham, who was a cohort of M-Base in its formative days. " Graham would come out to our house in Queens, and by that time I was always practicing so he heard me play. At some point he said to Steve, ' You should check out my nephew. He can play.' And Steve was like, ' Yeah, whatever.' But Graham was like, ' No, seriously. He goes to Music & Art High and he' s been studying for a while. He can play.' So he finally introduced me to Steve, and soon after that I played my first gig with him during that summer [2002]."

While dealing with the idiosyncratic, angular lines and intricate time shifting of Coleman' s compositions would be daunting for most fifteen-year-old drummers, Gilmore caught on quickly. " Steve has a really good

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MARCUS GILMORE

way of breaking down what he's trying to do," Marcus explains. "He has a way of looking at the music or the situation from an external point of view, so he doesn't really make it seem like it's something so different. He pulls back from it and says, 'Look, this is what it is. It's coming from here and it goes into this. It's just a rhythm.' In fact, he treats the different rhythms as their own unique claves for each tune.

"Generally," Marcus explains, "when you think of clave, it's a distinctive 2-3 or 3-2 pattern. But when Steve introduced me to his concept he said, 'Look, the word clave means 'key.' So if you learn this, you learn the key to the tune...the rhythmic structure of it and everything. If you know this, you can't get lost.' And he'd just break down each song into these individual claves or specific rhythmic figures and explain how you can rotate them within the composition. Basically, he showed me a lot of alternative paths to playing the music. With Steve, it's not about counting so much as absorbing each of these different clave feels organically into your playing so it just flows naturally. It was definitely hard, but I just practiced it a lot until I internalized it. And once it's internalized, you can do anything with it."

Coleman eventually introduced Gilmore to

Vijay Iyer, and when Gilmore went to Europe with Iyer's quartet to perform a concert, Marcus's mother came along. "It was the first time I went away with them and, yes, my mom came along," Gilmore sheepishly confides. "Now, I wasn't really too happy about that. True, I was only sixteen, but still...I definitely couldn't have done it on my own at that point. But whatever, I'm her only son and she was like, 'He's my baby! I can't let him go alone.'"

Musically, getting Iyer's complex Indo-Asian-flavored jazz compositions under his fingers was in some ways more challenging than playing with Steve Coleman. "I remember the first day of rehearsals with Vijay," says Marcus. "He dropped a whole bunch of new tunes on me that day, and after the rehearsal was over I felt like I was walking sideways or something. It was just so much information to handle. But it was a great challenge. I just practiced the material so much that I got to that point where you're just playing it and not thinking about it at all. Ideally, that's where you want to be when you're playing anything, where it's not like you have to be on edge or worry about where to come in and where to stop playing. It just flows."

The Future Is Bright

These days, Gilmore uses different Yamaha drum setups for different occasions. "I'm playing with a bigger bass drum when I play with Christian Scott, either a 20" or 22"," he explains. "With Vijay it's usually an 18". I also generally play a regular 5 1/2x14 snare, though there are some tracks on Christian's new album [Anthem] on which I play a piccolo snare."

Given his multi-faceted career to date, young Mr. Gilmore could be heading in a lot of different directions from here. At the time of this writing, he was on tour in Japan with Gonzalo Rubalcaba's new quintet featuring trumpeter Mike Rodriguez, saxophonist Yosvanny Terry, and bassist Matt Brewer. There were pending engagements with the Vijay Iyer Quartet, featuring alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa and bassist Stephan Crump. And no doubt there are further encounters with Chick Corea still to come. It won't be long before everybody wants a piece of this new rising star of the drums. And once his own compositions get recorded and heard by the jazz cognoscenti, his profile will only go up a few notches.



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Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez

Doing It Right The Second Time

Story by Adam Budofsky • Photos by Paul La Raia

Regular MD readers might recall that the last time we dropped in on Horacio Hernandez to check out his woodshed (September '04), we were bowled over by the percussive overload of his Cedar Grove, New Jersey basement. Besides the copious amount of memorabilia hanging from the walls—few drummers have criss-crossed the globe more than El Negro—nearly every square foot of floor space was occupied by drums, recording gear, and audio cables. Apart from his drum throne, there was precious little room to sit your butt down.

Sure, the place had its charm. But it wasn't up to the task of recording the kind of music Negro had in his head. And, like an interior designer might say, the “chi” just wasn't real hot.

After all, vibe is very important if you want to have some of your world-class musician buddies over to catch some magic on hard drive. “A friend of mine who is an architect put it in my mind that the place you work has to be nice,” recalls Negro. “You can't get into the music in a place that's depressing. So when we moved in, he was always, ‘Forget about the house, think about the studio! Make it like you want it.’ ”

It took about two years for Negro and his wife, Margaret, to find their new home, which is located in Plainfield, New Jersey. According to Negro, he had one very specific requirement: “I wanted a double garage, separate from the house, with no neighbors. I need this to do my work.”

Negro's new space couldn't be more different from his old one. Beyond the freedom a detached location affords in regards



to playing anytime without disturbing people in the house, a dedicated building is simply a more exciting place to make music in. You automatically feel a heightened sense of anticipation about the endless possibilities you can explore there.

Sure enough, the second you open the studio's side door, you know you're entering someplace special. The first thing you notice is the warm but intense color of the walls, as if the building

THE GEAR HERE

INSTRUMENTS

DRUMS: Pearl Reference series. Featuring 18" and 22" bass drums, El Negro's drum setup is designed so that he can play every conceivable style of music. For instance, if he's playing traditional jazz, he'll use the smaller bass drum, and swap out two of the toms for 10" and 14" models with coated heads. For fusion or rock, he'll likely use the 22" and toms with clear Evans G2s on top.

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HARDWARE: Pearl

HEADS: Evans

STICKS: Zildjian "El Negro"

Artist Series

PIANO: Schweighofer baby grand

KEYBOARDS: Korg X5D (top), Emulator E-Synth (bottom)

GUITAR AMP: Gallien Krueger 200MV

MIDI CONTROLLERS: M-Audio Ozone, Zendrum



RECORDING

MICS: Shure, May internal mounts.

Main 5 1/2x14 snare: SM57 (mounted inside), Beta 56 on top, Beta 56 underneath

Aux 4x10 snare: Beta 56

Toms: SM 57s (mounted inside)

Bass drums: 1 Beta 91 inside each, 1 Beta 52A in front of each

Overheads: 2 KSM32s, 2 KSM44s

Hi-Hats: 1 SM81 on each pair

MAIN COMPUTER: Mac Pro G5 with Intel dual processor

PRE-AMPS: For the drumset, Negro uses 6 pre-amps from his Mackie mixer, 8 from an M-Audio Octane (above G5 in photo), and 2 on a Mindprint DTC (the red piece of gear below the computer screen, which Negro also uses for guitar, piano, and vocals).

INTERFACE: M-Audio Firewire 1814.

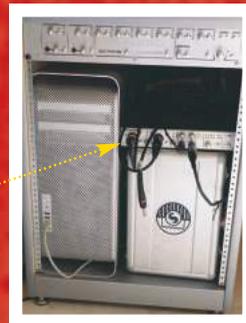
"This is a wonderful machine with eighteen inputs," El Negro says, "which allows me to record a full drumset. And it's got fourteen outputs, so you can use it for multiple speakers or headphones, etc."

COMPUTER PROGRAMS: Pro Tools, Reason, Ableton Live, and Logic Pro. "I've used Logic and Reason for a long time," says Negro. "Reason is a great sequencer program to make loops and get synth sounds with. Logic is the 'tape machine.'"

MONITORS: M-Audio EX66 (main), M-Audio DX4

HEADPHONES: Beyerdynamic DT 770 for guest musicians, Shure E5 in-ear monitors for Negro

CABLES: Planet Waves



ON THE ROAD

LAPTOP: Mac Powerbook G4

INTERFACE: M-Audio Fast Track Pro

HEADPHONES: Shure E5 in-ear monitors



itself was generating its own sunlight. Take a few steps inside, through a short hallway, and the room opens up to reveal one large space with a pitched ceiling, a couple skylights, and an ordered, awesome array of top-line instruments.

In the far left corner there's a baby grand piano, flanked by a couple keyboards and a mounted Zen Drum. At the far right is Negro's Pearl Reference series drumset. Along the right wall, there are some conga drums. Behind you is a comfortable couch, while off to the left is another, smaller sitting area with a couple turntables.

A wide control desk occupies the center of the room. Streamlined and uncluttered is the theme here. And the perfect view of the entire playing area from the "board" makes you feel like you're right in the middle of the action. No separate control room here, no thick pane of glass separating the players from the engineer. "This new way to have a home studio is very nice," Negro enthuses. "Everybody uses headphones, including the engineer. In a big studio all the musicians would be wearing headphones anyway, so it actually works the same way."

Adding to the spacious feel of the studio is the fact that all the cables running from the desk to the playing area snake

 An advertisement for Istanbul Mehmet Handmade Cymbals from Turkey. The image features three men holding various cymbals. The man in the center has a long beard and is wearing a white t-shirt. The man on the left is wearing a black t-shirt. The man on the right is wearing a red t-shirt. The background is a wall with the Istanbul Mehmet logo and the text "Handmade Cymbals from Turkey". The logo is in a stylized, golden font. The text "The Original Istanbul Sound" is written vertically on the right side. The names of the men and their bands are listed at the bottom: RONNIE CIAGO / Bill Ward Band, JOHN GRIFFIN / Sick Trip, and BOB BARBOZA / Los Angeles Drum Project. The website address www.istanbulmehmet.com is at the bottom right.

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El Negro keeps his woodshed open and airy by storing and displaying his huge collection of percussion instruments inside his house.

Though Negro says he doesn't play drums after ten at night, the garage was completely soundproofed during remodeling, so he'll play piano or listen back to mixes as loudly as he wants, any time, day or night. These days he's working on tracks that were initially conceived on the road, notably during a life-changing three-month tour of fourteen African countries in 2006. ("I found a great connection in Africa," Negro gushes. "People play just for the joy of it, a collective groove that's enormous.") The remarkably exciting and diverse material—which is sure to surprise even Negro's long-time fans—will likely be released on a future solo album.

"This is just my dream space," Horacio says proudly. "It's the perfect environment not only to work in, but to have fun in. Richie Flores was just here doing a session for my music, and we had a wonderful party here with Walfredo Reyes Sr. and Danny Reyes. Esperanza Spalding, who's a new star on the rise—she plays bass with Joe Lovano and teaches at Berklee—did some vocals here. And the guitarist Josele was here as well. And that's just the beginning."

underneath the floor. "The cables are all by Planet Waves, Evans' sister company," Horacio adds. "They really helped me out; cables are one of the most expensive parts of putting together a studio."

Once construction was complete, Horacio didn't immediately make plans to record anything for keeps in the space. Instead, he chose to take his time and experiment with instrument and mic placement, searching for the

optimal recording setup the room could provide. "The drumset is the hardest instrument to record," he explains. "It's got very high frequencies, very low ones, and everything in between. So you need a lot of microphones. For a grand piano, five mics would probably be too much. But for a drumset like mine, you need eighteen. So it took me time to work that out—especially considering I was on the road a lot while we were renovating."

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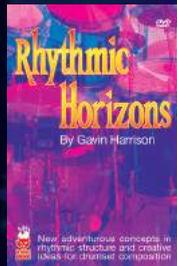
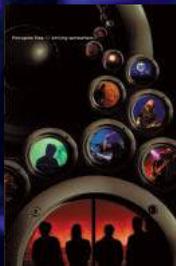
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Jazz 101

The Swing Feel And Triplet Independence, Part 1

by Dr. Sherrie Maricle

MUSIC KEY

One of the most abstract concepts young drummers must master is the swing feel associated with jazz. Even if you're playing "all the right notes," it doesn't necessarily translate into a good-feeling groove. To make that happen, you have to understand the groove on an intuitive level that transcends technical and coordination issues.

To develop an intuitive feel in any style of music, a drummer must engage in a multi-level practice routine, which includes technique, independence, and coordination exercises combined with live performance, listening, imitating others, transcribing, and improvising. This article provides exercises that address many of the technical challenges often encountered when developing a jazz feel.

Jazz Feel And Articulation

The primary subdivision that's used to create a good swing feel is the 8th-note triplet. To "swing" you must think of these 8th-note triplets with a legato feel that's smooth, flowing, and connected. If your jazz phrasing is played too staccato (short and detached), or marcato (heavily accented and separated), it will not swing. For the following exercises, I suggest placing an imaginary tenuto marking on each note. (Tenuto means to stretch the duration of each note to its maximum value, allowing it to flow seamlessly into the next note.) This mental image will help create a wide, fat, relaxed, and comfortable beat.

Practice With A Metronome

I suggest beginning the following exercises at 60 bpm. Then gradually work your way up to your fastest tempo. You should also work on them at slower tempos. Making music "swing" at extremely slow or extremely fast tempi is challenging, so work at both ends of your metronome.

It's equally important to practice the exercises within a select form (measures, minutes, or structure) utilizing specified phrasing, accents, and dynamics. For example, try a common jazz-phrasing technique of accenting the third note of an 8th-note triplet on each beat.

Warm-Ups

To play jazz with a contemporary feel, you should think of the multiple instruments of your drumset as one interdependent unit, where each limb gets equal attention. In order for each limb to become comfortable playing 8th-note-triplet subdivisions, work on exercises like Warm-Up Examples A, B, and C. If you have trouble playing these over a conventional jazz ride cymbal pattern, try playing continuous 8th-note triplets on the ride cymbal. Then gradually omit the extra notes, while still feeling the triplet subdivision.

Play the three warm-up exercises sequentially. You may add a break between the exercises by playing time for a few measures. Initially, play all of the exercises over long forms (for example: thirty-two measures each, two minutes each, or until it feels natural and relaxed). Then work down incrementally until you can play them as one-measure phrases. Make sure all of the parts are played legato (smooth and connected) and your unisons are precisely aligned.

For all subsequent sections: When the snare drum doesn't have a written line, double the jazz ride pattern. Also, try orchestrating the snare drum notes on your toms.

Shifting Triplets On The Beat

Once you have the basic warm-ups under control, begin shifting 8th-note triplets between the snare, bass drum, and hi-hat using a pre-determined pattern. Examples 1–15 employ one- and two-beat patterns. The two-beat patterns occur in Examples 1–6. The one-beat patterns occur in Examples 7–15. For an increased four-part independence workout, add the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 and the bass drum on all four beats when they're not included in the exercises. After you've mastered these examples, come up with a sequence of original patterns.

The image displays 15 numbered musical examples (1-15) in 4/4 time, each consisting of a four-measure phrase. The notation uses a standard drum set: snare (S), bass drum (B), and hi-hat (H). Triplet patterns are indicated by a '3' above a group of three notes. Examples 1-6 show two-beat patterns, while 7-15 show one-beat patterns. The patterns shift the placement of the triplet groups across the four beats of the measure.

On-The-Beat Triplet Variations

You can shift around the rhythms in Examples 1–15 to create challenging and fun variations. For example, instead of putting the snare on beats 1 and 2 and the bass drum on beats 3 and 4 (as in Example 1), play the snare on beats 1 and 4 and the bass drum on 2 and 3.

You can also create odd-note phrases, called "hemiolias." Example 16 uses a one-beat pattern orchestrated across three different instruments (snare, bass drum, and hi-hat), which creates a 3/4 phrase against the 4/4 meter.

Example 16 is a single musical phrase in 4/4 time, consisting of four measures. It features a hemiola pattern where a triplet of eighth notes is played on every other beat (beats 1, 3, 5, 7 in a 4-beat measure), creating a 3/4 feel against the 4/4 meter. The notation shows the snare, bass drum, and hi-hat parts for each measure.

JAZZ DRUMMERS' WORKSHOP

Exercise 17 uses a three-beat pattern to create another hemiola.

17

The image shows three staves of musical notation for Exercise 17. Each staff contains a sequence of rhythmic patterns. The first staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a hemiola pattern (two groups of three eighth notes). The second and third staves continue this pattern with variations in the placement of the triplet and hemiola groups. The notation includes stems, beams, and 'x' marks indicating specific rhythmic points.

By varying which instruments you play on, you can change the timbre, feel, and rhythmic perception of a pattern, which affects its function in the music. Use your imagination to design patterns that challenge and interest you.

Next time, we'll start breaking up the triplets between the limbs to create more syncopated phrases.



New York City drummer **Dr. Sherrie Maricle** is the leader of the acclaimed DIVA big band and the Five Play jazz quintet. She also performs with the New York Pops and is the orchestra's director of education. As a teacher, Sherrie serves on the jazz faculty at the New York State Summer Music Festival, and she runs a private drumset and percussion studio. Sherrie also created the Rhythm, Rhyme, And Rap Workshop for children, and she's an active clinician for Yamaha, Sabian, and Vic Firth. For more info, log on to www.divajazz.com.

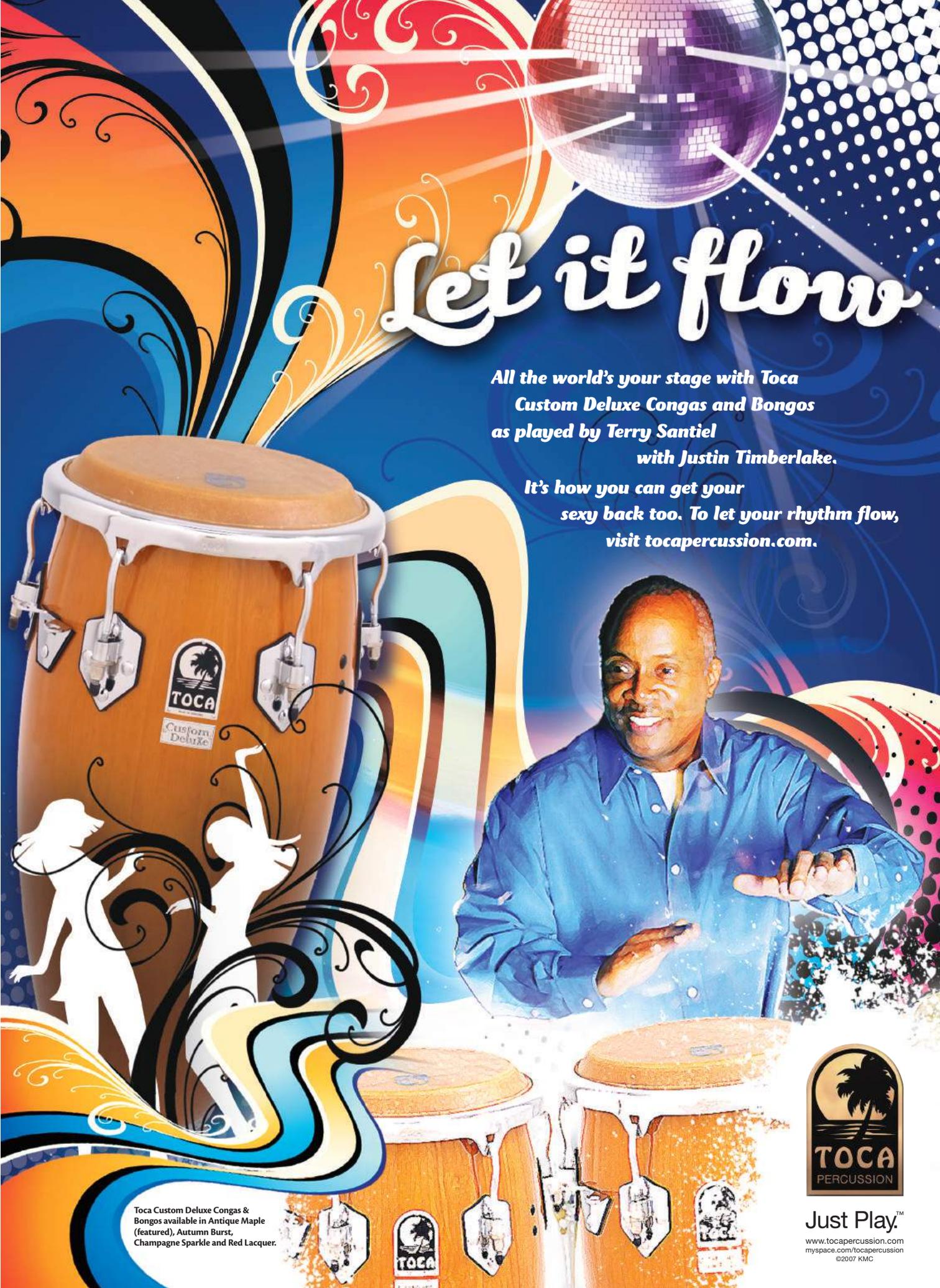


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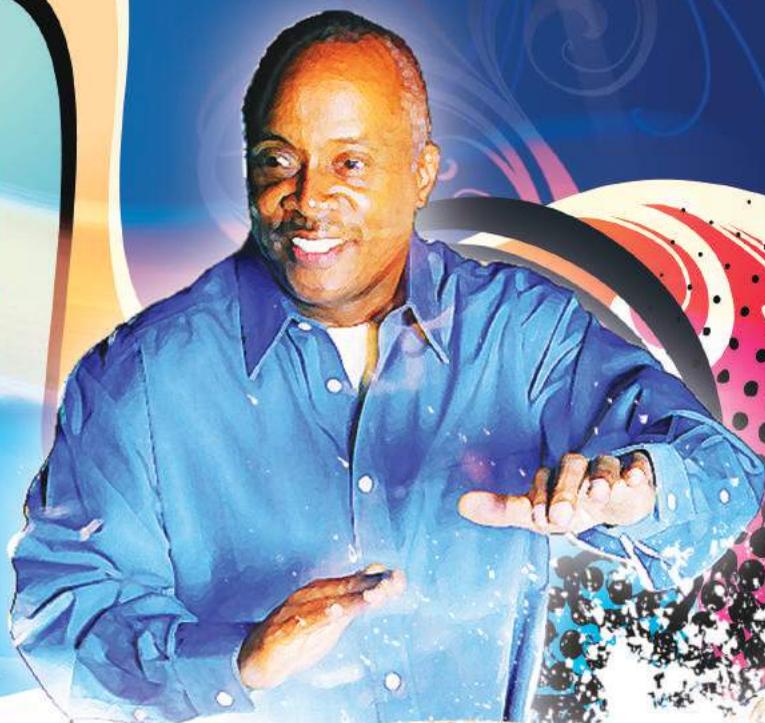
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Invert Your Rudiments

The Power Of The Paradiddle

by Jim Riley

MUSIC KEY

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

I'm a big believer in the practical application of rudiments. Rudiments are the building blocks of solid and creative drumming. Of course, every drummer I've come in contact with can play a paradiddle. But what about an inverted paradiddle?

There are three ways to invert a paradiddle. For this article, we're going to focus on one of those inversions. Example 1 shows an inverted paradiddle that has the double strokes in the middle. Take a moment to get the sticking under control.

1

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

Example 2 adds an accent at the beginning of each grouping. Remember to bring your stick up high for the accents, while keeping everything else low to the drum.

2

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

Now apply the rudiment to the drumset. Notice how the left-hand inner beats are played as ghost notes.

3

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

In the next example, play an additional accent on the "ah" of each beat. Now all of the singles are accented, while the doubles are played low.

4

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

Example 5 applies our new accented paradiddle to the kit. You can also create a two-bar pattern by combining Examples 3 and 5.

5

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

Example 6 uses the same accent pattern in a one-bar fill.

6

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

As with any pattern, the phrasing is created by the accents—the ones you play as well as the ones you don't play. By leaving out some accents, you can create cool-sounding patterns.

Check out this one:

7

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

Here's how the previous pattern looks when played on the kit. (I love this groove!)

8

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

Example 9 features the previous groove, some variations, and a fill that uses the same sticking. It's hard to believe, but this entire pattern is nothing but inverted paradiddles!

9

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

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

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

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

If you have a drumset teacher, I encourage you to take this article to your next lesson. Try working on one or two figures per week. Remember: These lessons cannot be mastered without practice. But if you keep shedding them a little bit each day, you'll have them worked up in no time.



Jim Riley is the drummer and bandleader for Rascal Flatts, an active session drummer, a teacher, and a freelance producer. He can be reached through his Web site, www.jimrileymusic.com.



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Relayed Time Shifting

The Key To Understanding African-Influenced Feels

by Phil Maturano

MUSIC KEY

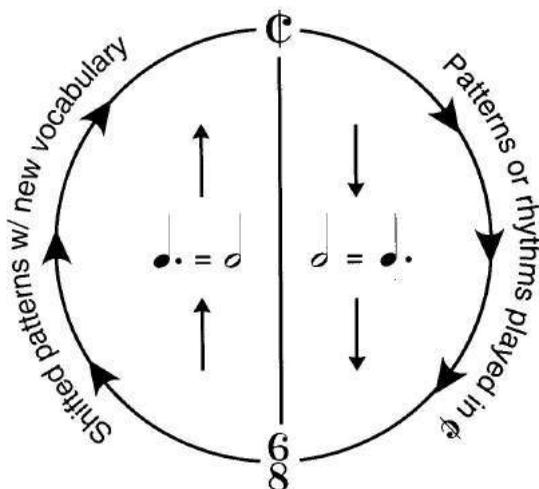
- Cow- Bell 
- S.D. 
- B.D. 
- H.H. w/ foot 

Contrary to what many people believe, great Latin drummers aren't just born with an innate ability to understand the complex rhythms within their music. They must be trained. Of course, some people may have a stronger rhythmic disposition than others. But the fact remains that anyone can learn to play Latin music, or other grooves of African descent, with the proper feel.

Of course, the ultimate question you have to ask yourself is this: Do you have the tenacity and desire to put in the effort that's required in order to learn some of the most complex and stylistically challenging music in the world? If you do, then it's time to break down some barriers.

So how do you get that special feel? How do you count the rhythms? Where's the "1"? These are some of the questions most often asked by musicians wanting to learn various African-influenced styles. The answers are fairly simple. You have to understand the basic 6/8 feel and how it relates to cut time. The earliest indigenous music of Africa can be thought of as 6/8 time. And since all Latin music is of African descent, it's important to internalize this 6/8 pulse before applying it to the drumset.

In contrast, most modern Latin music is written in cut time. This is mainly due to the exposure to Western culture and musical notation. But when you listen to traditional percussion groups from Cuba or Brazil that have remained relatively free of Western/European influence, the phrasing is not easy to transcribe in cut time. In fact, it's hard to fit the rhythms into any single time signature. The phrasing is somewhere between cut time and 6/8. What follows is a graph that'll help explain how 6/8 and cut time relate in Latin and other African-decent styles.

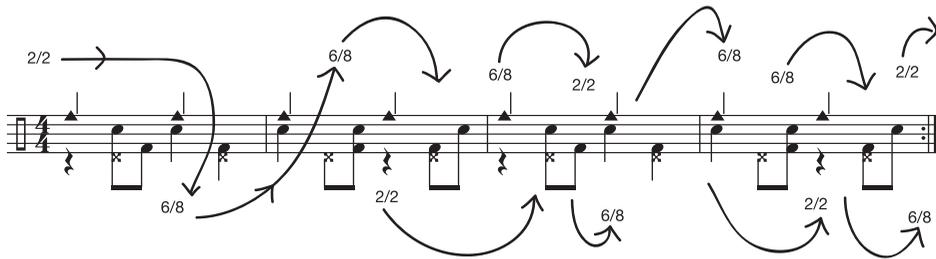


I like to use the analogy of time travel to explain the relationship between these two feels in Latin music. The top and bottom of the circle has the two time signatures. These are the worlds in which we "time travel." Cut time represents the contemporary Western world, while 6/8 is our interpretation of the ancient world of Africa. In the middle we have our musical/mathematical formula for pulse (half note = dotted quarter note, dotted quarter note = half note). This means that the basic pulse will remain the same as you shift time signatures.

On the sides of the circle, we have arrows indicating the direction and flow of vocabulary. On the outside of the circle, we have our time-traveling vehicles—the patterns that fit within each style. To achieve that elusive Latin/African pocket, you have to

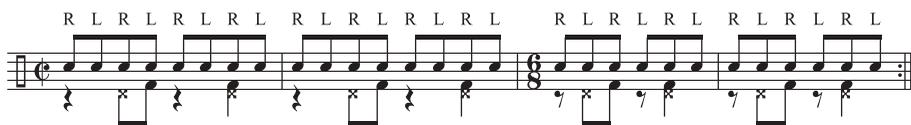
mix the two worlds. Your phrasing needs to flow in and out of each feel with ease.

The next graph, on the following page, is a more linear way to look at the relationship between the two time signatures. The time signatures are arranged in a random way, merely suggesting a flow of thought. The lines and arrows provide direction for the flow of the vocabulary. This type of flow is ultimately how you want your phrasing to sound. Playing this way will help break you out of "square" rhythmic thinking. You want to be able to flow in and out of both feels simultaneously so that the music can breathe.

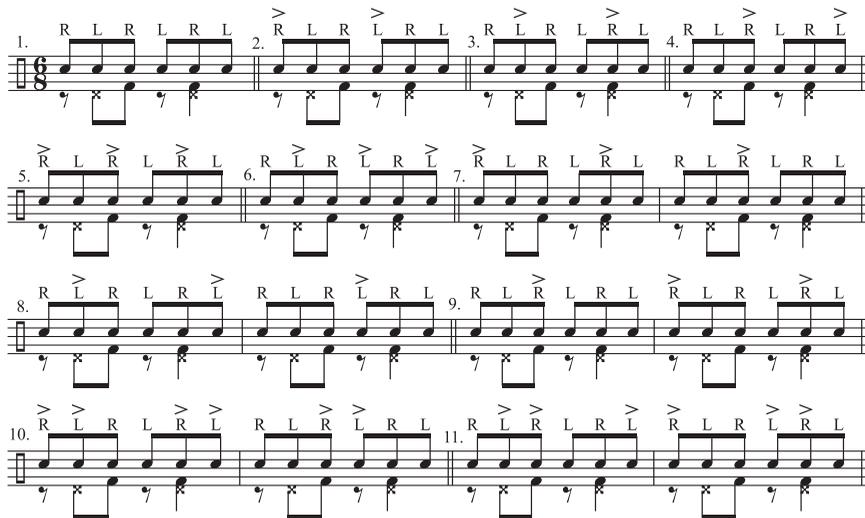


The next step is to work on some of these phrases in exercise form. First we need to transfer patterns from cut time to 6/8. Let's begin with a simple Afro-Cuban foot pattern. If you're familiar with basic Afro-Cuban grooves, you've probably seen this rhythm written in cut time (measure 1), where the bass drum plays on the "ah" of 1 and the "&" of 2, with the hi-hat on the "&' s."

For these exercises, play alternating 8th notes with your hands. Then morph into a 6/8 feel, playing the bass drum on beats 3 and 5, and the hi-hat on beats 2 and 5. Use a metronome to keep your pulse steady.



Now add accents to various notes in the 6/8 hand-to-hand sticking. Once you have these accent patterns under control, try alternating between the basic cut-time pattern from the previous example and the 6/8 variations.



If you have any questions regarding these exercises, log on to my Web site to watch a video demonstration of these concepts.

Toca con sabor!



Phil Maturano is on faculty at The Collective in New York City. He works in a wide variety of styles, playing everything from Afro-Cuban music and big band to R&B, rock, and jazz. Phil is also an active clinician for TAYE drums, Regal Tip sticks, and Anatolian cymbals. For more info, visit www.philmaturano.com.



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Stretch That Groove!

Part 2: Odd-Meter Permutations In 4/4

by David Garibaldi

MUSIC KEY

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

In my last article (November '07), we looked at a powerful rhythmic concept called permutation, which can be used to learn how to hear unusual rhythms as they relate to whatever time signature you're playing in. This time we'll develop the basic idea of permutation a little further.

We'll begin as we did in Part 1, using an open-handed approach. So you'll need to have an auxiliary hi-hat positioned somewhere on the ride-cymbal side of the drumset. Hi-hat 1 is played with the left hand and left foot, while hi-hat 2 is played with the right hand. We're going to begin by using the basic groove from Part 1.

Before we start permutating the beat, let's make a few changes. First, let's repeat the five-note phrase that begins on beat 3, which gives us a new beat in 9/8. Then add a sticking to help work out coordination problems.

BASIC IDEA:

Once you have this new 9/8 groove down, try phrasing it in 4/4. Here are three ways to develop this:

1. **Play the 9/8 groove as written, so you can hear the flow of the entire phrase.** I'm feeling it as 4 - 4 - 5 - 5, which breaks down to a right paradiddle (4), a left paradiddle (4), and two five-note phrases (5 - 5).
2. **Play individual measures as grooves.** Each individual measure in the extended phrase can be learned as a separate event.
3. **Connect the measures one at a time, until you cycle all nine variations within a 4/4 time signature.** The entire phrase takes nine measures of 4/4 to complete.

Examples 1-9 are nine 9/8 phrases. The brackets under each phrase show where the original 9/8 pattern falls within each 4/4 measure. Start slowly and make sure you count all the 16th notes out loud. As I stated in Part 1, counting aloud will ground you and help to unify all your limbs.

It will take some time to get through the entire nine-measure phrase, because you're training your ears to hear one time signature while playing another. Eventually your ears will develop, and you'll be able to play any odd-note phrases within 4/4. At that point, you'll be able to develop many of your own ideas. Enjoy!

2

L L R L R R L R L L F B R L L F

9/8

3

B R L L R L R R L R L L F B R L

9/8

4

L F B R L L R L R R L R L L F B

9/8

5

R L L F B R L L R L R R L R L L

9/8

6

F B R L L F B R L L R L R R L R

9/8

7

L L F B R L L F B R L L R L R R

9/8

8

L R L L F B R L L F B R L L R L

9/8

9

R R L R L L F B R L L F B R L L



David Garibaldi is the award-winning drummer with legendary funk band Tower Of Power.



Remembering Carlos Vega

On James Taylor's Live Album

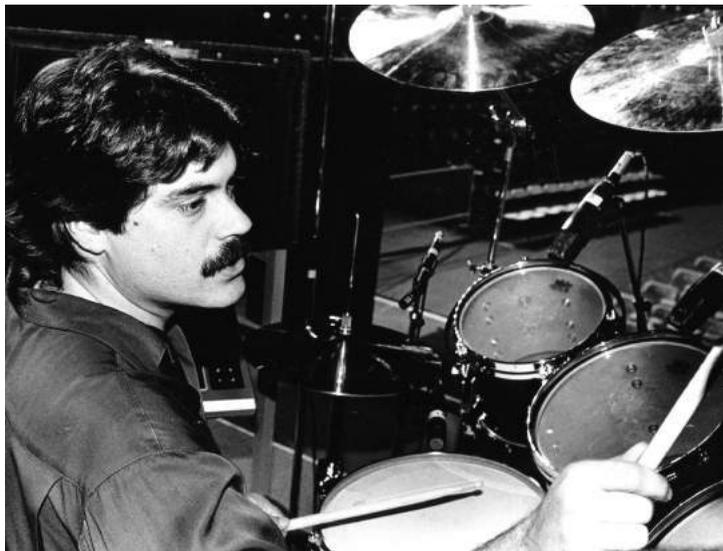
by Eric Novod

MUSIC KEY

open	○	R.C. Bell	⊗	C.C.	⊗	China	⊗
H.H.	⊗						
T.T.	⊗						
S.D.	⊗						
B.D.	⊗						
H.H. w/foot	⊗						
		Add 1					
		T.T.					

Carlos Vega's famed work with singer/songwriter James Taylor began in 1988 and lasted until his tragic death on April 8,

1998. While Carlos is often regarded as a session great, having recorded with Taylor, Karizma, The Bangles, Bonnie Raitt, Olivia Newton-John, Curtis Mayfield, Freddie Hubbard, Madonna, and hundreds of other acts, it's Taylor's 1995 concert recording, *Live*, that displays Carlos at his best.



Carlos's playing on *Live* reveals a serious amount of thought behind his musical choices. Every note is played perfectly in time, and everything is played for a specific reason. There are no overly busy fills and there are no grooves that are too sparse or light. Just listen to the crash cymbals throughout *Live* for a masterclass in selecting cymbals that match the harmonic and melodic context of the tunes.

In the *Modern Drummer* memorial article to Vega (February 2003), various musicians sounded off on what a special player Carlos was. Bassist Jimmy Johnson claimed, "He never used a reference metronome but could simply hear a song in his head and somehow divine the perfect tempo from his internal clock." While discussing the mixing and production of *Live*, Johnson continued, "While reviewing the tapes, producers Don Grolnick and George Massenburg discovered the song tempos to be virtually *identical* from night to night. Amazing."

Bass legend Lee Sklar, who recommended Carlos for the James Taylor gig, added, "As a bass player, every once in a while you're given a Carlos, which spoils you. It wasn't so much technical prowess, although he had impressive chops. But what I loved about playing with Carlos was his pocket. His feel was so deep. It was effortless to play with him. Carlos was one of those guys who, if you were cutting to a click, never in a million years would you know there was a click track."

These two short quotes prove why Carlos was such a successful drummer. Having proper technique and chops are great and necessary. But working on your time, feel, and dynamics, as well as making smart musical choices, will often lead to more work.

The following examples come from two of James Taylor's live staples, "Your Smiling Face" and the nightly drum feature, "Country Road."

"Your Smiling Face"

Measures 1–6 of "Your Smiling Face", which appear on the following page, display deceptively complex variations of a simple breakdown groove. While the bass drum and snare are played on quarter notes throughout, Carlos adds 16th notes on the toms, extra bass drum hits (usually leading into beats 1 and 3), and left-foot variations (often before a bass drum note). Measure 8 contains one of Carlos's common fills that begins with crash cymbal/bass drum accents and then moves down the toms. This particular fill reinforces the hits that are played by the rest of the band.

Measures 9–12 demonstrate Carlos's masterful dynamic control. Check out how he throws a lot of notes into his groove without overpowering the band or sounding busy. Also notice how he chooses his accents carefully. His bass drum push on the "a" of beat 2 in measure 10 locks in perfectly with Jimmy Johnson's bass line.

Carlos then increases the intensity by going into a Steve Gadd-inspired alternating ride/hi-hat groove in measures 13–14. Listen for how perfectly placed every 16th note is throughout this groove. (1:29)

"Country Road"

While "Your Smiling Face" reveals much about the drummer's dynamic groove and fill choices, the drum break in "Country Road" (measures 4–12) displays even more of Carlos' s brilliance. The first thing to check out is the wide dynamic range throughout the break. By measure 4, Carlos is playing very loudly, but the unaccented notes are still whisper soft, which makes the entire break amazingly dramatic.

The first three and a half measures of the transcription contain basic 8th- and 16th-note ideas. Notice how Carlos builds these measures so that the beginning of the break (beat 3 of measure 4) has a solid foundation.

The first three bars of the break (measures 5–7) contain powerful, intense grooves that have a lot of dynamic variation, making even the loudest parts feel smooth and comfortable. Check out the behind-the-beat snare/floor tom flams and offbeat China accent in measure 4. Also notice when Carlos chooses to open his hi-hats. He usually opens them shortly after an important bass drum hit, but he also throws in a bass drum/open hi-hat unison on the "&" of beat 3 in measure 5.

The remainder of the break builds momentum through short, rapid fills interspersed throughout a strong 16th-note groove. Notice how the ride cymbal/left-foot groove in measure 9 leads to the 32nd-note fill on beat 4. Carlos then plays a common fill on beats 3 and 4 of measure 10 before launching into the apex of the break in measure 11—two beats of 32nd note—triplet fills followed by snare/China accents. Carlos brings the break to an end by catching hits with the band in measure 12. (3:32)

If you haven't already, check out this album, especially the famous "Country Road" break. I play this track for all of my students—regardless of what type of music they prefer—and they all shake their heads in amazement.

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



The Master Musician

Loving The Notes And Being A Great Witness

by Billy Ward

The great pianist and composer Josef Zawinul passed away recently at the age of seventy-five. I met Joe while playing a jazz festival in Yugoslavia (when it was Yugoslavia) in 1987. I was playing with Bill Evans, the jazz saxophonist. An overly aggressive bouncer in Florida had just killed Jaco Pastorius, the genius bassist from Joe's group Weather Report, and Joe was reeling from the personal loss of the great musician and friend. I was fortunate enough to hang out with Joe until 5:30 the next morning, trading stories and generally kibitzing on life, its losses, and its gains.

To me, Joe was a musician much like Beethoven; he could make a symphony out of just four or five notes. He would always play longer in concerts than the time he was booked

Being the best drummer in the world (in a drummy way) does not serve the music. It chokes it.

for. He simply couldn't stop with his mesmerizing, lyrical music. His love was deep, very deep. Now, mind you, I never worked with him, so I don't know about his (probable) rough edges, which we all have. But Joe Zawinul was a truly great,

special musician, and I find myself incredibly saddened by this loss. Joe exhibited total and complete concentration and loved his notes with the finesse of Casanova. Yes, he loved his notes.

In my case, fully enveloping myself in loving the notes that I'm playing (and not playing) detaches my ego from my playing. A fortunate side effect of detaching my ego is that I'm able to now swim in the creative musical waters without a personal agenda, such as trying to prove that I'm the best drummer in the world. Being the best drummer in the world (in a drummy way) does not serve the music. It chokes it.

Being A Great Witness

One of my techniques for detaching from my own playing (while playing) is trying to become the very first and foremost witness to the music that I'm playing. Being a great witness involves a skill that a crime witness should possess: a clear and focused memory. So moment to moment, I'm checking the feel of the music, such as the pull of the time within the band, and the dynamics that are present (with an awareness of where it needs to be to shape the song best). Mostly, though, I'm simply watching it take place and doing my best to mold it to my—and the band's—vision of perfection.

Being a great witness additionally helps me to play better because, as a witness, I'm obsessing only on the present: There is only now. .now. .NOW! This eliminates any planning or scheming for that big drum fill that will happen after the next chorus.

How can you and I become better witnesses? By paying attention! When you're "stretching out" in the practice room or on the bandstand, remember it. An ever-expanding ability to concentrate on the music (while in the act) is what makes many of the great ones great. What exact notes did you just play? Can you sing it? Is it worth doing again? Can you repeat it? Can you play it with all kinds of alternative stickings?

Great musicians, actors, poets, painters—all great artists are great witnesses. One hint: If you truly love the sound of your instrument, it becomes easier to remember what the notes are. After all, how do you tear yourself away from your loved one? This is why spending those extra hours experimenting with your tone is always time well spent.

In This Together

Another really big step towards being a great, loving musician is realizing that intent does not equal completion. Playing that drum fill (with the intensity that I believe it needs) will not work if I'm just being a drummer. So many drummers go away from the collective group and only listen to themselves when they play a fill. Try never to allow your consciousness to stray from the rest of the band. We do this together, folks! We make the music with other people, and we play it for other people.

Imagine this: You're playing that exercise from a book for your teacher and you're hitting all the right moves—the rights and the lefts and the feet. And then the teacher writes the date of completion on the right-hand corner of the page and turns the page to move to the next exercise. Done. You got it, right? Not necessarily. How does it sound? (Did you tape it?) Is it musical? Do you own it, and are you able to do it within any pattern (with any sticking) you might find yourself in? Can you play it slowly? So what if we've fooled our teacher or our bandmates or the audience? Does that make it right? Does that make it art?

The Most Important Thing

What really matters in music? Love matters. In the attribute of love, there is no presence of the self. There is only the awareness of the one that is being loved. Can we do this more in music? The great ones did. Joe Zawinul, Elvin Jones, and John Bonham. Miles Davis, Jimi Hendrix, and James Brown. Love is pure. I've always felt the warmth of pure, exceptional artistry burning out of the hands of great musicians, like John Patitucci, B.B. King, and so many others. They're invisible when they play. Their playing frolics like a child playing in a swimming pool on a hot summer day.

The love of music that came out of Joe Zawinul when he played was obvious. Let's become more invisible in our music. Remove the ego and increase the love! By becoming invisible, we can purify the notes we play. I believe that the great artists who succeed in completion understand that the success comes from being detached from the act itself. The focus

needs to be on the result, the music!

Oh, and by the way...back to Yugoslavia in '87, after hanging out with Joe all night. The next day he looked at me

strangely, as if thinking, "Do I know you?" This tickled me. See, we weren't playing music. We were simply hanging out, so his witnesses were on vacation!



Billy Ward is an in-demand session drummer and clinician. He's worked with Carly Simon, B.B. King, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne, among many others. His book, *Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming*, is published by Modern Drummer Publications. His new DVD, *Voices In My Head*, is just out. Billy can be reached through his Web site, www.billyward.com.



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Keeping The Skies Friendly

The Drummer's Guide To Airline Travel

by Paul Wells



Illustration by Jeff Harray

Like many professional drummers, I've had to rely on commercial air travel to get to certain gigs. I currently fly between five and ten times a year, and this has allowed me to pick up some useful information that I'd like to share, in the hope of making air travel a little easier for other drummers.

Up until the mid-1980s, flying one's whole kit to gigs was fairly common. However, as air travel increased and flights became more crowded, airlines began limiting the amount and size of baggage that one could bring on a flight. They also started charging more for overweight bags. It soon became cheaper to rent drums at your destination than to fly your own drums from home. Of course, the quality of rental kits can vary to a staggering degree. Fortunately, we drummers can travel

with a few essentials to help make ourselves more comfortable with such "drums du jour."

The Rules And Regulations

As of this writing, most US airlines will allow a traveler to check two pieces of luggage, and to take one carry-on bag and one "personal item" (such as a small briefcase or backpack) aboard the plane. Be aware, though, that each individual airline has its own policies, with differences in size and weight restrictions. Just because you flew with an item on one airline last week doesn't mean you'll be able to take it on a different airline next week.

Airlines have Web sites you can check and toll-free numbers you can call to get up-to-date baggage information. Look for specific rules on your airline's site pertaining to luggage size and weight. Print a copy of those rules and bring it with

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you on your trip. If an airline employee gives you a hard time about your instrument, produce your copy of the official rules as a defense.

The All-Important Stick Bag

The bare minimum piece of equipment that most drummers travel with is a stick bag. This can, theoretically, be taken on the plane as a carry-on, or even as the small "personal item." However, I've heard accounts of security officials prohibiting stick bags because they thought drumsticks could be used as weapons. You could also encounter problems if you carry tools or spare parts in your bag.

I wouldn't want to blow my carry-on allowance on a stick bag anyway. I prefer to have an iPod, books, magazines, snacks, and bottled water on the plane with me. So I carry on a small backpack, and I stow my stick bag in my checked suitcase. Just in case that suitcase gets lost, I keep an extra pair of sticks in my backpack (which I'll show and explain to the security guard if there's a question). These sticks can also come in handy for practicing on my knee during long waits at the gate.

Here's a list of essential items that should be in your stick bag for traveling situations:

- 1. Sticks.** You should have three or four different models of varying weights and materials in order to suit different dynamic levels.
- 2. Brushes, mallets, rods, etc.** I carry at least two different types of multi-rods, and both wire and plastic brushes. If you're playing outdoors, humidity can collect on your snare head, making it difficult to play with wire brushes. Plastic brushes will work better in these situations.
- 3. Bass drum beaters.** Bring a couple of spares, just in case the one on the supplied pedal is in bad shape. If I'm touring with a quiet band, I'll bring a lambswool-style beater to help me keep the

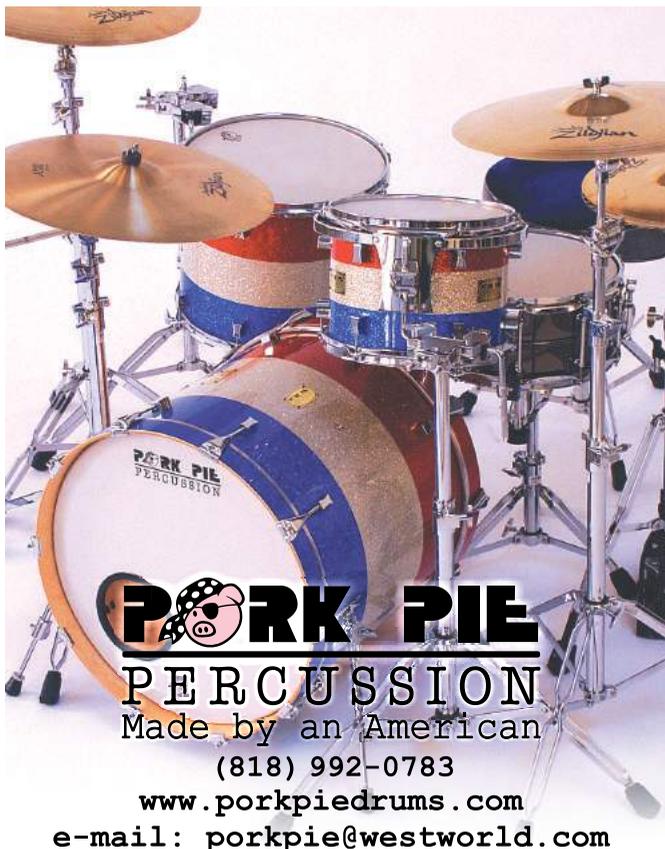
volume down.

4. Accessories. I pack cymbal sleeves and felts of different sizes (which always seem to be missing from rental kits), as well as some of the metal washers that sit atop a cymbal stand under the felts. I'll add Phillips and flathead screwdrivers, different sizes of Allen wrenches for bass drum pedal adjustments, and drumkeys (including the slotted style for Sonor tension rods). I also include small chains to hang off of the wingnut to give a cymbal a sizzle sound, a couple of hi-hat clutches (some companies use thicker hi-hat pull rods, so be sure to bring a clutch that will fit these larger rods), a bottle of aspirin, and a box of Dramamine motion-sickness pills.

Cymbals

Throughout the 1990s, I carried my cymbals onto planes in a cymbal bag. However, airlines have become extremely strict in enforcing their size limits, and carrying on cymbals has become increasingly difficult to get away with. (If you must carry your cymbals with you, limit them to 20" and smaller models that can travel in bags that will fit in the overhead bins of most large planes.) Most drummers now check their cymbals as luggage, in hard-shell cases. The obvious disadvantage to this is that your precious cymbals are more likely to get lost, damaged, or stolen—or simply to arrive late. Personally, I'm willing to take that risk, because I love not having to schlep a heavy cymbal bag around the airport and onto the plane.

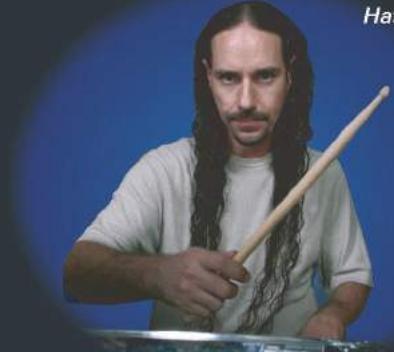
If you plan to check your cymbals, get the highest-quality cymbal case you can afford. A model with wheels and a handle will make the long walk from the airport parking lot much more bearable. Make sure, however, not to over-pack and make your case too heavy. Besides the fact that you'll still have to lift the thing a fair amount, overloaded cases are much more prone to being damaged



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in the baggage-handling process. It's also a good idea to enclose a note to baggage inspectors, politely asking them to re-pack the cymbals in the same way they found them.

Snare Drums

Whether you plan to check your snare drum or carry it on, pack it in a durable hard-shell case. Given a snare's moderate size, you should be able to bring it on board as a carry-on without too much trouble. However, be prepared for the flight attendants to ask you to "gate-check" your drum as you board the plane—especially on smaller aircraft. (Don't argue; it's their call.)

Also, remember that you'll be carrying that drum around with you for quite a while—waiting at the gate for the departure, racing through a hub airport to make a connection, and so forth. Think about that before you bring your 32-lb. bell-brass monster!

Additional Gear

Let's assume you're checking your cymbals and your suitcase (containing your stick bag) as your two allowed pieces of luggage, and carrying on your snare. Your options for bringing additional gear are limited, unless you're prepared to pay excess baggage charges.

A single or double bass drum pedal in its own carrying case can be checked or brought on a plane. Be prepared to take it out of the case and explain to security officials what it is and how it works. I've found it

+ THE DRUM RIDER +

If you're on a tour where gear is to be provided, you should send the promoter at each venue an equipment rider listing the gear that they need to provide for your performance. It should be as detailed as possible, stipulating exactly what you want. It's especially important to emphasize the elements of the drumkit that are most important to you. For example, I'm not picky about the depths of the toms. But I have a hard time dealing with piccolo snares on most gigs, so I specifically request a snare drum at least 5" deep. As an illustration, below is a rider I supplied for a recent TV performance with Deborah Harry.

Preferred drum brand: Yamaha. Maple, Birch, or Oak series are all fine. All drums must be professional-quality and in perfect working condition.

Drum sizes:

- 22" bass drum
- 12" or 13" rack tom (mounted on bass drum)
- 16" floor tom (MUST be on legs, NOT stand mounted)
- 14" brass- or copper-shell snare, 6½" deep (please no "piccolo")
- 14" wood snare, 5" deep

Heads (all MUST be new!):

- Remo coated CS on snare
- Remo coated Ambassadors on toms
- Remo clear Powerstroke 3 on bass drum

Hardware (Yamaha preferred):

- 4 cymbal stands with all felts and plastic sleeves
 - 1 hi-hat stand with working clutch
 - 2 snare stands that can be adjusted very low
 - 2 bass drum pedals (Yamaha or DW) with felt beaters (one is a spare)
 - 1 heavy-duty drum throne that can be adjusted very low
- All hardware MUST be in perfect working condition. Please no missing felts or wingnuts, stripped threads, etc. Drums MUST be set up on a 6' x 6' carpet to avoid sliding. Please no blankets...they won't work!

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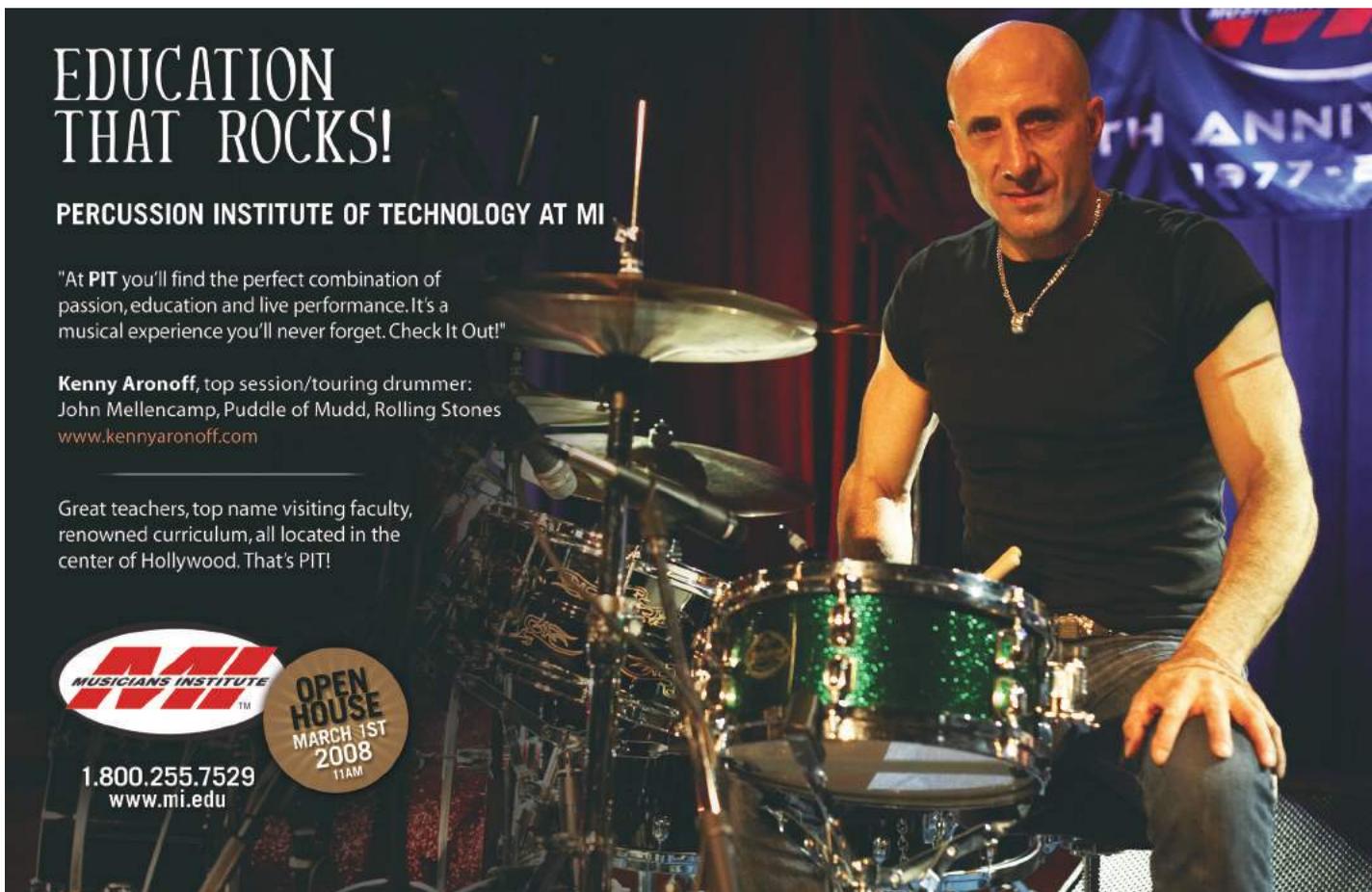
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handy to have a drum catalog or a copy of Modern Drummer that features the gear I'm bringing, so that security can get a better idea of what it is and what it's for. A single pedal might also fit in your suitcase, if there's room left after you've packed your clothes, toiletries, and stick bag. If you're into auxiliary percussion, you can usually find room in your backpack or suitcase for shakers, tambourines, or other small items.

If you're going to need a substantial amount of gear, and you're willing to check it, here's a final packing idea for you: Buy a high-quality hard-shell tom case in a size between 12x14 and 16x16. Place your snare drum in the bottom of the case. In the space atop the snare, you can fit a bass drum pedal, a throne seat (put the base in your suitcase), a second snare, and/or a variety of small percussion instruments. Place each individual item in its own soft case, and use wood or plastic dividers to shield each piece of gear from bumping together. Make sure everything is well separated and protected. Remember to weigh the fully loaded case at home to make sure it's under the airline's weight limit. Assuming that it is, you've created an efficient way to transport several pieces of equipment in a case that can be checked as a single piece of baggage.

Final Steps

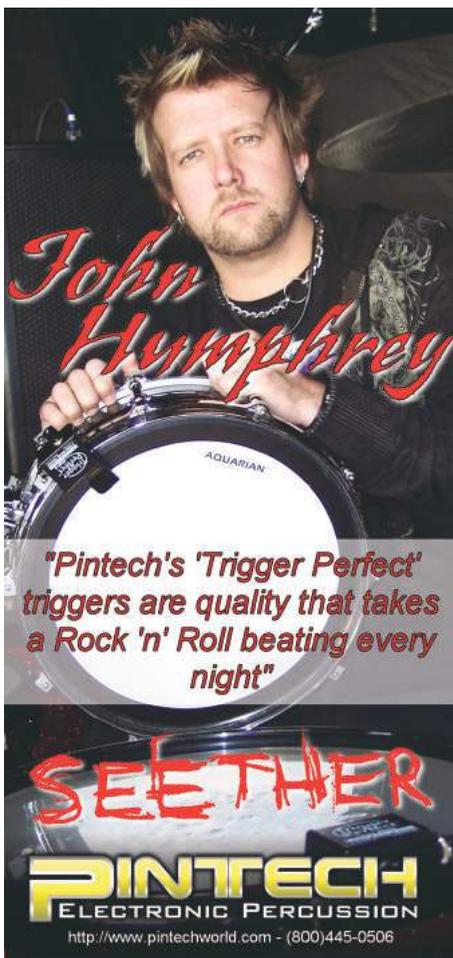
Once you've figured out what you're going to bring, measure and weigh everything to make sure you're not going to go over any limits. Be sure to attach completed personal-information tags to each piece of baggage. I also enclose a couple of business cards inside my cases, in case the outer tags get torn off.

Avoiding Risk Altogether

If you check each airline's Web site to see the monetary amount they're liable for if your gear is damaged, you'll be surprised at how little it is. For this reason, it's my feeling that traveling musicians should seriously consider purchasing specifically designated "road" instruments. By this I mean equipment that's serviceable, but that you won't be heartbroken to lose, and that can easily be replaced.

Remember, too, that while we all like to use our personal instruments whenever we can, most of us can get the job done on any drumkit. Art Blakey used to say, "I am the instrument!" I like to bring cymbals and a snare drum with me, but I'm confident that I could show up to a gig with nothing more than my stick bag and sound like myself on whatever gear was provided. Taking this approach may be the only way to guarantee that your personal gear remains safe and sound...at home.

continued on page 146



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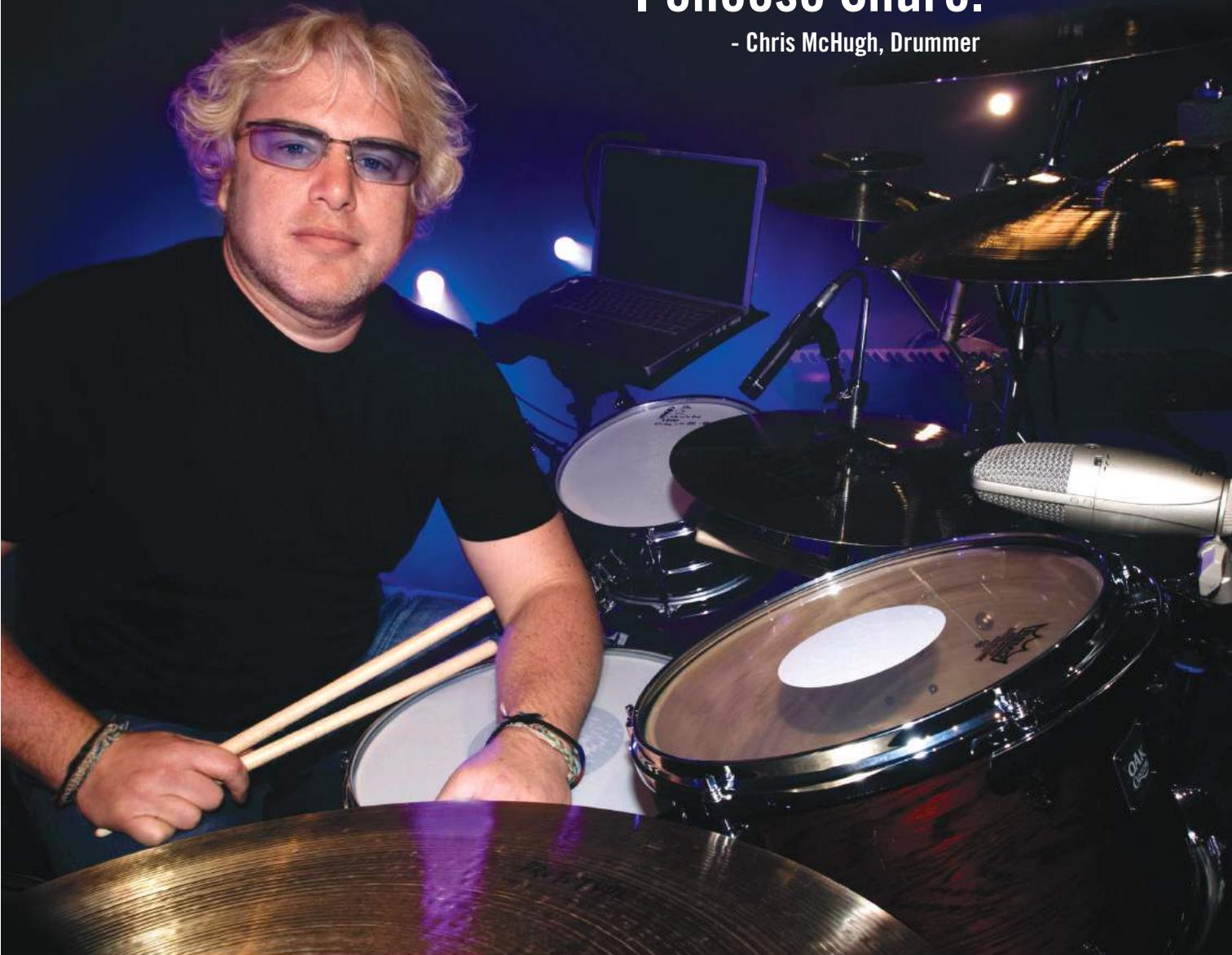
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HOW THE PROS TRAVEL

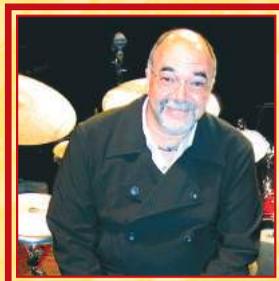
We canvassed a panel of top drummers to learn how they handle air travel. Our questions included:

1. What drum gear do you bring with you?
 2. How do you pack and organize your gear?
 3. What gear do you check and what do you carry on?
 4. How has the experience of air travel changed for you in recent years?
- Here are our panel's responses.

JOHN RILEY: When I travel, I bring my cymbals in a Protecator rolling hard case, and a stick bag and a practice pad in my suitcase. I travel light and try to carry everything on, but when I *have* to check a bag I check my suitcase and carry my cymbals on. The Protecator case has a slim profile and fits in many overhead compartments. But it's heavy-duty enough to be safe in case I'm forced to check it.



My worst experience came on a flight returning from Alaska, for which I checked my suitcase and cymbals. I made a connection in Detroit and happened to be looking out the plane window, when I saw my cymbals coming off the plane on the belt, enroute to my next flight. When I got to New York my suitcase arrived, but my cymbals were missing. The airline was no help in locating them, and they would only reimburse me for the value of the case, the running shoes, and the Swiss Army knife I had in the bag, because the airline's regulations stated that "musical instruments are not covered."



PETER ERSKINE: For most trips, I'll bring my cymbals in an XL Elite case with wheels, along with a stick bag and cowbell that I pack into my suitcase. Since I began playing DW drums, I'll fly with the entire four-piece kit when I can. The hardware is light enough not to catapult my baggage into overweight, and if enough musicians are traveling with me, excess baggage is not an issue. For any flying, I rely on XL Specialty

Percussion cases for my drums. For hardware, I use a Beato bag with wheels.

Customs officials in foreign countries often express an interest in my cymbal case. I simply point to the case, smile, say the word for "cymbal" in their language, and then mimic a crash-cymbal player in a marching band while making a goofy face. A friendly smile while acting like an idiot seems to work wonders when dealing with someone wearing a uniform.

More seriously: Be kind to airline workers, such as check-in agents and flight attendants. More than one of them has told me that when a passenger is nice, they'll do whatever they can for him or her, but if a passenger is not nice...good luck!

BILL STEWART: Generally, I bring cymbals, a snare drum, sticks and brushes, a couple of drumkeys, and extra felts. The rest of the drums are usually provided by the venue or promoter for the various road gigs I do.

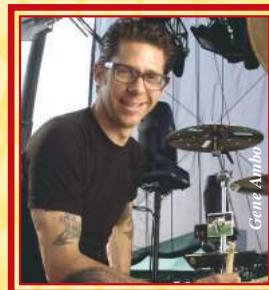
I check my snare and suitcase, but I carry my cymbals onto the



plane. I sometimes put my bottom hi-hat cymbal in my suitcase, since it's more replaceable than some, and it lightens my load walking through airports. I put my stick bag in my suitcase for the same reason, though that does create the hassle of finding sticks if my bag doesn't arrive for that evening's gig. I carry my cymbals not so much out of fear of their being damaged, but more out of fear of their being lost altogether.

Airline travel seems to have improved recently, because the airports are better at moving people through security, and travelers are getting more experienced about not bringing banned items. Still, I much prefer to arrive early and have some time to kill than to get stressed by cutting it close.

ATOM WILLARD: When Angels And Airwaves heads overseas for a tour, we rent a kit. I bring cymbals, a snare drum, sticks, and a kick pedal. A lot of the stuff goes into cases, but I stay away from heavy flight-style cases because their weight reduces what I can actually bring. Sometimes I load up a floor tom case with a snare drum, heads, and sticks. Having more stuff in one container makes it easier to move around.



I used to carry my snare on, with its case loaded up with sticks or heads. But I don't think the security folks will go for that anymore, seeing as how they won't even let me carry on my water. Also, the practice of showing up at the airport half an hour before takeoff is no longer an option. So there's a lot more waiting around.

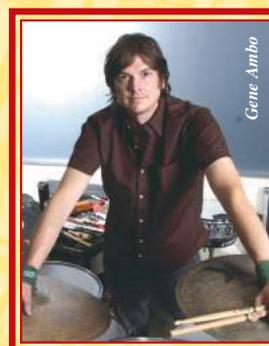


ADAM NUSSBAUM: I have a 20" bass drum case that XL Percussion cut down to about 6" deep. It allows me to pack a lightweight Zildjian cymbal bag with three cymbals and a pair of hi-hats, a stick bag with assorted spare parts and tools, and an assortment of drumheads. This gets checked as baggage.

I used to tip a skycap and check my drums, while carrying the cymbals on the plane. But factors involving cartage, weight, security, and cost have changed that practice. Now I forward a rider specifying what I require as far as drums go.

GLENN KOTCHE: With Wilco I don't bring anything. Everything is shipped ahead of time in road cases. When I do solo performances or shows with my duo, On Fillmore, I do need to take gear because a lot of it is customized and therefore not rentable.

To avoid having too many cases to keep track of, I wrap the more fragile pieces of gear in my clothes, eliminating the need for a suitcase. I make sure



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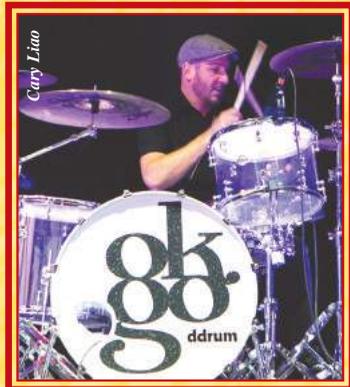


PRO TRAVEL TIPS

everything is padded enough to survive rough treatment. I also put a note in each case, explaining that it contains fragile musical equipment and to please carefully repack it as it was originally packed. My hope is that the note will speed things along so the bags don't get extra attention and are therefore put on a later flight (which has happened).

I'll carry on my cymbals if the plane is big enough. Otherwise I only carry on things that I can't replace. These are usually small customized percussion items or mallets that I don't want to risk being in a bag that gets lost. But there are many things that I can't carry on anymore—like certain types of striking implements—because they look too dangerous. I once had to go back through security so I could mail a single crotales that was in my carry-on luggage. The security screener said it could be used as a weapon, and I wasn't about to throw it away. That wouldn't have happened when I first started touring.

DAN KONOPKA: OK Go travels with twenty to forty pieces of flying gear, depending on what kind of tour we're on. That takes a lot of time to get through security. We used to get to the airport an hour and a half before flight time. Now we have to be there at least three hours before. So generally, I think less is way more when you're flying to a gig. I check my snare and cymbals in heavy-duty SKB cases, and I try to get sticks into another bit of flying gear, like a cable trunk. If we hear in advance that the gig is supported by a good rental company and that we'll have time to tweak their gear, I'll only bring sticks.



DAVE WECKL: Before 9/11, I used to carry full drumkits as checked baggage. Now airline baggage rules are tougher than ever, especially in Europe. Fortunately I have endorsing companies that help out. For example, without Yamaha providing sets for me everywhere, I wouldn't be able to perform comfortably—if at all—under traveling conditions.

To supplement the provided gear, I generally bring cymbals (in a heavy-duty Sabian backpack-style cymbal bag, not a case). I also carry my own Shure mics in a lightweight SKB case—along with mic clamps and clips, extra cabling, and a few tools.

My third case is a bass drum case from XL percussion, cut down to about 8" deep. It holds accessories, an extra cymbal or two, and sticks. I don't use a stick bag...it adds too much weight! I wrap my sticks, brushes,

and mallets in a black piece of fabric. At the gig I just unwrap them and set them on a case or whatever I can find to act as a "stick stand."

The case also contains a few hard-to-find hardware pieces, like multi-clamps and the tom mount that I need to mount my 12" tom on the bass drum. I also

put in a complete set of spare heads, along with my in-ear monitors, cowbell and holder, playing shoes, and small fan (220 volt for EU!).

When fully packed, that case weighs around 49 lbs. The idea is to keep every case under 50 lbs., which is the limit in the US for free baggage. For anything over 50 lbs. you get charged an average of \$80 per bag. And if it's over 70 lbs., the airline won't take it, period. It has to go air cargo.

Everything mentioned above is checked. Carry-on is a whole other deal. In the US you can get away with a bit more carry-on stuff, but in Europe—especially the UK—it's now one carry-on, *period*. I use a backpack (Swiss Army makes really good ones!) for my computer, small hard drives, camera, and a few other things. I also carry a personal over-the-shoulder bag made by Eagle Creek. This has worked well all through Europe. I'm able to put the smaller bag in the backpack if necessary (which it was in the UK). So the only real "equipment" I take on board is the computer. I never carry on any drum gear.

The biggest problem with air travel today is that there are no worldwide standards. Travel from the States involves one set of rules, travel within Europe or elsewhere involves very different rules as well as strict weight limitations. Most airlines in the EU only allow 20 kilos (44 lbs.) per person. And they'll charge up to 15 Euros (about \$20) *per kilo* in overweight. On my band's last tour we didn't have that much stuff: twelve bags for six people. But because of the weight, we probably spent about \$5,000 in overweight charges. If you're on a big tour with no budget constraints, then this is usually not your problem to worry about. But if you're on your own, plan to travel as light as you can, otherwise the airlines will be eating up your profits!



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



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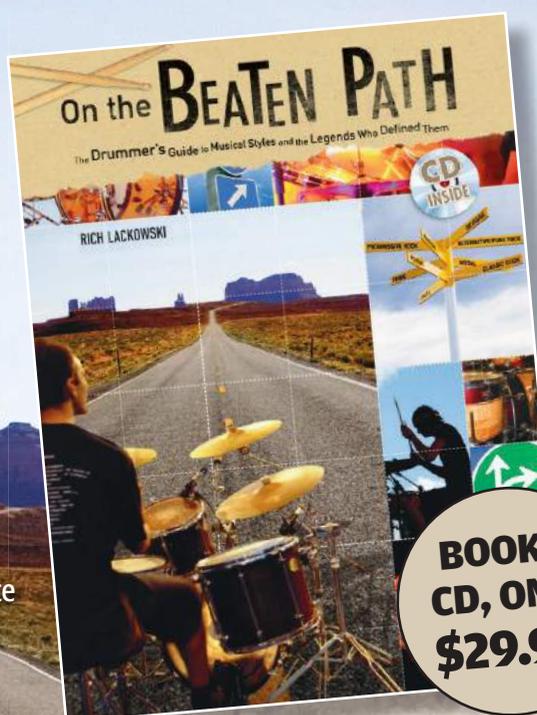
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The Bottom Line

How To Get What You're Worth As A Working Drummer

by Jeremy Hummel

We drummers spend countless hours honing our craft and developing a sense of musicality—and thousands of dollars on equipment. While most of us would choose “love” if pressed in a “Do you do it for love or for money?” query, it’s also nice to pocket some jingle in return for all the time and money we’ve invested.

So whether you are a “weekend warrior” or someone like me, who does a multitude of drumming endeavors to make a living as a “professional,” it’s important to understand your financial earning potential—an important topic that isn’t always discussed openly. The music business is rare, in that if one has an understanding of the context in which he is about to work, he can sensibly negotiate his price.

The reality of the business is that unless you’re a “first call” drummer who has a manager to handle his scheduling, you’re on your own. I began playing in clubs when I was nine years old, and I’ve been self-employed for the majority of my adult life. Over this tenure, I’ve learned a lot about booking gigs, doing sessions for an artist, and other aspects of a successful drumming career. I’d like to share these tips by breaking things down according to specific areas of interest. Keep in mind that the principles discussed can certainly cross over from one field to the next.

Experience

Before we get into any of the individual categories, let me first say that negotiating a price for a gig is substantially built on one’s résumé. Ask yourself the following question: “Do I have enough experience to merit my asking fee?” It’s rarely wise to charge more money than the guy down the street who’s been playing much longer than you have. The exception, of course, would be if your abilities speak volumes over his. The point is to be honest with yourself.

Session Work

If someone contacts you to perform on their recording session, there are some key questions that should be asked up front. In no particular order, these include:

“Who’s funding the project?” I do sessions for a variety of artists in different musical genres. Some of them are backed by money, others are struggling newcomers. While my price doesn’t vary drastically, I know that when artists or bands have money to work with, I can get my rate and perhaps a bit more. On the other hand, I’ve done sessions at reduced rates for people who didn’t have much cash. I’ll do this if I feel the

music would be enjoyable to work on, or if the gig might open doors for more work in the future.

“Will there be revisions?” One justification for asking for more money from those who have financial backing is that such bands and artists often have “associates” who want to re-record or remix songs. In negotiating my price, I want to make it known how things will go down should they “not like it” later on. Therefore, I give two options: Price “A” is without revisions, and price “B” is with them. In giving your price with revisions, it’s good to factor in the time involved with you doing probably two or three takes of the “new version”—not to mention gas, food, etc.

Another negotiating method I’ve used is to make the session a package deal. For example, some bands want me to be part of the entire pre-production process. While I might increase my fee due to the extra estimated time, if the client wishes to have me do ten or twelve songs, I won’t charge a per-song rate. Instead, I make it an all-inclusive package.

One bit of advice: When doing five or more songs—or entire records—ask for half of the agreed price up front and the other half at the completion of the project. Musicians aren’t the most stable or dependable people, and you don’t want to turn down other work or block out time and lose money because

It’s rarely wise to charge more money than the guy who’s been playing much longer than you have. The exception would be if your abilities speak volumes over his. The point is to be honest with yourself.

the guitar player decided to get back together with his girlfriend and doesn’t want to be in a band anymore.

There are also circumstances where the band wants me to play on an entire CD, but their other jobs make the sessions difficult to schedule. In these cases, I prefer to give an hourly rate comparable to what I’d get for teaching.

“Where will the session be?” Remember, the idea is to

make money, not spend it. Don't forget to factor in gas, hotels, and other personal expenses involved with doing the session. With the price of gas these days, you could potentially use up your salary covering transportation alone. If you must travel, some artists will pay a salary and then provide an extra allotment for expenses, rather than factoring it all in together. You might be asked to provide expense receipts in this case.

Gigs

Throughout my drumming career I've consistently played gigs. After years of building a reputation as a solid and versatile player, I got to a point where I felt confident in naming my "bottom line" price for live performances. This was the amount I needed to simply leave the house. Of course there are exceptions, but by having an established figure as part of your negotiating tactics, you'll begin to earn what you think you're worth.

It's also good to be realistic about the demographics and venues in which you perform. Sure, I do some gigs in a "concert" environment. But I also do gigs where the clientele is more concerned with how their steak tastes than with the linear paradiddle I just busted out.

Filling In

This is an area where being a versatile player is highly beneficial. If you can play comfortably and authentically in a variety of styles, you can increase your gigging potential on fill-in dates. While it would be great to ask, "How much is your band getting?" and then ask for an equal cut, it's usually not that simple. They might ask, "How much do you need to do the gig?" This is a classic example of why it's good to have a "bottom line" asking price.

I once had a band call me when they had a big gig two weeks away and their drummer bailed. After being told that the entire band was making only \$50, I gave them a price that would cover the gig, two rehearsals, and my personal time learning the material. Yes, they lost money—but they needed a drummer who could learn their songs fast, and I was the one they turned to. They later said the gig came off better than they ever imagined, so everyone walked away happy.

Who Does The "Benefit" Benefit?

How many of us have gotten calls either for our band to perform or for us to fill the drum chair with someone at a benefit concert? The reason this decision is tough is that one side of you doesn't want to be karmatically punished for all eternity by not playing a "worthy cause" fundraiser. But at the same time, you've played your share of these gigs, and darn it, you're tired of doing freebies! (Believe me, I get called enough for these to relate.)

The first thing I consider in this sort of situation is: What is the benefit for? Is the cause important enough for me to offer my time and expertise on the skins? (I personally have a soft spot for kids, so people can usually count me in for child-related benefits.) A good way of drawing the line is to ask if backline gear, including a drumkit, will be provided. If you don't have to fuss with loading, setting up, and tearing down your own drums, you might be more inclined to take the gig.

Another question I ask is, "Who else is performing?" In some instances, a benefit organizer might be having trouble getting

people to commit, so you might feel more inclined to pitch in. On the other hand, if a large number of artists are getting involved, things could work two different ways. I've turned down benefits because I felt there were more than enough performers already involved. On the other hand, you and your band could look at this as

Sure, I do some gigs in a "concert" environment. But I also do gigs where the clientele is more concerned with how their steak tastes than with the linear paradiddle I just busted out.

a great networking opportunity. And benefits can be good for getting future work. It largely will depend on who will be in attendance. It could be a situation where some high rollers will be hanging out, and they might be impressed with your performance and ask your band to play at their private party in a few months.

I also consider the adult-to-kids ratio. I've done some benefits where parents who were in attendance liked my playing, discovered I'm a drum instructor, and subsequently hired me to teach their kids.

Teaching

I charge \$40 per hour for a lesson. I came up with that number by understanding that teaching would be a substantial part of my income; therefore, a priority was placed on making sure I could get students. The goal was to charge a rate that I felt I was worth, but that would still be reasonably affordable. In doing this, I factored in the demographic in which I live. Sure, I could charge much more in the city, but I live in a small town where farms and trees are far more common than office buildings. I know other drummers who charge \$100 and more for a lesson. While I'm sure they're worth that amount, I just don't know many people who can afford it on a regular basis.

The Bottom Line

We all want to get work playing the drums in some capacity. In whatever arena that is, it's important for us to feel confident that we're being paid what we're worth. What's your bottom line?



Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, *We Are Not Alone*. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.



Building A Successful Teaching Practice

Part 3: Where Do I Teach?

by Robert P. Smith

This installment is Part 3 in our series about establishing a teaching practice. But it could easily be considered Part 2A, because the processes described in this installment and last month's ("The Start-Up") should be happening simultaneously. As you network and advertise, you also want to consider where you would most like to set up shop.

You might think the answer to the question "Where do I teach?" is simple: "Wherever anyone will hire me." But if you're networking to the best of your ability, you're likely to

discover that you have a few options as to where to establish a teaching practice. I've narrowed these options down to four: at your home, at the student's home, at a store, and at a school. Let's explore these options.

At Your Home

Teaching at home probably sounds like the greatest option. You set the hours, you save on gas, you can get a lot of work accomplished around your teaching schedule, and the students come to you. All true. The home studio is a great, economical way of running a teaching practice. However, there are certain



Illustration by Jeff Herring

issues that could inhibit your success.

Think about location. Do you live in an area that people would want to drive to? Do you have a relatively young population in your area that would be likely to take music lessons? Is there parking nearby?

Some quick research into the demographics of your area could yield information that might help you decide if this option is realistic. Don't assume that people will just jump in their car and drive

Don't assume that people will just jump in their car and drive five miles to take lessons with you, especially if you're new to teaching.

five miles to take lessons with you, especially if you're new to teaching. As they say in real estate: "Location, Location, Location."

Have you set up a bona fide studio in your house, or are you just

teaching out of your living room? Having a designated space for teaching is key to effective education. You don't want a situation where people can walk in and out, or where TVs are blasting and phones are ringing.

Of course, building a designated space can be costly. But in addition to providing you with an effective teaching area, you'd also have a killer practice room. If this is your plan, try to have outside access directly to this room so as to avoid the distractions mentioned above. You could even partition the room and create a small waiting room (for the truly optimistic teaching entrepreneur).

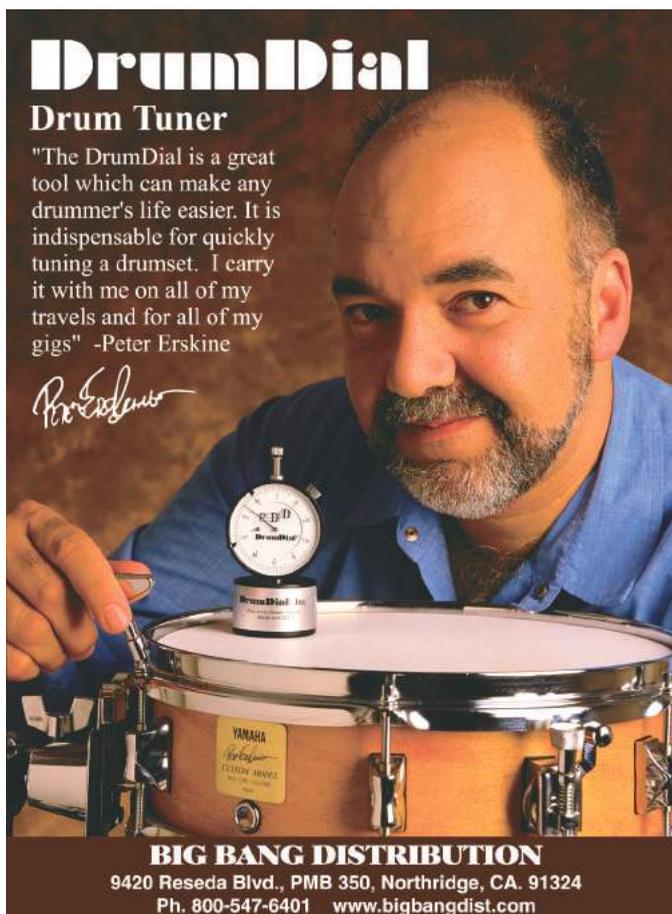
If you're determined to teach at your home and you don't have a separate teaching studio, be careful to avoid potentially embarrassing, reputation-damaging situations. You don't want a student walking past your spouse who's drinking coffee in his or her bathrobe. This would be unprofessional and inappropriate. Keep the students in specified, common areas (first floor, basement, or garage only). Also, be careful if you have pets. Question your potential clients about allergies or other animal-related issues. And just to be safe, keep Muffy in an upstairs room or elsewhere during lesson time.

Finally, be aware that teaching in your home might open you up to a liability claim if a student slips on your front step or has some other type of accident on your premises. You should discuss this with your insurance agent before you take on any students.

At The Student's Home

This could prove to be the most lucrative of all the teaching options, but it also requires the most diligence on your part.

Making house calls will save your clients a lot of extra hassle



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PHOTO: STANLEY BENDERS

TEACHERS' FORUM

when it comes to scheduling and time management. The fact that you are freeing them up to accomplish other things will not be lost on them.

Students or their parents will likely be willing to pay for this convenience, so you'll be in a position to charge more than your normal rate. Be sure to factor in your expenses when deciding your rate. Gas, food away from home, and phone bills are a few big weekly expenses. Car maintenance and repair should also be considered. Charge accordingly, but fairly.

Making house calls can be especially beneficial to your students, because you can see where they practice, what equipment they're using, and how that equipment is set up. Thus you can make sure that they have their drums set up properly, and that they have a designated space for practicing without distractions.

When you start at a new student's house (particularly a younger student), protect yourself from embarrassment and potential liability by staying out of private areas—especially bedrooms. Make sure that the

student and his or her parents understand this requirement before you arrive, so that the equipment necessary for the lesson will already be in an appropriate location, such as a living room, basement, or garage.

Be prepared to spend a lot of time on the phone scheduling and rescheduling. This is where your diligence comes into play.

Students' schedules will constantly fluctuate, and you need to be extremely flexible.

It's wise to be aware of band concerts, school plays, and other student obligations that can wreak havoc on your schedule. Make note of the dates on which local school districts schedule holidays and in-service days so you can utilize those extra times for lessons before or after the conflicting event. Those extra days can also come in handy when you have to cancel lessons for a gig.

By the way, try not to think in terms of "canceling" a lesson when you have a gig; think in terms of "rescheduling." If you make the time to get the lesson in, the student and parents will appreciate it. It is solely up to you to make the schedule work, not the client, so stay on top of things.

Make sure you have a specific policy in place regarding no-shows and such. (This will be the subject of a later installment in our series.) People need to be where they say they're going to be—or you could end up sitting in your car for an hour. A cell phone is a must when exercising this option. Last-minute changes will happen. Get used to it.

At A Store

This option is the most popular with teachers, for good reason. The music store can be a meeting place of musicians, students, and teachers—a place where connections are made, business cards are traded, and a sense of community can be developed. There will already be a staff in place to take care of advertising, scheduling, and the ordering of necessary materials, like books and sticks. You can just show up and teach!

But—and there's always a "but"—there are many aspects of teaching at a music store that are not within your control, and that could be problematic or even detrimental to your career. The first is pay. You'll never get the kind of money you would out of the other three teaching options. The store will determine the price of your

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lessons, and will usually take a substantial cut. Then there's the question of how you'll be paid. Will it be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly? Will you get paid for missed lessons? Will the store be taking taxes out, or will you need to report all income at tax time? (This, too, will be the subject of a later installment.) You have a right to know the answers to these questions, so ask!

The bottom line is: If you're comfortable with making less money in exchange for having less work to do in scheduling and advertising, then teaching at a music store is a viable option. Just realize that you'll need quite a few students to make the venture feasible.

Which brings me to my next point: How aggressively will the music store pursue students? Is teaching their main mission, or is it secondary to making sales on the floor? Is the counter person outgoing and sales-oriented, or is he or she the dark, brooding, frustrated, "musician forced into retail" type? Having a grumpy or inexperienced person at the counter could have a negative impact on your student numbers.

Talk to the other teachers at the store to get their opinions on how things are done. (Just make sure you stay strictly neutral in your comments. Don't begin preaching about what you see is wrong and how things could be better if you were running the place.) Consider whether you want your name associated with those other teachers or that store. Remember: Your reputation can take years to build up and only a minute to be destroyed. Make sure you'll be represented by the store in the best way possible. Otherwise, you could be lumped into comments like, "They have crappy teachers over at that music store."

Look into the store's policies on missed

lessons, student fees, and make-ups. Do they fit your way of thinking, or is the store taking too much money and expecting too much in return? Some stores will allow you to set your own policies, which can be very advantageous to you. So find out. Finally, be aware that teaching in your home might open you up to a liability claim if a student slips on your front step or has some other type of accident on your premises. You should discuss this with your insurance agent before you take on any students.

At A School

This option shares some advantages with teaching at a store, but it offers a few unique opportunities that will further benefit you and your students. As with the in-store option, you'll probably have a designated room to teach in, you'll have to follow the school's policies, and you'll have the advertising and scheduling done for you. However, in a school you have the added prestige of being in an institution that is solely concerned with teaching and not with sales (schools are usually non-profit) and with being part of a community that shares a common vision.

To clients, this scenario not only seems to be the most obvious option for learning, it also provides a feeling of contributing to something and promoting artistic ventures in their neighborhood. For you, a school offers increased opportunities for recitals and concerts, forming bands, or giving adult classes at night. You might even land a gig playing for the school's musical productions, or hosting master classes. The sky's the limit as far as what you can do in such a place.

When you're applying for a teaching position in a school, sit down with the director and

discuss what the school's mission is. Every non-profit has a mission statement, and you want to make sure it falls in line with your way of thinking. Also look at the history of the school. Has it shown constant growth? A non-profit's financial history is public, so you can easily learn whether this institution is on the rise or fading fast. Do the research.

Teaching at a school can add prestige to your résumé and lead to many new opportunities. However, you will be tied into the school's program, so you'll be more restricted in your ability to reschedule, accept gigs, and set your own policies. There are also likely to be events or meetings that will be mandatory for you to attend. As usual, it's a trade-off.

Making A Choice

Having now explored the four options for where to teach, you might be wondering which one to pick. Well, why pick just one? Diversify! I teach three days a week in students' homes, and I work the other two at a school. You can mix and match to find a way that will fill up your schedule without putting all your eggs in one basket. Locate different areas to teach in; don't restrict yourself to just one locale. It's my firm belief that there are more students out there than teachers—especially good teachers. With a simple plan of diversification, development, and diligence, you can be living your dream of doing what you love.

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. Albone, Mike Montrey, and The Helots. You can contact Rob at jabondo@msn.com.



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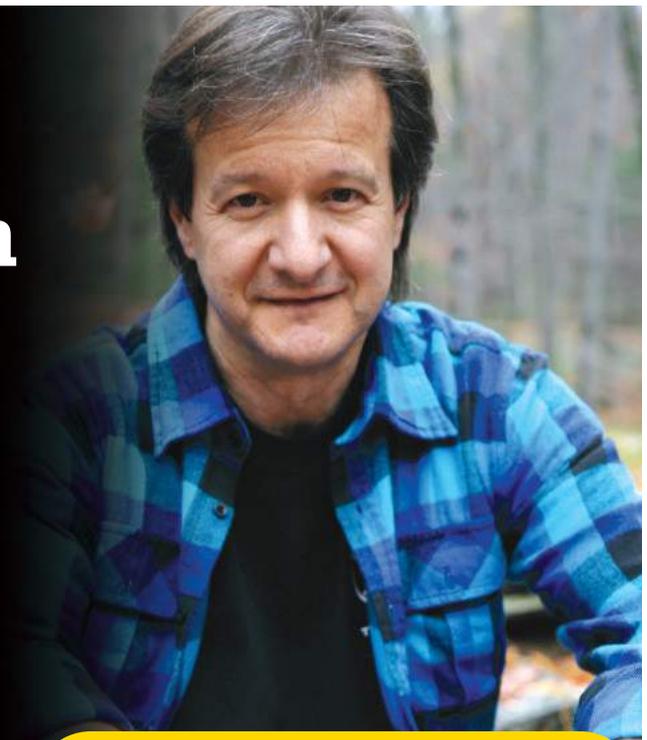
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Bob Clearmountain

**Engineer, Mixer,
Producer...And Hitmaker**

by Billy Amendola



Bob Clearmountain has worked in one recording capacity or another with just about everyone—and we mean everyone. From his beginnings as a bass player and engineer in the early 1970s, Bob eventually became house engineer at New York’s famous Power Station studio, where he probably engineered, produced, or mixed at least three quarters of your record collection. His credits include albums by Bryan Adams, Bruce Springsteen, David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, The Who, Hall & Oates, Bon Jovi, Chic, Roxy Music, Toto, John Fogerty, The Corrs, INXS, The Pretenders, Aerosmith, Kelly Clarkson, Clay Aiken, Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, and Sheryl Crow.

In 1989, Bob put his expertise into recording the Bob Clearmountain’s Drum Samples CD. The first of its kind, the CD offered over 900 samples of natural drums recorded in various studios—for use free of licensing fees. It went on to become one of the biggest-selling sample CDs ever.

Over his thirty-plus-year career, Bob Clearmountain’s talents have literally changed the way the world hears music. MD is pleased to have the opportunity to explore those talents.

MD: I know it would be impossible for you to remember all the drummers you’ve worked with over the years. But one of the first records you engineered was with Billy Cobham, so let’s start there.

Bob: Billy is one of the nicest guys on the planet—and unbelievably talented. He had the biggest drumset I’d ever seen, with Octobans, gong bass drums, and every other thing you could imagine. One song was basically a drum solo, and I had

A CLEARMOUNTAIN COLLECTION

Bob has produced, engineered, or mixed sessions with an extensive list of drummers, including: Larry Aberman, Kenny Aronoff, Matt Chamberlain, Billy Cobham, Mickey Curry, Josh Freese, Steve Gadd, Steve Jordan, Jim Keltner, Andy Newmark, Jeff Porcaro, Allan Schwartzberg, Tony Thompson, and Narada Michael Walden.

the 32-input board at Power Station completely filled up with drum mics—and I still needed more to get everything. It was over the top, but Billy was really playing it all. He wasn’t just showing off.

MD: A few years later you recorded Narada Michael Walden.

Bob: Narada was easy to record because he knew how to tune and how to hit the drums to get the most resonant sounds. A lot of times, back in those days, I used to tune the drums myself. Of course, when drummers insisted on doing the tuning, I’d tell them to go right ahead. But some drummers were just as happy not to have to do it.

At Power Station we had our own drumsets, including a set of Ludwigs that I picked out. They were always very resonant and really easy to record. We also stocked our own heads—mostly clear and coated Ambassadors, depending on what type of session it was.

MD: Did you tune Tony Thompson’s kit on all the Chic records?

Bob: Yes, I did. When Chic was playing in the rhythm room, we’d be going for that tight sort of R&B/disco sound, and Tony was always cool with it. He’d always say, “Yeah, whatever

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BOB CLEARMOUNTAIN

you want to do, I'm good." Tony was unbelievable, not only with Chic but also on records by David Bowie, Diana Ross, and Sister Sledge. I miss him.

Back then I was totally hands-on. I'd always be running into the studio between takes to touch up the tuning or change a head—whatever it took to make it sound right. Nowadays we have people like Ross Garfield and his Drum Doctors crew. They'll bring drums and tune them for sessions. Ross is amazing at it, and the drums always sound fantastic.

These days we also see more drummers who know how to get a great sound out of their drums. Most of it is actually the way they hit the drum. They know how to make the drums sing, and I love that. Matt Chamberlain is a great example of that.

MD: What other qualities do you look for in a drummer?

Bob: Well, good time, obviously, and just being open to anything. As a producer I prefer drummers who don't try to impress you with how much finesse they have. The best drummers are solid players who can get the drums to resonate and complement the song.

Being able to follow a click and overdub to a prerecorded track is also very important. It would be nice if we could go back to making records without click tracks, with the whole band playing together in the studio. But that's just not the way records are made now.

MD: Let's talk about drummers who impress you.

Bob: After thirty-two years of doing this, it's hard to remember everyone—and I don't want to leave anyone out. But besides drummers I've already mentioned, I'd list Josh Freese, Andy Newmark, Shawn Pelton, Pete Thomas, Mel Gaynor from Simple Minds, and Mickey Curry. Among New York drummers, Allan Schwartzberg was always great to work with, as was Jimmy Young. Steve Gadd, of course, goes without saying. He's just unbelievable.

Kenny Aronoff is powerful as hell, with a wonderful straight-ahead feel. Steve Jordan played brilliantly on a single that I did years ago with The Pretenders, "Don't Get Me

Wrong." The Marotta brothers, Rick and Jerry, are both terrific players with great feels. And of course there's Jeff Porcaro—one of the best

drummers ever, and a great guy. It's a shame that we lost him.

I also love what Stewart Copeland does. I saw The Police recently, and I couldn't take my eyes off of Stewart. He's one of the few drummers who can play as much as he does

and have it feel good at the same time.

I've mixed many records that Jim Keltner played on, but I've never recorded him.

work with that you haven't?

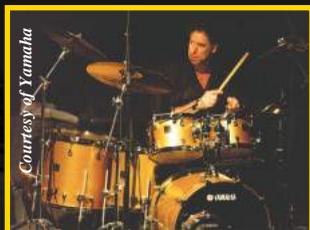
Bob: Two drummers that have died: John Bonham and Keith Moon. And though I mixed

HIGH ON THE MOUNTAIN

Three top drummers reflect on working with Bob Clearmountain.

KENNY ARONOFF

Bob Clearmountain diligently captures the honesty of any band he's mixing. I love the way he brings out the best sound qualities and the personalities of all the individual instruments on a recording—and therefore the sound and personality of the band. Bob's mixes have resulted in some of the best-sounding records ever heard.



MICKEY CURRY

My fondest studio memories are all of sessions with Bob. I owe my career to him. He makes me sound the way I want people to hear me. He loves the drums, so he pays a lot of attention to them, and he works really hard at getting the sounds right. He has amazing ears, and he's in a league of his own with regards to mixing. He's also a blast in the studio—no pressure, and lots of laughs.

ANDY NEWMARK

Bob was the first, and biggest, of a breed of engineer superstars. When he was on staff at The Power Station, his talent brought a lot of business there. *Everyone* wanted Bob to engineer their recordings, because his name ensured a quality product, no different from having big-name players on the session. Artists were more than willing to give him points on their record to have his magic engineering touch. His mixing talent and sonic instincts also made artists willing to give him a royalty just to *mix* their record.

Bob recorded me many times during the 1980s. He had a very unassuming, mellow vibe in the studio. Producers and musicians alike trusted Bob's instincts when it came to any sound-related issues. He also worked very quickly. Some producers and engineers made names for themselves because they took hours to get drum sounds. Bob got great drum sounds in ten minutes.

When an engineer gets good sounds quickly, it's much easier to play in the studio. Having to wait until a record is mixed in order for it to sound good is too late. Musicians need a good-sounding track right from the start in order to play well. Having someone like Bob on board, who has the sound thing totally covered, takes a big load off of any producer's mind.

Since I'm saying this for *Modern Drummer*, I'll put it in a drum context: Bob Clearmountain is the Steve Gadd of recording engineers. He was and still is the man.



"I've had drummers send me MP3s and videos to impress me with how amazing they are. Okay, you can play a drum solo. But how many records have drum solos?"

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BOB CLEARMOUNTAIN

a single for Ringo years ago, I've never actually worked with him. I'd love to do that, because I love the way he plays.

MD: Let's shift gears from the players to what's being played. What tips would you offer drummers coming into the studio for the first time? How would you make them comfortable?

Bob: First of all, I want to hear what they sound like. I'll say, "Tune the drums the way you hear them, and we'll go from there." Sometimes that sounds perfect. I try not to worry the drummer about the sound—unless it just sounds like crap. The last thing you want is to have a drummer hitting a snare drum or a tom for hours before he's got to do a good take. He'll just get bored and pissed off and tired. I want him to be in a good mood and feel like the session was a breeze.

Sometimes when problems happen, it might be because drummers are not hearing all the overdubs that will happen later, and they're not hearing how things are going to end up in the mix. So I'll just give little tips, like loosening the bass drum a bit, or using a different kind of muffling pillow, or trying different mics. I might suggest trying different heads on the toms, or using a different snare drum. Most drummers come with two or three snare drums, so we go through them to hear which one sounds best.

Through all of this, I try to keep the drummer involved as much as possible. I don't want to force what I think should be their drum sound on them. But because I've recorded and mixed so many records, sometimes I'll help them out a little bit—and hopefully they'll be into it.

MD: Let's talk about equipment. Do you have any favorite drum mics?

Bob: Well, everyone has their favorites, and I'll tell you what I use. But that's not to say that they're what everyone should use. Every room is different, every drummer is different, and every set of drums is different. And people go for different things.

Lately I've been switching between different bass drum mics. I've been using the Beyer M-88 a lot because The Stones' live sound guy uses it on Charlie Watts' bass drum. I've been recording them a lot using their mics, and Charlie's bass drum always sounds great. But recently we did some recordings with an engineer named Bryan Cook, and he was using

an FET47 on the bass drum, which sounded fantastic. That's the transistorized version of the old tube-style U47.

For snare drums I always use a Shure SM57.

CLEARMOUNTAIN'S 15 FAVORITE DRUM RECORDINGS

Though Bob didn't work on the following recordings, he cites them as his favorites for specific drum-related reasons.

1. **"Stairway To Heaven"** — Led Zeppelin
Simply the perfect rock snare drum from the ultimate rock drummer.
2. **"When The Levee Breaks"** — Led Zeppelin
The inspiration for room mics on drums.
3. **"A Wizard, A True Star"** (entire album) — Todd Rundgren
Perhaps technically a disaster, but absolutely perfect for one of my favorite albums.
4. **"Tempted"** — Squeeze
Just an overall great-sounding, perfectly played, well-recorded kit.
5. **"Black Hole Sun"** — Soundgarden
Huge!
6. **"Help!"** — The Beatles
Amazingly energetic-sounding kit. I love the "ping" on the snare. Ringo at his effortless best.
7. **"Watching The Detectives"** — Elvis Costello
Over-driven analog tape distortion (I think) that really works.
8. **"It's The Same Old Song"** — The Four Tops
Ultimate classic '60s mono R&B drums, courtesy of The Funk Brothers and Motown.
9. **"Let It Bleed"** — The Rolling Stones
Charlie Watts always sounds amazing, but he sounds even better here.
10. **"Everyday People"** — Sly & The Family Stone
There's only one chord in this song, so the drums have to be great!
11. **"Refugee"** — Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers
Mixer Shelly Yakus at his best. My reference in the '80s.
12. **"Pride In The Name Of Love"** — U2
No comment needed here. Just listen. Amazing!
13. **"Generals And Majors"** — XTC
Concise, well recorded, and extremely well played.
14. **"Something To Talk About"** — Bonnie Raitt
Engineer/mixer Ed Cherney at his best. Great song as well.
15. **"Close To Me"** — The Cure (original mix)
Fat, dry, and very close.

It's kind of the standard. For toms I've been using Shure SM98s, which are little clip-on condenser mics. I used to use Sennheiser 421s top and bottom, but I don't anymore because they get an '80s sound—almost too big.

MD: Do you mike the top and bottom of the snare?

Bob: Usually—and the bottom mic can be just about anything. Sometimes I use a Shure SM81, which sounds pretty nice, or another 57. I'll treat the bottom mic separately. I might overly limit it, or compress it and add a lot of top end. Then I'll mix it in way underneath the top mic, just to bring out a bit of the snares. And I'll always put it on a separate track to retain total control over it in the mix.

That's something I can advise your readers about. If they see a mic underneath the snare drum, they should make sure that the engineer is putting it on a second track, not mixing it in with the top drum mic—because that's a disaster. Once that bottom mic gets mixed in with the top mic on the same track, it's really rough to do anything with it. Nowadays, with people recording in digital workstations, there are plenty of tracks. So there's no reason not to keep it separate.

Here's another thing: A drummer who sees the engineer putting up a single room mic in a studio should try to convince him to put up a stereo pair of drum room ambience mics along with the mono room mic. This will give the producer and mixer the option of re-creating the sounds of the drums in the room more accurately in stereo. You can't create a stereo ambience if it hasn't been recorded stereo in the first place.

MD: What about the bass drum? Do you like the mic on the inside, the outside, or a combination of both?

Bob: Mostly on the inside. But again it depends on the kind of sound you're going for. If a drummer brings a 26" bass drum with a full head on the front, going for a big Bonham sound, then just stick a mic on the outside—a 47, a Sennheiser 421, or maybe a Shure Beta 52.

I always liked the AKG D12. But AKG stopped making them years ago, so they're hard to find. The D12 gets a round sound that's great for ballads and jazz, whereas for rock a lot of people will stick a Sennheiser 421 inside the drum right up next to the head to get a real high-end clicky sound.

MD: Do you like the front head off completely, or do you prefer a hole?

Bob: Usually a hole, because then the drum still resonates a bit. If the front head is off I'll usu-

ally make a tunnel with a blanket, but that's not for the bass drum sound. It's more to keep the snare drum sound out of the mix.

MD: Do you prefer a single stereo overhead mic, or two individual mics?

Bob: Sometimes I'll use individual mics, like AKG 451s or 460s, which have a nice bright top end. But lately I've been using a Royer SF12 stereo ribbon mic, which sounds really good and has a nice stereo image.

MD: Do you EQ the drums on the way to tape?

Bob: I'll generally add some top end to the snare drum so that when we bring the tracks up while doing overdubs it sounds exciting instead of murky and flat. I don't have a set EQ formula, I just turn the knob until the drum cuts through and has some impact to it.

I do the same with the toms. If they sound clear and bright enough, I might not EQ them at all. Otherwise I'll just do a little bit. I won't go too far in the recording, so that there's always room to do a bit more later. And I never use compression when recording. I'll do that only in the mix.

MD: When you approach the drum mix, in what order do you bring up the kit?

Bob: I put the whole kit up in a rough mix to hear how it's been recorded, and then I'll work on it from there. I listen to the way the drums relate to the rest of the mix, because I'm not just mixing drums, I'm mixing the record as a whole. The drum mix has to relate to the vocal, the guitars, the keyboards, and especially the bass. When I bring the faders up on the console, I always have the bass drum right next to the bass so that they're almost like one thing. I treat them together as far as the balance goes, and I'll EQ them so that they complement each other.

It's really hard to generalize about mixing techniques, because there are so many different types of music. Sometimes the drums should be quiet and distant, depending on what sort of texture you're trying to paint. When it comes to rock or pop, it's important for the drums to feel powerful, even if they're not real loud.

MD: What equipment can you recommend for getting a decent drum sound in a home studio?

Bob: A little Mackie 1604 console will work okay. Then get some decent mic pre's. My favorite is the Apogee mini-MP, which is the only non-digital product Apogee ever made. And again, you can't go wrong with Shure SM57 mics. You can use them on just about anything and get a pretty good sound.

MD: How do you feel about drum sound

replacement, and all the software out now for that purpose?

Bob: I try to use samples as little as possible, but occasionally I'll sneak in a bass drum just to reinforce something that isn't quite working. I still use Digidesign's Sound Replacer. But I wish they'd come out with a newer version, because it has a lot of problems. It would be nice if it could alternate between two samples on fills, which it certainly won't do now. I also use Drumagog occasionally, which actually works better in some situations. With Sound Replacer, you have to go back and make sure each sample is lined up, because it's not all that accurate, depending on the dynamics.

It's pretty tough for any of these sound replacer programs to track exactly. You always have to go back and check each beat to make sure they're right and there aren't any false triggers.

MD: Finally, do you have any advice for MD readers who'd like to become studio drummers?

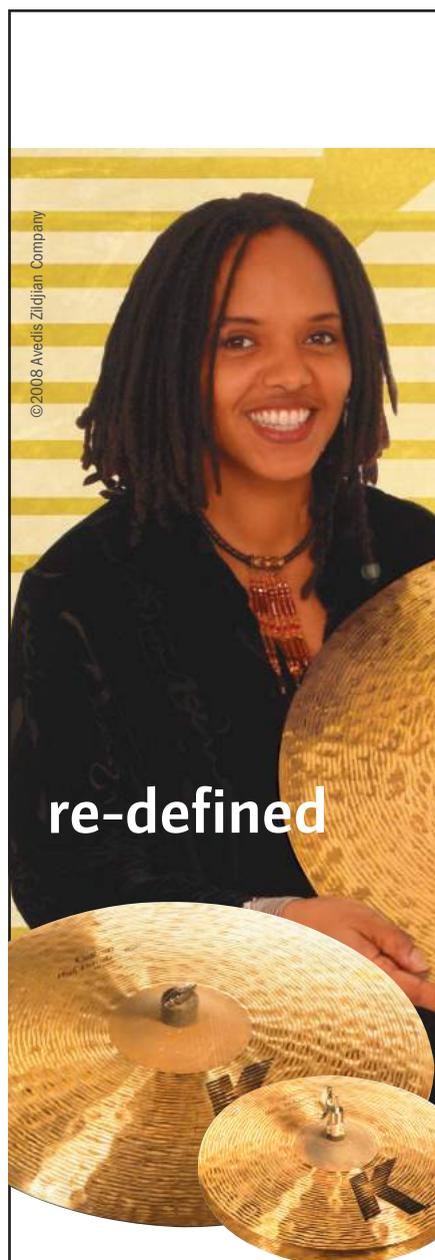
Bob: When you listen to music, don't just listen to the drums. Listen to everything that's going on on that recording. It's all about the music; it's not about the fancy stuff that you know how to play. Ringo Starr once said when he was being recorded, "Just give me the vocal louder than everything else." He would play according to what the vocal was doing. Like it or not, the vocal is the most important thing on a record, and all the instruments have to complement that.

I've had drummers send me MP3s and videos to impress me with how amazing they are. They'll send a drum solo on which they're playing every kind of tom-tom paradiddle. Okay, you can play a drum solo. But how many records have drum solos? Making a recording is about being part of an ensemble. What's important is what you can add and how you can make the recording sound good. That's what you've got to keep in mind, more than anything.

For more on Bob Clearmountain, please visit www.mixthis.com.



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ANATOMY OF A DRUMSHELL

HOW MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION AFFECT THE SOUND OF YOUR DRUMS

BY MARTIN PATMOS



The drum is a relatively simple instrument—with a bit of black magic,” says Joe Montineri, a veteran drum tech, custom builder, and head of product development for drum shell manufacturer Keller Products. Geometrically, a drum is a hollow, enclosed cylinder....but there’s so much more to it than that. Its character is defined by the shell and heads, the materials and assembly of which affect sound and performance.

Drum shells in particular hold a certain mystery, with the type of wood they’re made from,

their dimensions, and construction all being important factors in the sound they produce. And with numerous lines of drums available today from companies on practically every continent—not to mention the existing vintage and custom markets—understanding just what’s what can seem daunting.

So with a little help from several leading drum builders and representatives from various companies, let’s peel back the drumhead and take a look inside these cylinders we love so much.

Why Wood Works

With the exception of metal snare drums and acrylic-shell drums, the overwhelming majority of drums are made from wood. Maple, birch, oak, basswood, ash, mahogany—these are some of the woods currently in use by today's manufacturers. A number of these are considered industry standards, while others by their very nature offer something different. To help us distinguish the different woods in the drumming forest, in addition to Joe Montineri we spoke with John Good, designer for DW; Ray Ayotte, former president and designer for TAYE and Ayotte; Gene Okamoto, product manager for Pearl; Jim Haler, product manager for Yamaha drums; Mapex's national sales manager, Scott Sasser; solid-shell master John Craviotto of The Craviotto Drum Company; and William Reeves, president of Oregon Drum.

To begin with, drums are made from hardwoods, or deciduous trees, and not from coniferous softwoods. Among these hardwoods, the ones used for drum manufacture generally have a medium to hard physical character.

A key to the hardness of a wood is its average dried weight, given in pounds per cubic foot (lb/ft³). According to Albert Jackson, David Day, and Simon Jennings' *The Complete Manual Of Woodworking*, rock maple has a hardness of about 46 lb/ft³, while a silver maple is approximately 39 lb/ft³ and poplar is about 31 lb/ft³. With some exceptions, most drums are built with woods falling somewhere around this range. Notice that different species of a given wood, like maple, will have different hardness ratings. That said, John Good states, "Don't

Scott Sasser says, "total confidence in the end result."

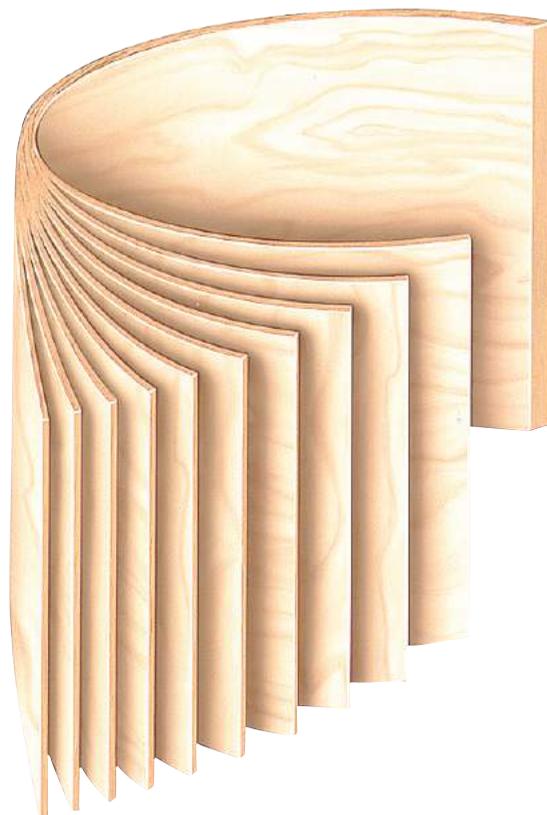
Second, the wood must be workable. Some woods are simply too hard to craft a shell with, are not easily converted into plywood, or don't hold a bearing edge. For reasons like these, materials like rosewood or spruce, which are great for building guitars, are not practical for plywood drum shells. On the other hand, with maple, for example, "You can cut a bearing edge that creates a nice clean surface," says John Good. "It's fine with end grain, and it's fine with side grain."

Third, the plies chosen for the exterior and, to a lesser extent, the interior of the shell must be visually appealing and be able to take a finish evenly, if they're to be seen.

There are other considerations when selecting wood for a shell. According to Good, "The first thing that comes to mind is, 'What are you trying to achieve?' If you're trying to get longer sustain, of course we go to a maple drum. If you're wanting a punchier, better recording-style drum, that's when we use birch. Maple has a long vibration, and birch vibrates very fast and short."

Wood Types And Sound

In drum building, the species of wood used is commonly thought to influence the



Okamoto notes, generally offers a dark, warm tone, as does the somewhat harder African mahogany.

Though biologically unrelated, Philippine mahogany, or meranti, offers a dark sound with less sustain and a punchy bottom. With its lower density, poplar, which can be found as inner plies in some vintage drums, softens the sound. Basswood, another softer wood, can have a balanced, round tone. Bubinga, quite a dense wood, is deep and rich. Beech drums are said to show characteristics between maple and birch, and ash drums

"The majority of drummers buy with their eyes, not their ears." —Jim Haler, Yamaha Drums

forget, we're not making these drums out of solid planks. They're veneers, and therefore that hardness factor isn't the same."

Woods are chosen by drum builders for a variety of reasons, both economic and practical. First, as Gene Okamoto says, any particular wood used should have an "abundant and consistent supply." Abundance is important so that enough drums can be made. Consistency in quality, with a tight, even grain, is imperative so that each manufacturer can have, as

sound. For instance, maple is generally said to have a higher fundamental pitch, with more mids and highs in the mix, plus more sustain and tone. Birch is said to offer a lower fundamental, natural EQ, and a punchier sound with less sustain. Oak generally has a lower fundamental, but with lots of cut and volume. Walnut offers very dark tones, along with volume and medium sustain. True South American mahogany, long the "secret ingredient" found in many vintage drums, as Gene

are said to cut with a throaty warmth. And these are just those woods commonly used by the major manufacturers—the world of custom drums is even more diverse.

If this virtual forest sounds confusing, this generalization by William Reeves should help: "A greater-density wood creates a more reflective internal surface, and usually a more resonant shell—although this isn't always the rule." "You can't argue with mother nature,"

“Most human beings are unable to accurately hear the myriad qualities that many drum manufacturers lavish upon their instruments. Wine tasting seems a more exact science.” —Scott Sasser, Mapex Drums

adds Scott Sasser. “Denser woods influence pitch into the higher register, although there’s plenty involved in the construction of a drum that can either negate or exploit the density of a raw laminate ply.”

So generally, the denser the wood, the sharper and brighter the sound, while the less dense, the rounder and softer the sound. What’s the exception? John Good points to oak. “Oak is very hard, but it’s porous,” he explains. “When you put it in veneer form, you get more of the properties of its porousness, which makes for a warmer-sounding drum.” Other characteristics might be related to the natural oils present in the wood, especially with woods from tropical regions, as esteemed drum builder John Craviotto observes.

Mixed-Wood Shells

But what about shells made with more than one type of wood? When building with plies, different species can be combined in construction. This practice has a long history. Many vintage drums were made of mixed-wood shells, usually with a softer wood such as poplar as the middle ply in a 3-ply configuration. To some extent, this was originally done for economic reasons, as is still the case. Mixed-wood shells are not uncommon in entry- or mid-level drums. Yet this practice also lends itself to designing shells with particular characteristics, so mixed-wood shells can be found at the professional level too.

As Joe Montineri comments, “You can combine woods, but you need to calculate carefully, because some woods don’t harmonically match up in their vibrations.” In other words, what began as economic necessity led to sound design, with many mixed-wood shells available today displaying their own characteristics.

All of these wood-related sound characteristics should be taken with a grain of salt, warns Ray Ayotte: “Do you really know anyone who can tell the difference? With all things being equal, if you built a drum from rock maple and



one from Finnish birch—which have practically identical hardness ratings—if your life depended on it, could you tell the difference by just listening?”

The point here is that woods of comparably high quality and density will likely produce comparable results. Similarly, Scott Sasser remarks, “There’s definitely not one wood that’s superior for building drum shells—though there are some woods that have been impressed on the buying public as superior. Most human beings are unable to fully and accurately hear the myriad qualities that many drum manufacturers lavish upon their instruments. What critical ears can do is describe the complex character of sounds and how they differ. But even among critical ears you’re likely to get inaccurate results in A/B comparisons. Wine tasting seems a more exact science than the dark art of describing acoustic qualities.”

Furthermore, Ray Ayotte adds, a drum shell is “probably only responsible for about ten percent” of a drum’s total sound, with the counter-hoop being influential but the drumhead producing most of the sound. Indeed, others informally polled put the shell’s contribution no higher than thirty percent, with drumhead type and tuning being most responsible for sound.

Drum Construction And Sound

So why all the hype? As Joe Montineri observes, there are many more drum manufacturers than drumhead manufacturers, which points to another issue, and that is drum construction itself. “Most companies in the old days made their own shells,” he says, “and their sound was inherent in their own formula.” Among today’s companies manufacturing their own shells, the details in their design formulas also lead to differences.

John Good illustrates this point: “I’ve made drums out of cherry, a very dense wood. But once you put it into veneer form, you get a host of sounds that are different from what you’d have with, let’s say, a John Craviotto solid shell cherry drum that’s going to have a brilliant crack to it. In veneer form it has a much different character; it has darker qualities.”

In other words, if two drums are made with the same wood by different builders, the result will be different drums with different characteristics. Or, as Ray Ayotte quips, “An omelet is made from eggs and heat, but great chefs will produce different results.”

Exactly how our wood of choice is used in a drum’s construction is equally important to the wood itself.

The How’s & Why’s...Of Plies

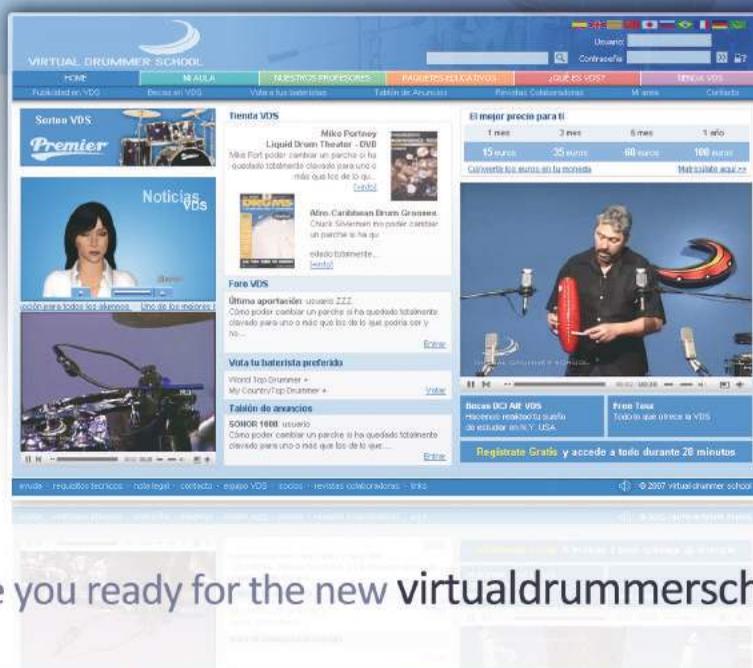
Just about every drumset on the market today, modern and vintage, is built with ply shells. But there is a lot of variation among them. They may be made with three plies on up to nine, ten, and sometimes more.

Jim Haler shared a description of Yamaha’s ply shell construction, which helps illustrate how a shell goes together: From the chosen tree, very thin sheets are cut and formed into “master plies” that are two or three layers thick. These master plies are then cut for depth and length, and used to make shells with any number of plies, from four to nine and so forth. After they are rolled together and glued with the seams staggered for even strength all around, pressure is applied from the inside of the shell

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against a mold to create a strong, solid cylinder. This pressure might be created with a diaphragm (as Yamaha does) or mechanically, before the glue is set to cure. The newly formed, rough shell is then cut square at the ends and sanded. Stains and clear coats are then applied, the bearing edges are cut and sealed, the holes are drilled, the hardware is assembled, and out the door it goes to your local drum shop.

While not every manufacturer constructs their instruments in exactly this way, this does illustrate the basic idea of wrapping plies together and forming a cylinder. Among the many companies producing drums, besides variations in the number of plies, wood grain direction might also vary. Some builders quote theories about how sound travels along or across wood grain (deeper or brighter), and take this into consideration. The most common practice, however, is to alternate ply grain for strength.

Another individualistic trait is the type of joints used where the edges of each ply touch. Butt joints and scarf joints, as well as seams that are vertical or at an angle to the drum, are all in use by various manufacturers. Each company's methods have been decided on for specific reasons. Since each design is engineered for strength, durability,

and sound, obviously there's more than one way to cook an egg here.

Through Thick And Thin

Ply of wood also influence shell thickness. Most drum shells range in thickness from a few millimeters on up to about a quarter-inch thick, although there are exceptions. Both strength and sound will be affected by shell thickness. A really thin shell—like those offered by some custom companies—might sound great in an acoustic trio, but they might warrant mics in an amplified setting. A slightly thicker shell might sound stronger in a natural mix with amplified instruments. Scott Sasser suggests that with comparable materials and diameters, "The thicker the shell, the greater potential for a higher fundamental pitch. A comparably thinner shell offers the greatest potential for movement (resonance)."

Thin and thick shell designs have been used in different ways by various companies over the years. Probably the greatest variations in thickness can be found in snare drums, which can range from a thin, single ply up to one that's an inch thick. In this context the thin/thick qualities of a wood shell can help draw out different tonalities, emphasize certain overtones, contribute to the amount of dryness, and

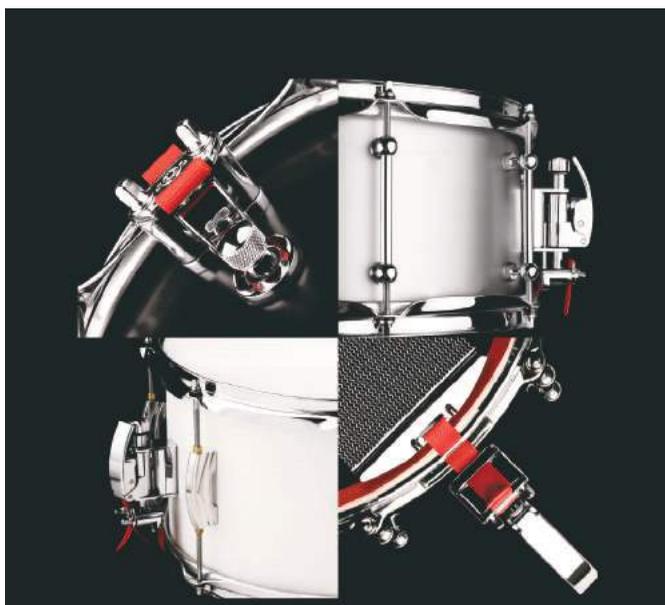
so forth.

As for the rest of the kit, most shells fall within the parameters mentioned above. Often, within a series of drums, all the toms will have the same thickness, while the bass drum and sometimes the low toms are a bit thicker. Remember, the type of wood will dictate this to some extent, along with whatever the designer has in mind. To sum up some comments Ray Ayotte made, the trick is to find a musical middle ground, since a shell that's too thick will lack warmth and sound noisy, while a shell that's too thin might deform under the added stress on the tension rods when hit.

And What About Shell Sizes?

As for depth and diameter, it's no secret that size affects pitch. Of the two dimensions, "pitch increases or decreases more through diameter than depth," notes Joe Montineri. While this might seem obvious to anyone comparing a rack tom with a floor tom, depth is a more subtle dimension. It might require a close listen to reveal the distinctions between a power tom and conventional tom of the same diameter, but they exist, and there's a science behind it.

John Good explains, "The longer the drum, the shorter the sustain. There are two major things that take place when you



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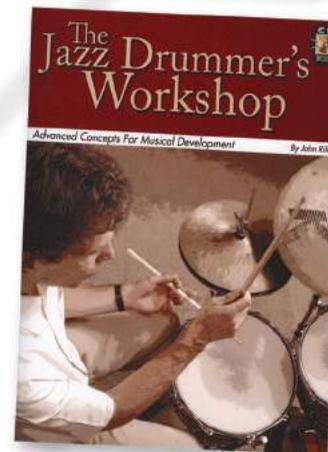
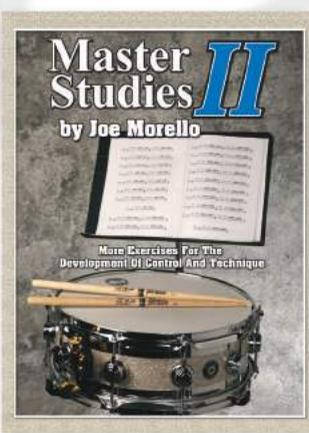
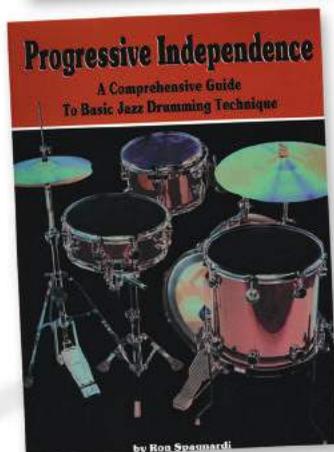
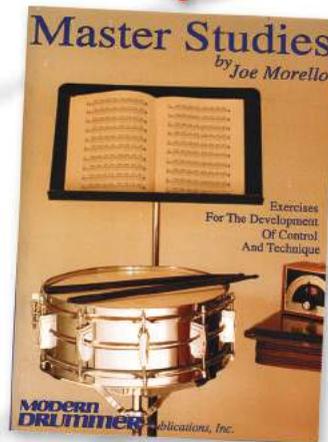
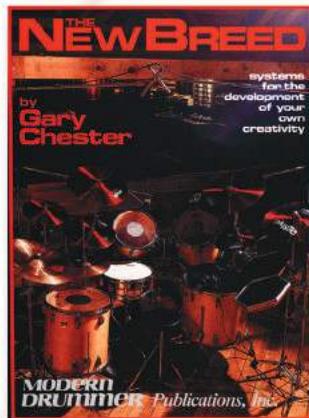
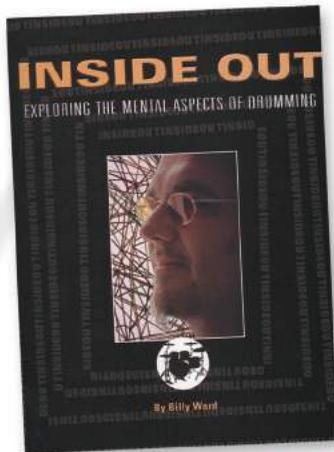
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strike a drum: First there's a circular vibration that travels down the shell lightning-fast. Then there's an air column created from one head to the next. With those two elements working in a drum, the longer that drum shell is, the less likely these two elements are bound to work together to excite the bottom head." This helps explain the difference between the big fat sound of traditional-sized toms and the added depth of character but shorter sustain that power-sized toms produce.

Joe Montineri notes that drum sizes originally were determined in part by economics. Improved techniques in the 1980s led to power sizes, opening the door for the endless depth/diameter combinations available today. Traditional and power sizes are still common, but drum sizes between these two, and shorter, are also found.

An easy way to hear the effect of depth is to compare the response of two like snare drums—a 5" with a 6½"—with the snares turned off. Because they're generally drier than toms, the effect of depth should be easier to hear. This of course begs the question, Is there an ideal relationship between depth and diameter? That depends on who you ask.

From The Outside In

Moving from the outside of the shell in, there are a few things worth noting. Special attention is given to the exterior surface plies on drums, where the wood grain will be showing. As John Good says, "What you want to do is create a pleasing, aesthetic

A great variety of stains, lacquers, and waxes are applied to finish the wood on the outer surface. This range of techniques frequently leads to colors that highlight the wood grain. For drums that receive a plastic covering of some form, the outer ply's appearance is less important. From solid colors to silver sparkle and beyond, coverings offer finishes that couldn't easily be made with traditional wood finishes. And no, an outer covering shouldn't affect drum sound, as long as it's tightly glued all around. However, if there are air pockets or it's loose in some way, it could deaden the shell.

Whatever the outer appearance, the desire for visually appealing drums is very important. We might not always admit that looks are important, but they're significant when it comes to selling drums. After all, as Jim Haler points out, though we listen, "The majority of drummers buy with their eyes, not their ears."

Inside Reflection

For other reasons, interior surfaces are important. While not readily seen, they're sometimes visible and should have a basic appeal. More important, though, is what Joe Montineri calls "the internal reflection"—how the finish or texture inside a drum affects the sound. Besides a shell's actual vibrations, this is another area where the wood comes into play.

After sanding shells to various degrees of smoothness, some manufacturers then coat the drum's inside, while others leave them raw. Looking at drum companies past and

variety of interior surfaces, smooth to rough, firm to hard. There's a history and wisdom behind these combinations, and it's considered a key ingredient in the overall design of some drums.

Why so much variation? As John Craviotto comments, "The chamber (the inside of the shell) contributes a lot to the sound." This is attributable to how sound waves move against a drum's interior wall. "You don't want it totally smooth," adds Craviotto. "That gets away from the woody sound. Don't make it look like a PVC pipe."

In other words, some texture to the interior wood is usually desirable, however faint to the eye it might be. Joe Montineri tells of his days as a drum tech, when he would "rough up the inside of a shell" if he thought the sound needed to be warmer, noting that if they're too smooth, shells can produce a boing-y quality.

To Reinforce, Or Not?

Most drums today are strict cylinders. However, there are a good number still made with reinforcement hoops. Originally, these multi-ply maple rings were used to ensure the roundness of a thin ply shell. As manufacturing techniques developed, drums could be made without them while remaining strong and in round.

Since then hoops have become a point of debate for some, with those opposed arguing that modern shell and drumhead design eliminates their need. Yet others favor reinforcement hoops for the mellowing effect and focus they contribute by adding overtones. "When you

"A famous custom drum maker once told me that if you took a generic shell and put brand 'A' lugs on it, it would sound like brand 'A' drums. Then, if you took the same shell and applied brand 'B' lugs, it would sound like brand 'B' drums." —Gene Okamoto

look on the outside, and a halfway decent inner grain. In the middle you can use a lower grade of maple—not to be cheap, but it's unnecessary to take beautiful-looking grain patterns and put them in the core."

present, a variety of special paints, sealers, and varnishes can be found coating the interior surface. This protects the wood surface and can harden it to some degree. The combinations of sanding and finish lead to a

strike the drum," John Good says, "that reinforcing hoop is holding the value of the attack. It holds it for a second and then releases the lower fundamental, which is the beauty—the roundness and resonance—of the drum shell."

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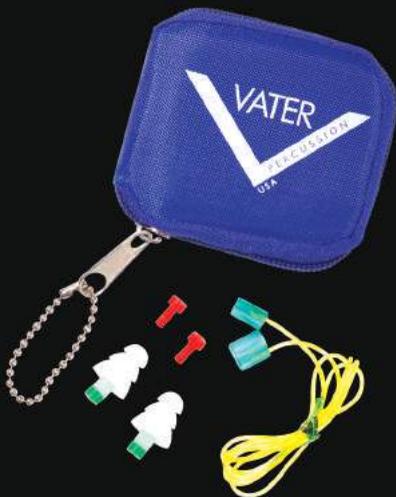
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DRUMSHELLS

Many (though not all) vintage drums were designed with reinforcing hoops, which is part of their appeal for some, although the aged, "played-in" wood is perhaps the greater attraction. Today reinforcement hoops can be found in shells that aim to reproduce those classic qualities, as an option for certain manufacturer's high-end lines, and as an integral part of solid-shell designs. (More on that later.)

The Edge Of Insanity

Regardless of whether a drum is made with reinforcing hoops or not, perhaps the most important drum shell feature affecting sound is the bearing edge. Shrouded in mystery as something to never tamper with, the bearing edge is the point of contact between shell and drumhead. The head must evenly meet the shell all the way around, and a great deal of precision is involved in creating the bearing edge so the head can sit perfectly.

As Ray Ayotte relates, first, the shell needs to be square, or flat, meaning that the edge is level all around and doesn't dip or rise (except in the case of a snare bed). The edge is then cut from the interior of the shell going out, and sanded and finished smooth so that the drumhead can move over it. As a head is hit, it stretches and slides over the edge. (Incidentally, this is a key area where the strength of a shell comes into play, as the movement of the head adds stress to the shell.) How a drumhead vibrates depends in part on how it's suspended.

There are several bearing edge cuts that can be found on drums in production today—rounded, 45°, rounded 45°, double 45s, 30°, and 60°—each uniquely influencing how the drumhead will resonate. The 45° edge is probably the most common, as it's strong, easy, and leads to a sound with notable attack.

Rounded edges are favored by some for their mellow sound. Those seeking more vintage sounds might seek rounded bearing edges on drums with reinforcing hoops. Of the other bearing edge styles, the double 45 has found a lot of favor. Reportedly easier to tune, what really sets this cut apart is the greater range of motion the drumhead has across the edge. Created with two 45° cuts, one each from inside and outside the shell, the double 45 results in the shell diameter being slightly smaller than it would otherwise be. While many find the motion this allows beneficial, critics argue that the potential for too much motion can lead to unevenly seated drumheads.

As for the 30° edge, it "calms down the attack of a 45 while retaining sensitivity," according to John Craviotto, while a 60° edge would theoreti-

cally add attack. On certain high-end drums, different bearing edges might even be employed for different functions, with the edges on bass, snare, and toms all being different.

Regardless of a drum shell's bearing edge type, for the sound to be optimal, the more precisely done the better. As for tampering with them, no, it really isn't a good idea unless you're very skilled with woodworking, routers, and lathes. If you have a drum with damaged bearing edges, there are several custom drum shops throughout the country with the facilities and experience to re-cut them for you.

Hardware Facts

Another issue is the amount of hardware attached to the shell. The advent of RIMS mounts revolutionized drum suspension by taking mounting hardware off the shell, an idea so innovative that every manufacturer has since come up with their own version of the concept. Removing the mounting hardware and eliminating a potentially large hole for a tom arm leaves the shell more free to vibrate, with only the lugs remaining attached to the shell.

Most drum builders would concur with Scott Sasser, who states, "Preserve the shell integrity wherever and whenever possible. Any hardware affixed directly to the shell adds mass onto a surface you'd rather have in motion, and has the potential to alter the properties of the drum."

However, lugs, which are almost always attached to the shell, can have a lot of visual personality, and most manufacturers use distinctive designs. Gene Okamoto relates the following story: "A famous custom drum maker once told me that if you took a generic shell and put brand 'A' lugs on it, it would sound like brand 'A' drums. If you took the same shell and applied brand 'B' lugs, it would sound like brand 'B' drums. And so on with brand 'C' and brand 'D' lugs. The mass of the lugs and the size of the cavity, he reasoned, contributed to the drum's sound."

At heart, most lugs host a swivel nut, which accepts the tension rod and is somewhat forgiving of real-life variables affecting the drum. The tension rods hold the counter hoop, which in turn holds the head.

Though not part of the shell directly, counter hoops are worth mentioning, as they too can affect drum sound. The triple-flange design is most common, but heavier die-cast and wood hoops add their own unique characteristics. Beyond the lugs, unless the drum has snare hardware, the only other items attached to a shell are a grommet for the air hole and a nameplate.

Other Designs

Hardware, bearing edges, reinforcement hoops, internal surface, exterior cosmetics, depth, diameter, thickness, wood type—the anatomy of a drum would seem complete, except that there are other ways to build a drum shell. Solid-shell design, the stave shell, and the block shell are methods more likely to be used for constructing snare drums than toms or bass drums, but they offer intriguing possibilities nonetheless.

The term “solid-shell” might seem misleading, for it’s not a hollowed out log we’re generally talking about here. Also called “steam-bent,” the design concept relies on a single ply of wood bent around reinforcement hoops, creating a shell with only one seam.

John Craviotto is perhaps the most renowned solid-shell builder, prizing this design for the increased sensitivity it offers and the species-specific wood characteristics it communicates. In working with single plies of wood, an awareness of factors such as oil and sugar content and grain direction inform his methods. Having arguably perfected solid-shell design and construction, beyond snare drums Craviotto also produces full custom kits, in some cases ingeniously stacking single plies of complementary

woods for deeper shells.

Meanwhile, stave-shell design is most easily understood by imagining a shell built like a wooden barrel. William Reeves specializes in these drums, and explains the logic behind their design: “The stave-shell method greatly improves the quality of wood in contact with the drumhead, as hundreds of square inches of glue are eliminated entirely from the process. The resulting drum shell comes alive with the wood species, making a tonal contribution different from that in a ply shell.” By using individual staves, more than one wood species can be used for the shell, with unique tonal and visual results.

Similar to stave shells, block-shell construction utilizes blocks of wood in a horizontal pattern, like a brick wall. Note that the difference in grain direction between these two designs can influence tone to some degree.

The Wrap-Up

So there really is more than one way to cook an egg. Of course, all the engineering that goes into the shell isn’t that effective without drumheads. Responsible for the majority of sound, drumheads in different

weights and surfaces bring out different characteristics in attack and reverberation. Yet the type of stick used and how a drum is hit—the human factor—is the most important, for, as Ray Ayotte points out, “You hear what the musician wants you to hear.”

With so many options, drummers and consumers must consider John Good’s comment, “What are you trying to achieve?” Martha Stewart once said something along these lines: When making a recipe, use the best ingredients you can afford. With this idea in mind, most companies offer kits aimed at beginners, professionals, and everyone in between. Whether it’s a basic all-around kit or something more style-specific, look for a well-made drum.

Just remember, as cool as gear is, try not to get sucked into the minutia or marketing hype too much. Listen, for as Jim Halperin says, “Beauty is in the ear of the beholder.” And take to heart what jazz great Joey Baron said in his Ask A Pro response in the October, 2006 MD: “Remember that you produce the sound, no matter what brand of instrument you play.”



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The Gladstone/Krupa Snare Drum

A Look At Gene's Treasure

by Harry Cangany

Today we use the term "custom drum company" with regularity. But fifty years ago, there was really only one custom drum company. It was small, with two employees. And it was exclusive. You had to have the right connections to get one of the sixty or so snare drums made in the owner's apartment. Even fewer drumsets were made—only a handful—and today those drums are worth a fortune.

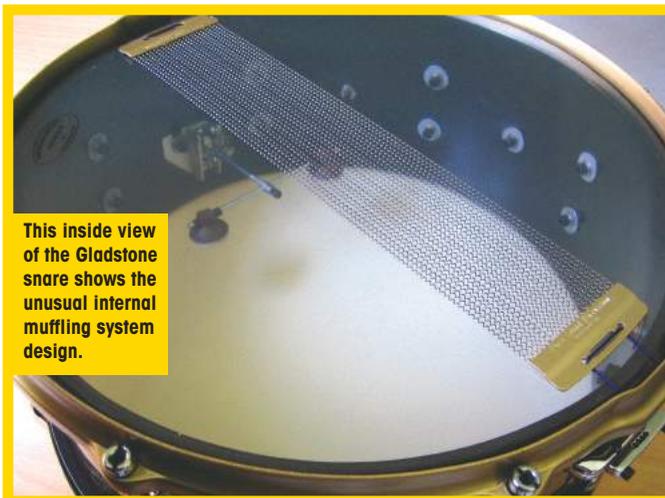
The drummer/designer/builder in question was Billy Gladstone, an immigrant who shed his original name of Goldstein in order to make his mark on the music scene in New York City. Billy became known for his snare drum technique as early as the 1920s, when he was a Leedy endorser and a part-time employee in Frank Wolf's drum shop. Billy ultimately changed manufacturers, joining Brooklyn-based Gretsch at the same time that he gained fame as Radio City Music Hall's superb pit drummer.

Besides being an outstanding drummer, Billy Gladstone was an inventor and an "improver." In the late '30s, he worked with Gretsch to create the Gretsch Gladstone snare drum, a special tube-lug model that featured a tuning system that allowed both heads to be tensioned without the need to turn the drum over. After World War II, Billy introduced his signature Billy Gladstone snare drum to the world. Gretsch provided the

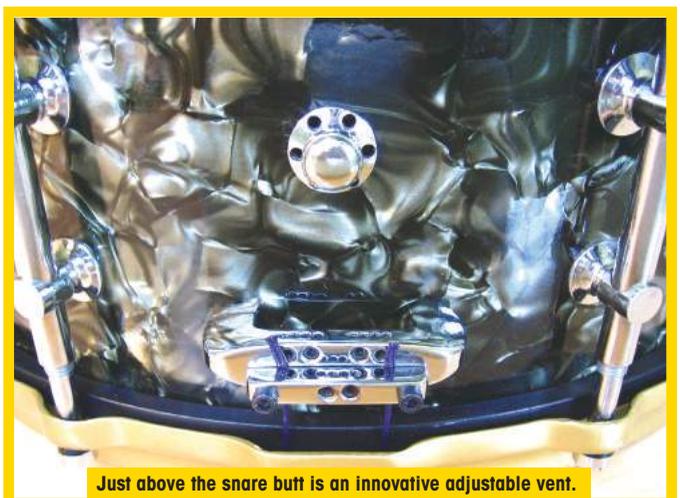


shell and the hoops, but everything else was pure Billy.

We've known for years that Gladstone made 6x14 and 7x14 snares for drum stars like Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson, and Cozy Cole. In fact, Chet Falzerano, author of the recently released book *Billy Gladstone*, owns Gene's first BG drum—a 7x14 snare that has one chrome plate on it. (Each Gladstone snare features a chrome plate that lists the name of the original owner.) The plate on that drum says: "To Gene Krupa, The World's Most Renowned Drummer, From Billy Gladstone." That inscription



This inside view of the Gladstone snare shows the unusual internal muffling system design.



Just above the snare butt is an innovative adjustable vent.



The famous Gladstone 3-way key is used to operate the drum's unique tensioning system, which allows each head to be tuned from the top of the drum.

plate speaks volumes about the respect that Billy—a technical fanatic whose rolls inspired Buddy Rich—had for Gene.

But Billy made another drum for Gene—which we show here in all its glory. It's a 6x14 snare, with a 3-ply shell and no reinforcing rings. This drum features a black diamond finish and has two engraved plates. The first plate features the same words that are on Chet Falzerano's drum. The second plate reads, "Billy Gladstone Radio City Music Hall."

This second Billy Gladstone snare made for Gene Krupa was given to its current owner by Gene's widow, Patti Krupa. It was a gesture of friendship to a young man who adored

America's first drum star and became his friend, helper, and confidante over thirty-five years ago.

This BG snare was stored by Gene in Frank Ippolito's Drum Shop in New York City—the place for drummers to hang in the '40s and '50s. (Ippolito's was also the place where the chain-drive bass drum pedal was created.) Krupa sent for the drum to have at home after he retired. Gene had gut snares on it, but these were changed recently to modern wires. There was another change: You can see that the hoops are bronze in color. The

owner (who has requested anonymity) painted them to hide flaws in the plating until they can be re-plated. He's a native New Yorker, and the colors of bronze, chrome, and black diamond reminded him of the decor of Radio City itself.

Chet Falzerano's Gladstone drum has the black lacquer finish that was standard on such drums. Billy Gladstone's personal drum was gold lacquer. Billy once commented that he didn't like plastic covering on his drums. Yet Cozy Cole's Gladstone snare was white marine, and Chet Falzerano has seen another black diamond example similar to our Krupa drum. Why would Gene Krupa, the first drum star and a famous proponent of white marine pearl, have a drum so different? It's another drum mystery.

Enjoy the pictures, friends, because they depict drum history. Look for Chet Falzerano's book to learn more about Billy Gladstone, whose snare drum design is still emulated nearly half a century after his passing. And please don't forget that on January 15, 2009 we'll be celebrating the one hundredth birthday of Eugene Bertram Krupa, the "Ace Drummer Man" who inspired Billy Gladstone to build this month's remarkable drum.



Optimal Computer System Requirements
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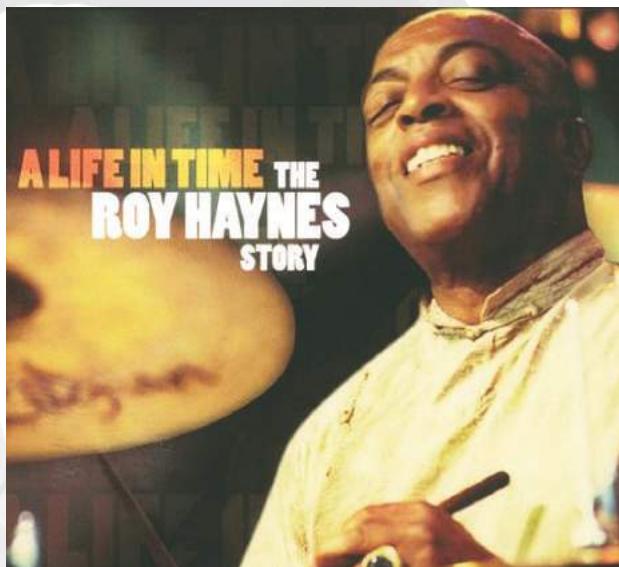


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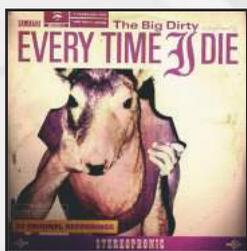
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ROY HAYNES A LIFE IN TIME: THE ROY HAYNES STORY

★★★★★

The last of the drum masters to have played with both **Charlie Parker** and **John Coltrane**, Roy Haynes is no doubt the one remaining godfather of modern jazz drumming. This four-disc box set (three CDs/DVD) proves why. It's all here, from his early work with Bird, **Bud Powell**, and **Thelonious Monk** to more contemporary recordings with **Jackie McLean**, **Pat Metheny**, and **Chick Corea**—not to mention his own still startling solo work. Through it all, Haynes' incendiary signature, that eruptive brew of hyper snare drum figures, edgy cymbal work, and hardscrabble combinations, continues to sting the senses. Essential! (Dreyfus Jazz) **Ken Micallef**

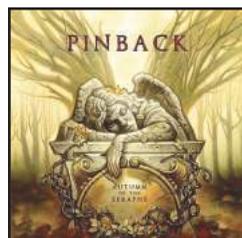


EVERY TIME I DIE THE BIG DIRTY

★★★★★

With metal-core now cutting into the mainstream, the market's been flooded by second- and third-rate bands, vying to stake their claim in the once-underground scene. Buffalo, New York trailblazers Every Time I Die have remained at the forefront of the genre, and their latest, *The Big Dirty*, instantly eases any fears of the band relinquishing its position. Drummer **MIKE NOVAK** steers this formidable ship, with tracks like "A Gentleman's Sport" and "Rebel Without Applause" being excellent examples of Novak's ability to transition amongst a variety of patterns with fantastic, fluid motions. (Ferret)

Waleed Rashidi



PINBACK AUTUMN OF THE SERAPHS

★★★★★

San Diego indie-pop team Pinback's sound might be rooted in the wriggly, complex interplay of guitars and relaxed flow of vocal harmonies between the band's principals, **Zach Smith** and **Rob Crow**. But on *Autumn Of The Seraphs*' best cuts—like the Police-y "Blue Harvest" or the stoner rock-meets-lush pop exercise "Off By 50"—the web of guitars is elevated by the way the rhythms just as intricately interact—drumbeats parrying and thrusting with chord stabs, tip-toeing around plinky arpeggios. Crow and Smith focused on tighter rhythmic interplay on this album, pulling in No Knife's **CHRIS PRESCOTT** for most of the cuts. It was a good choice: A dubby guitar line weaves around "Devil You Know," and Prescott locks its center; bass and guitar pull a jagged call-and-response in "Barnes," and Prescott binds them. **Nicole Keiper**

TAKING THE REINS

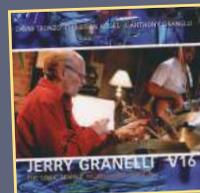
MANU KATCHE PLAYGROUND



Though he's best known for his elastic kit work with Peter Gabriel and Sting, Manu Katche's ECM debut, *Neighborhood*, proved he was also a gifted composer.

Like his drumming, which remains artfully illustrative, the new compositions of *Playground* are as precise as cut glass. **Ken Micallef**

JERRY GRANELLI V16 THE SONIC TEMPLE



Uncompromising and always inventive, drummer Jerry Granelli is a master of the long-unfolding improv. Embracing the process itself, this double disc features the same set list on successive nights.

Granelli's pulse and textural finesse lead **Dave Tronzo**, **Christian Kögel** (guitars), and **J. Anthony Granelli** (bass) through sprawling, atmospheric journeys. Otherworldly. (Songlines) **Jeff Potter**

HERMAN MATTHEWS HOME AT LAST



The new album by Herman Matthews (Tower Of Power, Kenny Loggins) displays his talents not only as a drummer, but also as a songwriter and singer. There are several well-crafted songs here that hearken back to classic soul/R&B, aided by Matthews' equally classic-sounding voice. The drummer's great pocket underlies it all. (www.hermanmatthews.com) **Martin Patmos**

LIGHTING THE FUSE

By Mike Haid



PHIL MILLER IN CAHOOTS, STRATOSPHEERIUS, GARY WILLIS

Conspiracy Theories, by British fusion vet Phil Miller's In Cahoots ensemble, is a refreshing collection of creative jazz/funk fusion led by the ex-Matching Mole/Hatfield And The North guitarist. The compositions present drummer **MARK FLETCHER** with the opportunity to shift gears in many different musical directions, which he does effortlessly and with fluent technique. Much of the material is a bit reminiscent of Bill Bruford's compositionally quirky Earthworks, but with fewer odd meters. (www.moonjune.com)

On the opening track of *Headspace*, the sophisticated, high-energy band Stratospheerius unleashes a funky, infectious vibe that draws the listener in and never lets go. The deep grooves and serious fusion chops

of drummer **LUCIANNA PADMORE** push **Joe Deninzon's** powerful, violin-driven compositions with authority. This would be an exciting band to see live. (www.stratospheerius.com)

On *Actual Fiction* bassist **Gary Willis** and drummer **KIRK COVINGTON** continue their atmospheric, post-Tribal Tech groove explorations on an album filled with innovative instrumental techno/funk fusion. Covington exhibits energized, jazzy funk chops over Willis's futuristic, staccato bass lines. Spanish drummer **DAVID GOMEZ** adds impressive fusion drumming to a couple of strong tracks to round out this impressive rhythmic romp. (www.abstractlogix.com)



HIGH ON FIRE DEATH IS THIS COMMUNION



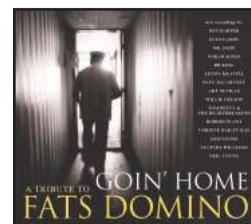
High On Fire's modus operandi has typically revolved around the chunky and massively trudging trademark metal they established nearly ten years ago. On *Death Is This Communion*, the band's fourth album, things haven't changed a bit. In the world of sludgy and heavy, the lack of deviation is a welcomed quality, particularly from **DES KENSEL's** relentless hammering, which persists in fine form. Reminiscent of Melvins slammer Dale Crover (particularly on the more uptempo cuts, like the intro of "Turk" and "Headhunter"), Kensel consistently constructs a headbanger's rhythmic paradise. (Relapse) **Waleed Rashidi**



BONERAMA BRINGING IT HOME



Bonerama is a New Orleans brass band featuring four trombonists up front, plus a sousaphone player, an electric guitarist, and drummer **ERIC BOLIVAR** on a very hot seat. Bolivar, a veteran of Karl Denson's funk circle, has the whole package—feel, chops, dynamics.... And it's a good thing, because he needs it all on *Bringing It Home*. Bolivar powers the group through a diverse live set from Tipitina's, effortlessly switching from slippery second-line originals to charged-up covers of The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Thelonious Monk, and The Neville Brothers. **STANTON MOORE** guests. (www.bonerama.net) **Robin Tolleson**

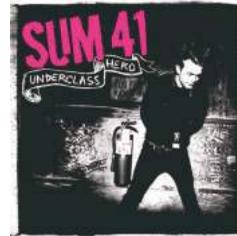


VARIOUS ARTISTS GOIN' HOME: A TRIBUTE TO FATS DOMINO



Sprawling tribute projects too often flounder, but *Goin' Home* is right on target. Seminal Crescent City heart rock 'n' roll legend Fats Domino is honored on this benefit double disc, which puts headliners (**Neil Young**, **Paul McCartney**, **Tom Petty**) alongside local legends. New Orleans equals good grooves, and the drummers here deliver. Highlights include **JOHNNY VIDACOVICH** with **Bonnie Raitt** and **Jon Cleary**, **DERRICK TABB** and **KEITH FRAZIER** funking **Lenny Kravitz** and the **Rebirth Brass Band**, **RAYMOND WEBER** with **Taj Mahal** and **The New Orleans Social Club**, and **SHANNON POWELL** with **Willie Nelson**. Cut of the month: **ZIGABOO MODELISTE** lays down the snakiest pocket alive behind **Herbie Hancock**, **George Porter**, and **Renard Poché**. Drum machines only dream of doing this. (Vanguard) **Jeff Potter**

SUM 41 UNDERCLASS HERO



Eschewing much of the metallic edge that pervaded recent Sum 41 efforts, *Underclass Hero*, the band's fifth disc, pushes its trademark bouncy pop-punk back to the front.

Drummer **STEVE JOCZ's** performance here is top-notch, nearly rubbing shoulders with Travis Barker's on Blink-182's *Enema Of The State*. The get-up-and-go of "Walking Disaster" features Jocz hustling across the track with ease, seamlessly transitioning from half-time phrases to tom blasts. "March Of The Dogs" is another up-tempo drumming delight. (Island) **Waleed Rashidi**

MATT POND PA LAST LIGHT



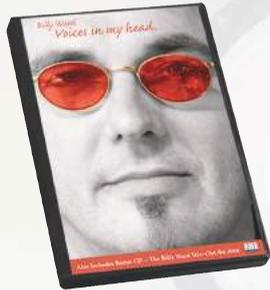
It only takes a quick listen to the second track of Matt Pond PA's latest album to get the gist of where this version of the rotating cast excels. Drummer **DAN CROWELL**

snare-smashes into "People Have A Way," his insistent kick pulse pushing classic-pop/rock rhythms forward underneath pounding piano, lush chamber-pop accompaniment, and band namesake Matt Pond's warm but propulsive vocal. It, like the rest of the disc, is built on gracefully rendered subtlety, both melodically and rhythmically. On "Taught To Look Away," featuring Americana siren Neko Case, Crowell works Ringo's brand of brilliantly angled simplicity. That balance has long been the core of MPPA's approach, but *Last Light* might be the best version they've managed yet. **Nicole Keiper**

MULTI-MEDIA

BILLY WARD VOICES IN MY HEAD

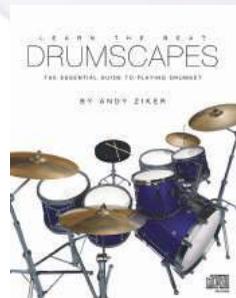
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One of the most musical and colorful drummers on the planet, Billy Ward begins his second DVD by revealing his vast knowledge of drumming history by performing examples to educate the viewer on the development of jazz concepts on the trap kit. The uniquely artistic production includes interjections from other notable drummers, as well as a trio of guest students. Ward's creative mind moves at the speed of sound; among the heady topics he covers are drum tuning techniques, rudiment applications, and various creative, musical drumset patterns. Ward also explains and performs along with tracks from his *Out The Door* trio CD (included). (DW DVD) **Mike Haid**

DRUMSCAPES: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO PLAYING DRUMSET BY ANDY ZIKER

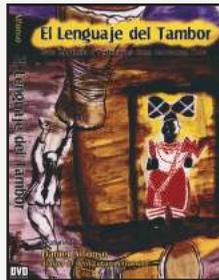
BOOK/CD (2) LEVEL: BEGINNING TO INTERMEDIATE \$24.95



Rhythm charts as candy bars? Gila Monster? The French grip? These concepts might initially seem alien, but they'll become familiar upon the completion of the exercises in this 100-page instructional workbook. Ziker also offers tips on the Moeller technique, reading, writing, and "rhythmic (as pertains to tablature), "drum-istics" (drumming tricks), and how to apply accented 8th-note triplets to bang out melodies like the *Flintstones* theme. While "essential" isn't a *completely* accurate description of this package, it is useful and a heck of a lot of fun. **Will Romano**

EL LENGUAJE DEL TAMBOR FEATURING DANIEL ALFONSO

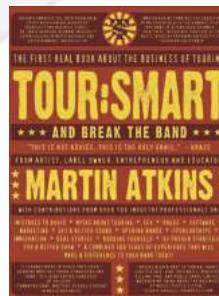
DVD (2) LEVEL: ALL \$49.95



El Lenguaje Del Tambor (The Language Of The Drums) is an incredible film about Afro-Cuban bata rhythms and techniques from Matanzas, Cuba. **DANIEL ALFONSO HERRERA** (priest of Ogun), **MAYKEL GAZMURI RODRIGUES** (priest of Ochun), and **YOSVANY OLIVER CORTADELLA** play the trio of sacred and beautifully decorated bata drums in a series of conversations, where the rhythm flows back and forth between the lead iya drum (mother, dedicated to Yemaya), itotele (dedicated to Ochun), and okonkolo (dedicated to Chango). This two-DVD set includes five hours of drumming and demonstration. The interviews in Spanish (with English subtitles) allow you to experience the "tempo" of the spoken word. The drumming is hypnotic and the close-ups of the drummers' hands bring you *right there*. (www.kabiosile.org) **David Licht**

TOUR SMART AND BREAK THE BAND BY MARTIN ATKINS

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$29.95



Every drummer wants to play out, and many want to go on tour, even if only in small doses. Author/drummer Martin Atkins' *Tour Smart And Break The Band* should be a must-read for all drummers—and I mean *all* drummers. Atkins gives advice on everything from what to put in your suitcase to how to deal with publicists, booking agents, and club owners. All 564 pages are filled to the brim with interviews, personal experiences, Excel spread sheets, PhotoShop ideas, case studies on bands—even gas mileage charts. *Tour Smart* certainly lives up to its title. (Soluble LLC) **Fran Azzarto**

And Furthermore...

SIGUR ROS HEIMA

Stunning beauty abounds in Sigur Ros' *Heima* DVD—in the band's dreamy minimalist sound, the rhubarb stick marimba they play together, and the desolate locations in their Icelandic homeland, where the live performances were filmed. There's beauty in **ORRI DYRASON's** kit work, too. Often with brushes and mallets, he lends time that is hypnotic and textures that are delicate. (Beggars XI) **Patrick Berkery**

TOWER OF POWER LIVE

"Often imitated, never duplicated!" That's how TOP leader **Emilio Castillo** introduces drum god **DAVID GARIBALDI** on this beautifully filmed concert DVD, and truer words were never spoken. This electrifying 2005 performance is a total inspiration, from top to bottom. The legendary ten-piece horn band has never sounded tighter, and Garibaldi's approach remains totally fresh—percolating, precise, and *grooving*. Highlight: The classic "Soul Vaccination" features DG's famed twisting parts. (www.towerofpower.com) **Frederick Bay**



This book gains readers access to Tiemann's Web site and lo-res video files demonstrating many of the patterns featured within. The site's functionality and subscription policy (\$19.95, which includes one-month free membership) could be tweaked, but this is a minor point. *Rock Drumset In Six Levels* offers scores of easily mastered exercises highlighting the basic concepts of rock backbeats, the use of fills, and odd meters. (www.mydrumlesson.com) **Will Romano**

ROCK DRUMSET IN SIX LEVELS BY SCOTT TIEMANN

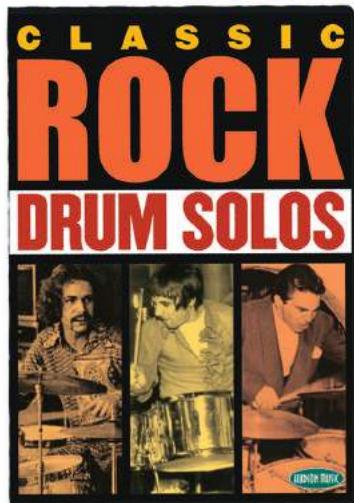


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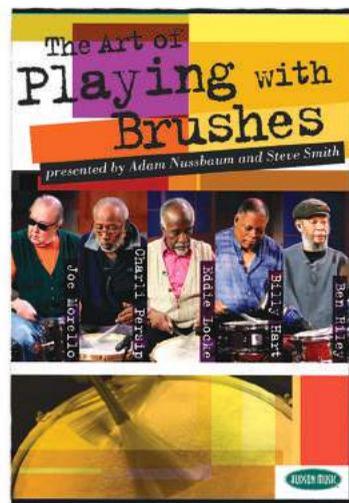
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Performances and interviews from the 2-Day 2006 Modern Drummer Festival with Stewart Copeland, Steve Smith, Thomas Lang, Luis Conté, Danny Seraphine, Glenn Kotche, Mike Mangini, Teddy Campbell, Gerald Heyward, Aaron Spears, Marvin McQuitty, Bobby Sanabria, Jason McGerr, Brann Dailor, Ronald Bruner, Jr. and Dave DiCenso.

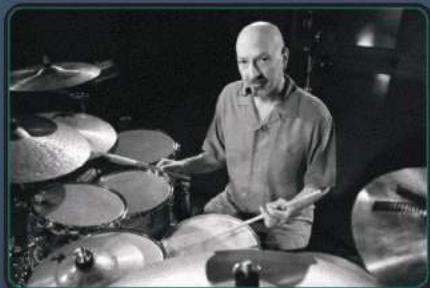


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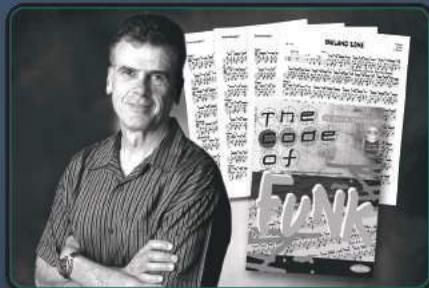
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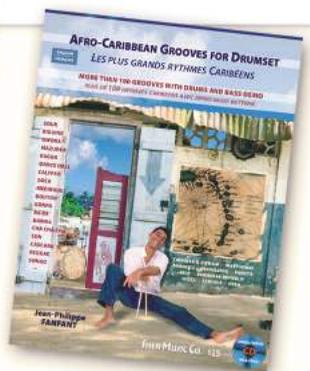
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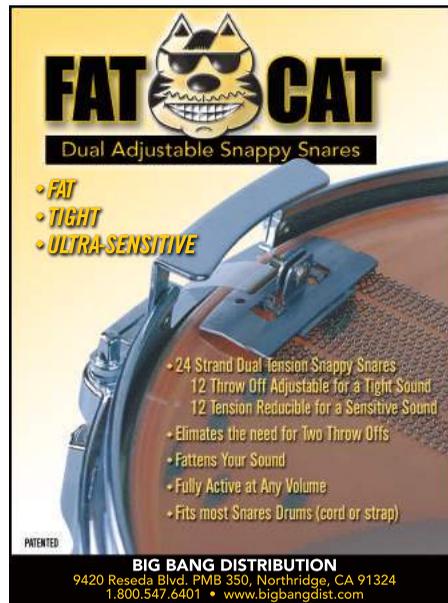
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Connecticut **Vintage And Custom Drum Show**, April 20, 2008, Newington, CT. 30 exhibitors, consignments, door prizes, and live clinics. Contact Rick Smith, (860) 523-1850. Ctdrumshow@aol.com. www.ctdrumshow.com.

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Drumline VS Drumset, the movie. MD Kit of the Month, March 2008. www.johndonovan.biz. Most movie drums for sale. Matching drumline gear also for sale. Movie demos for sale. **Corps Style Kit Instruction. Central Long Island location.** www.johndonovan.biz. (570) 856-6052.

Drum Bum: T-Shirts and gifts. www.drumbum.com.

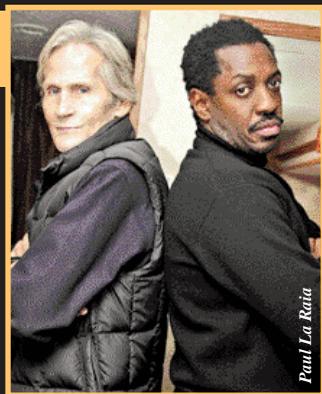
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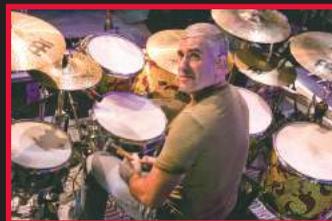
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Woodstick 2007

Story and photos by Chris Edwards

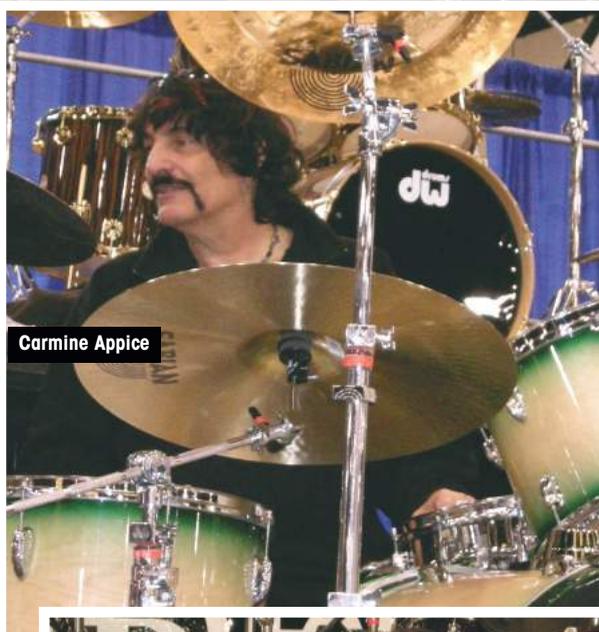
On this past Saturday, October 27, hundreds of drummers gathered in the Puyallup Showplex auditorium in Seattle for the 2007 edition of Woodstick. The yearly event brings amateur and professional drummers together in an attempt to break the world record for multiple drummers playing at the same time, while raising money for charity.

Although last year's Guinness world record-setting total was not bettered this year, the 322 participants did set the record for the number of drummers playing "Louie Louie" simultaneously. And Woodstick founders **Chris Kimball** and **Donn Bennett** were still pleased by the turnout. The event was sponsored by the Rotarians of Tacoma, along with **Sabian, Mapex, Gretsch, Sonor, Ayotte, Remo, Evans, DW,** and **Pro-Mark.**

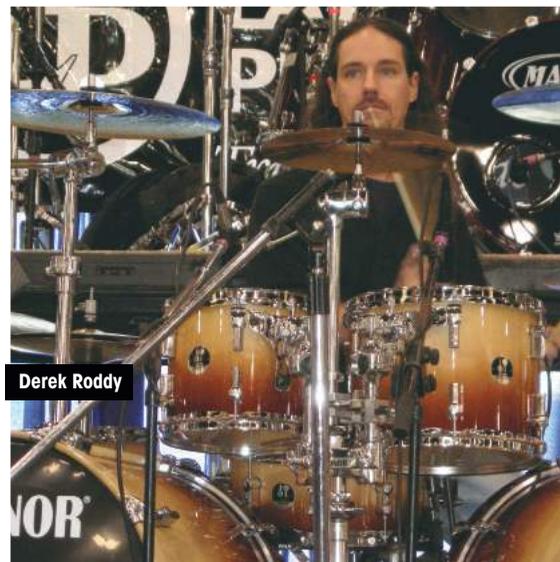
Woodstick is scheduled as a three-hour event, but random drumming started with the completed set-up of the first kit during the early morning hours and rarely ceased until the house was cleared at 6:00 P.M. The event was marked by performances of intertribal drumming from **The Soft Sound Warriors** of Tacoma Washington, as well as drum corps demonstrations by **The Pacific Alliance** and Seattle's **Blue Thunder.** In addition, celebrity drummers on hand included rock legend **Carmine Appice**, Today Is The Day's **Derek Roddy**, **Michael Shrieve** (ex-Santana), **Scott Mercado** (ex-Candlebox), **Tony Coleman** (ex-B.B. King), **Michael Dorosier** (ex-Heart), **Alan White** (Yes), **Jeff Kathan** (ex-Paul Rodgers), and **Ricky Lynn Johnson** (Wailers).

This year's Woodstick was a fundraiser for research into hearing regeneration. "Loud music has taken a toll on our ears," observed Donn Bennett. "It's payback time. A big part of what Woodstick tries to do is promote hearing safety."

Bennett is hoping to expand Woodstick into a national or even international event. He and his staff are already at work to try to make that happen. For more information on the future of Woodstick, visit www.bennettdrums.com.



Carmine Appice



Derek Roddy



In Memoriam



Carlos "Patato" Valdez

Renowned Cuban conguero Carlos "Patato" Valdez died this past December 4 of respiratory failure. He was eighty-one.

As a youth, Valdez was well known from Cuban television appearances. He emigrated to New York in 1955, where he quickly saw action with Kenny Dorham, Tito Puente, Herbie Mann, Dizzy Gillespie, and most major Latin and jazz figures of the day. Soon after, Valdez became a close friend and technical advisor to LP founder Martin Cohen. Their collaboration resulted in the LP Patato model congas, which became

among the top-selling congas of all time.

Valdez generated an enormous tonal presence on congas that belied his diminutive size. For over sixty years he demonstrated how a musician could combine technical skill with superb showmanship. His conga playing fused melody and rhythm, and his keen understanding of rhythm was rooted in dancing. Patato even mastered the art of dancing on top of his congas during his performances, to the delight of his audiences.

Many recordings showcase Patato's musicality. Examples on LP's house label are Ready For Freddy and Authority. But two revered ensembles best express Patato's legacy. One is the Latin Percussion Jazz Ensemble, assembled by LP founder Martin Cohen. The other is a later collaboration, The Conga Kings, in which Patato performed with fellow icons Candido Camero and Giovanni Hidalgo. The trio recorded several significant albums, as well as performing at Patato's last concert.

Patato was also recognized for his contributions to Latin music and culture. The Puerto Rican Jazz Festival, the International Latin Music Hall Of Fame, and the New York Hispanic Entertainment Journalists were among several organizations that recognized Patato's lifetime achievements with awards.

Roland Meinl

Roland Meinl, founder of Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente and a pioneer in the art of cymbal and percussion manufacturing, passed away this past December 4, at the age of seventy-eight.

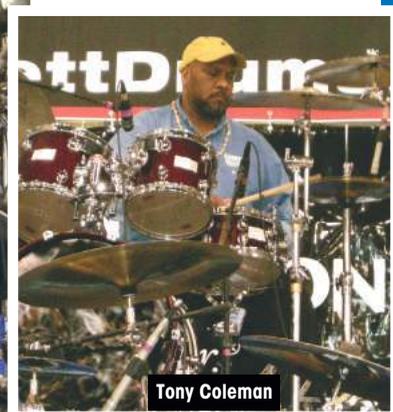
Roland began an apprenticeship as a wind instrument maker while still a teenager. He founded the Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente company in 1951. During the early years, Roland manufactured cymbals by hand using simple tools, and he carried them on a bicycle to the local train station for shipping. He hired his first employee in 1964.

During the '70s, Roland developed more modern cymbal production, while at the same time establishing the company's distribution business for music retailers in Germany and Austria. In 1978 he founded Meinl's first percussion factory in Thailand and began introducing the full range of Meinl percussion instruments.

After Roland's son Reinhold began working with the company in 1972, Roland continued to be involved in all of the company's operations. As long as he lived, his presence, sense of humor, and magnanimity were felt among Meinl's employees, who, as a result, always held him in high esteem.



Alan White



Tony Coleman

Indy Quickies

The **2008 Cape Breton International Drum Festival** will be held at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre in Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada on Saturday April 26 and Sunday April 27. The lineup of performers will include **Carmine Appice, Alan White, Danny Seraphine, Michael Shrieve, Ed Mann, Aldo Mazza, Dave Langguth, David Jones, Billy Nuki, Pamela Lynn, Larnell Lewis, Stephan Chamberland, Dom Famularo**, and festival founder/producer **Bruce Aitken**. In addition, **William F. Ludwig III** will offer his "History Of Percussion" presentation, and Cape Breton International Drum Festival Legends Awards will be presented to Michael Shrieve and Motown great **Uriel Jones**. For more information, go to www.cbdrumfest.ca.

The **KoSA International Percussion Workshop & Festival** returns to the picturesque campus of Castleton State College in southern Vermont for the 2008 edition, from July 30 to August 3. The hands-on intensive drum and percussion camp offers a diverse range of musical and ethnic percussion styles and techniques. Participants learn in small daily classes and play with a professional rhythm section, in jam sessions, and in recitals. For more information, visit www.kosamusic.com.



Pro-Mark endorser **Dana Hammond** (Mandy Moore, Jessica Simpson) has formed Choice Group, a non-profit organization to benefit inner-city children as well as children in the foster-care system. Choice Group assists young people in discovering their talents while

teaching the discipline and organization needed to succeed as an entertainment-industry professional. More information is available at www.promark.com.

Pintech USA is working with several endorsers to raise money for charity. Each artist autographs four Pintech T-shirts and four mesh heads, and also contributes four sets of drumsticks, to create a "swag pack." A numbered certificate of authenticity, signed by Pintech president Dan Gilbert, is also included. The artist picks a favorite charity, and the swag pack is auctioned off on eBay. In 2007 Chris Adler (Lamb Of God) raised money for the ASPCA, Rob Bourdon (Linkin Park) donated to the Music Relief Fund, Jim Sonefeld and Gary Greene (Hootie & The Blowfish) raised funds for Safe Harbor, John Humphreys (Seether) contributed to The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and Keith Harris (Black Eyed Peas) raised money for Fellowship of Associates of Medical Evangelism (FAME).

Harmonix Music Systems, developer of the blockbuster Guitar Hero franchise, recently announced that the Rock Band videogame will feature **Ludwig** drums exclusively in the all-new platform for gamers to experience and connect with music. A variety of in-game drum outfits will be modeled after Ludwig Vistalite, Stainless Steel, and Glitter sets. A pair of Ludwig-branded sticks will also be included with each game.



Vater Percussion is also featured in Rock Band. Gamers can drum along to tracks from Vater artists such as Weezer, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Jet. As the in-game drummer for Vater artists' bands, gamers can earn a Vater drumstick endorsement and Vater clothing within their journey to Rock Stardom in the Rock Band game.



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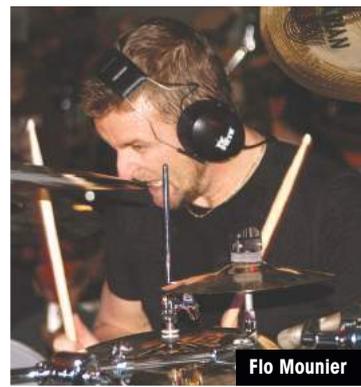
Cascio Interstate Music DrummerFest 2007

Cascio Interstate Music of New Berlin, Wisconsin held its seventh annual DrummerFest this past Saturday, November 10. Drummers **Paul Leim**, **Teddy Campbell**, **Flo Mounier**, and **Grant Collins** turned in stellar performances.

Leim's clinic focused on his work as a first-call Nashville session drummer, including an explanation of his personal numbering system for learning songs and keeping track of tempos, feels, and which tools to use. His drumming sound was crisp and steady, with perfect time fueled by taste and restraint. Leim was followed by Australian drummer Grant Collins, whose chops and timing are beyond most people's comprehension. His mastery of time signatures sent his performance gliding through many transitions and complexities.

Teddy Campbell impressed the audience with his slick and funky grooves and mind-blowing fills, all played with tight and defined accuracy. The day was capped off with Flo Mounier of Canada's extreme metal group Cryptopsy. Beyond his almost superhuman hand and foot speed, Flo played with creativity and sensitivity, groove and imagination. His mild demeanor and thoughtful explanations expanded the minds of all who witnessed him.

In keeping with tradition, the four DrummerFest artists concluded the day with a no-holds-barred jam that brought the crowd to its feet. The event was supported by **Yamaha**, **Paiste**, **Sabian**, **Pearl**, **Zildjian**, and **Gibraltar**. For more information, go to www.interstatemusic.com.



Flo Mounier



Teddy Campbell



Paul Leim

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The Collective's Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration

New York's famed The Collective music school celebrated its 30th anniversary this past October 21 with a gathering at The Cutting Room in Manhattan. The event featured performances by Collective students and faculty, including Ignacio Berroa, Memo Acevedo, Ian Froman, Kim Plainfield, Pat Petrillo, Jason Gianni, and Pete Retzlaff. Modern Drummer editors Rick Van Horn, Adam Budofsky, and Billy Amendola were on hand to present an award to Collective founders Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel, as well as current school director John Castellano, in recognition of the school's educational achievements.



Memo Acevedo



Ignacio Berroa



Senior editor Rick Van Horn (left) presents Modern Drummer's award to Collective founders Paul Siegel (center) and Rob Wallis (right center) and school director John Castellano (right).

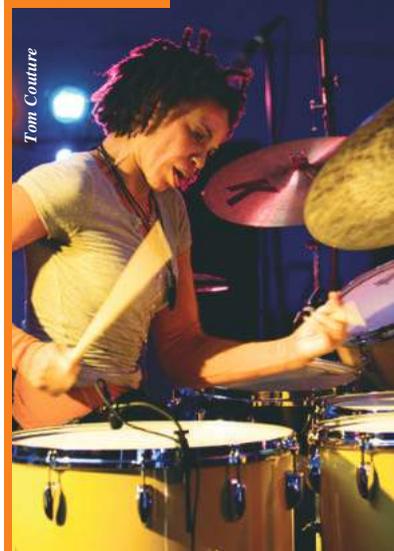
New England International Drum Expo

The New England International Drum Expo was held this past October 6-7 in Manchester, New Hampshire. More than a thousand drum fans came to view the custom and vintage instruments on display and attend clinics by a stellar roster of artists.

Artist performances featured **Steve Smith's** tribute to the late Max Roach with a masterful rendition of "Drums Unlimited," **Pete Lockett's** brilliant tapestries of world rhythms on tablas, bongos, and hand percussion instruments, and **Cindy Blackman's** intensity, which amazed and inspired the audience. **Dave Mattacks, Bob Moses, Neal Smith, Kenwood Dennard, Dave DiCenso, Andrew Barr, Sergio Bellotti, and Jerome Deupree** were also on the bill, and all performed with mastery and soul. A DVD of these performances is slated for release shortly.

By the end of the show, raffle-drawing winners had walked away with exotic snare drums, shells, cymbals, scholarships, and other prizes. Event sponsors included **Beatnik, Bosphorus, The Collective, Craviotto, DW, Gretsch, Hudson Music, Keller Shells, Ludwig, Willoughcraft Drum Co., Zildjian, and Modern Drummer**, with additional support from **Classic Drummer, Drumnetics, Evans, Vic Firth, Gibraltar, LP, Not So Modern Drummer, Pro-Mark, Qwikstix, Shure, Sonor, Tempus, and Universal Percussion**. For a recap of the 2007 show or for information on future shows, go to www.thedrumexpo.com.

Cindy Blackman



Tom Couture



Tom Couture

Pete Lockett

Who's Playing What



Vater drummers now include **Chris McHugh** (Keith Urban), **Lawrence Breaux** (Robin Thicke), **Steve Sinatra** (Halfway To Hazard), **Ryan Yerdon** (Puddle Of Mudd), **Joe Travers** (Zappa Plays Zappa), **Jeffrey Jones** (clinician/educator), **Steve Miller** (Just Surrender), **Brandon Lanier** (Quietdrive), **Mike Fuentes** (Pierce The Veil), **Robert Ortiz** (Escape The Fate), and **Benny Cancino** (Invitro).

Jazz/fusion drum legend **Lenny White** has joined the Istanbul Agop cymbal artist roster, with a signature ride to be issued shortly.

Dancing With The Stars percussionist **Vanessa Brown** is performing with Grover tambourines, triangles, and accessories.

Dave Simmons (Kymani Marley), **Mike Melancon** (Emerson Drive), **Steven Spence** (Black Tide), and **Brain Doerner** (Saga, Helix) are now playing Pearl drums.

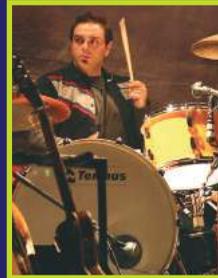


New Vic Firth artists include **Brandon Saller** (Atreyu), **John Keefe** (Boys Like Girls), **Dango** (Amber Pacific), **Danny Cooper**

(Drop Dead, Gorgeous), **Michael "Moose" Thomas** (Bullet For My Valentine), and **Ricc Sheridan** (Earl Greyhound).



Argentine drum star **Charly Alberti** is a new Yamaha artist.



Now using Silver Fox drumsticks are **Nick Amoroso** (Matt Nathanson), **Rachel Blumberg** (Bright Eyes), and **Will Franklin Chapman** (Steven Curtis Chapman).

New Gibraltar hardware artists include **Stefanie Eulinberg** (Kid



Rock), **Taylor Hawkins** (Foo Fighters), **Ryan MacMillan** (Matchbox Twenty), **Paul Crosby** (Saliva), **Zac Farro** (Paramore), **Dave McClain** (Machine Head), **Travis Smith** (Trivium), and **Mike Bennett** (Hilary Duff).



Steve Smith

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The Glowing Mutated Beast

No, the name of New York drummer John Donovan's kit doesn't allude to a monster from some grind house flick. However, the kit was built to be in a movie. According to John, "This drumset is the result of what happens when the worlds of drumline and drumset go to war."

When John decided to create his self-produced movie, *Drumline Vs. Drumset*, he needed a kit that would reflect his regimented drumline training. The Glowing Mutated Beast includes eleven acoustic drums, twenty-five cymbals, five electronic triggers, and multiple percussion instruments—all strategically positioned like an ultra-massive set of tenor toms from a drum & bugle corps drumline. "The design of the kit is based on a set of marching tenors," says John, "because the basic flow of the instrument makes so much logical sense."

"The drums were custom-built to keep costs down and quality up," John continues. "The cymbals are top-of-the-line Paistes supplemented with Wuhan Chinese models. I also used matching marching equipment. Pearl hardware holds up this 1,700-lb. beast. The drums and the decorative mic cable sleeves are all luminescent. Two of my percussion toys and one of my two custom Manhasset music stands are phosphorescent. All of my lug casings and hoops were powder-coated fluorescent. To top it off, we dumped



over 1,400 watts of black light on half the film footage."

John's kit was created in the fall of 2005, and it remained in the same place until the end of pre-production on *Drumline Vs. Drumset* in the spring of 2007. In May of that year, John, his wife, and their baby son—with trailer in tow—drove 1,200 miles to Minnesota to start filming John's opus. Twenty-nine days later, production was over. Says John, "I hope that my performances and comments on the movie will inspire drumset players to train with a well-managed drumline program, and will inspire drumline players to explore drumset performance as a way to earn a living."

Information about John and his movie is available at www.johndonovan.biz.

Photo Requirements

1. Photos must be high-quality, sharp-focus, well-lit, and in color. High-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Show only drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
6. Digital photos on disk and print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.
7. Digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to rvh@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message.



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