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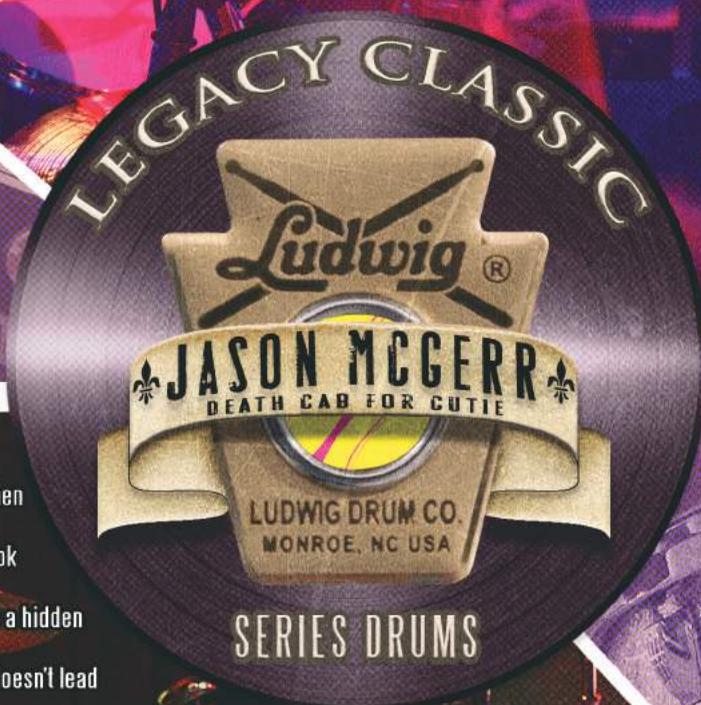


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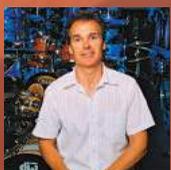
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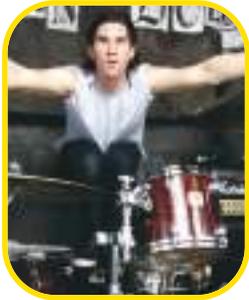
From John Cougar' s " Jack And Diane" to Puddle Of Mudd' s " Famous," studio stalwart Kenny Aronoff recounts a career' s worth of greatest hits.

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134 A Different View Producer/Engineer Niko Bolas

The veteran sonic accomplice to Neil Young, Keith Richards, and Herbie Hancock insists that with him, it' s people first, gear second.



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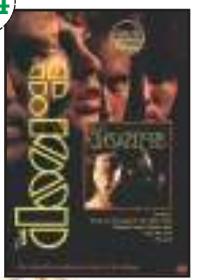
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The New Inspiration

I have a question for you: What was it that first made you want to become a drummer? Can you remember what it was—that first event that created the impulse within you to pick up the sticks?

For most drummers over a certain age, that inspiration hit them after they heard a musical performance featuring a drummer tearing it up on the radio, TV, or on stage. Thinking back over the scores of interviews I've edited while at Modern Drummer, I can recall many, many artists identifying "key inspirations," certain musical events that inspired them in a way that they'd never before experienced.

Older drummers often cite Gene Krupa's tribal tom-tom work on "Sing, Sing, Sing" as an early memory. For baby-boomers, Ringo Starr's 1964 performance with The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show was huge. For thirty- and forty-somethings, Peter Criss on KISS Alive!, Phil Collins' massive fill on "In The Air Tonight," Neil Peart on Rush's "Tom Sawyer," or Alex Van Halen's double bass on "Hot For Teacher" lit the spark. Somewhat more recently, images of Tommy Lee and Dave Grohl on MTV, Chad Smith at Woodstock II, and Travis Barker on the Warped tour drove flocks of hopeful future rock stars to the drum shop for their first kit. But that whole mindset, that whole approach, is quickly changing.

What's the latest "buzz," that thing that's inspiring a new generation of drummers? Well, it may not be a drummer in a hot new band. It may be a video game.

I probably don't have to tell you about the popularity of video games such as Guitar Hero and Rock Band. They're a big-selling phenomenon, played by folks across the country and beyond. And it's easy to understand why, as these games provide a fun virtual experience. But the big question for those of us who ponder the future of drumming is, are they motivating potential musicians to take the next step?

As for me, I believe that these games are inspiring new drummers. Holding sticks, developing simple coordination while tapping along to famous rock tunes, using a "scoring" approach to motivate self improvement—all of this has to be urging at least some gamers to try the real thing. Besides, kids (as well as adults) spend a lot of time playing video games. Being exposed to the enjoyment that comes from music—and not solely focusing on games, many of which seem to glorify violence—is a good thing.

With this in mind, I hope you'll check out the Teachers' Forum article drummer/educator Andy Ziker has written about Rock Band on page 140 of this issue. Andy gets into the specifics about the popular game, how he's seen it impact some of his students, and how it can help teachers.

Will Rock Band and future video games bring a new crop of drummers to the instrument? Chances are good. Exactly how this will influence our craft, only time will tell.

Bill Miller

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Michael Bettine, Robyn Flans, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Mike Haid, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Wittet.

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Tomas Haake

Thanks for featuring Tomas Haake of Meshuggah on the cover of the May issue. He's a drum god to me and an inspiration to many up & coming metal drummers. The Obzen drum tabs were a nice addition.

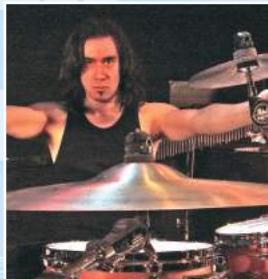
Eric Stephens

Thanks to Ed Breckenfield for tackling those difficult Meshuggah transcriptions. It doesn't seem like this music was ever intended to be written down, but it sure helps the rest of us earthlings make sense of it!

Daniel



MAY 2008



Jens Hannemann

I really enjoyed the Jens Hannemann article. Thanks for reminding everyone that we need to keep a sense of humor!

Mike Kosacek
digitaldrummer.net

The Jens Hannemann interview was the perfect complement to Billy

Ward's "Dumb Luck Seagull" article. I'm not sure if they balanced one another or if they cancelled each other out. Either way, I'm going to have a drink and listen to "Lowdown."

Jason Cooper

This Jens Hannemann has a lot of nerve talking the way he does about himself and especially about Jeff Porcaro. I never thought Modern Drummer would give someone like this even a paragraph of space in their publication, let alone an entire article. I think Mr. Hannemann needs to humble himself a bit and maybe he'd get some gigs. I'd love to see how he would measure up to phenomenal drummers such as Thomas Lang and Dave Weckl.

Bernie Nestico

Fred Armisen's interview had me laughing out loud! (I love that he challenged Porcaro to a hi-hat competition—God rest Jeff's soul.) Sometimes my love for drums makes me take it so seriously that I forget the real reason I got into drumming—because it's fun. It was nice to see Fred poke a little fun at all of us drummers.

Damien Fahey, MTV

Thanks for the great article on Stan Lynch. Stan's playing on the classic Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers songs is as integral to them as Ringo's is with The Beatles or Charlie Watts' is with The Rolling Stones.

Christopher O'Hare

I thought the Stan Lynch article was tasteless and below MD standards. While it's interesting to learn about Stan's production/writing credits, the references to the drumming on classic Petty tracks were brief and lacking real information. This article was little more than a gossip piece, and it didn't do anyone involved, including MD, any justice.

Brad The Drummer

I really enjoyed the Stan Lynch interview. Stan is one of the greatest drummers ever. He was such a huge part of The Heartbreakers' sound.

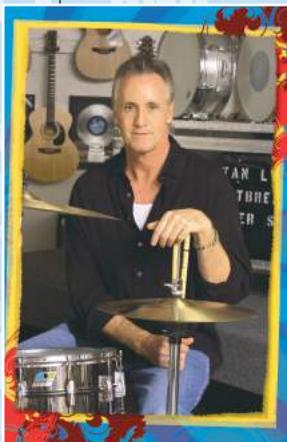
Kevin T.



Drum Gods II

I read Drums Gods II cover to cover. I'm a guitarist, and I found the advice from some of my favorite drummers applicable to all musicians. Music is truly the universal language, and maybe drummers are the best ambassadors.

Brad Smith



Stan Lynch

Thanks to Patrick Berkery for the excellent Stan Lynch interview in the May issue. Besides being one of the greatest rock drummers of all time, Stan is probably one of the most underrated. Having been friends with Stan for twenty years, I can tell you he is one of the most humble and honest people you'll ever meet. I'm glad that that came through, as well as his great sense of humor.

John DeChristopher
Avedis Zildjian Company

DROPPED BEATS

- Hammerax's Liquicy cymbal was incorrectly listed in May's *New And Notable*. There's only one 22" model available, with a list price of \$490.
- The photos of Tomas Haake in the May issue were not credited. They were taken by Micke Sandstrom.
- The titles for the Meshuggah transcriptions of "Bleed" and "Lethargica" in the May issue were inadvertently reversed.
- There was an error in Lenny White's setup information in the July issue. Lenny currently endorses Vic Firth sticks.



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James Blunt's
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I love your drumming on James Blunt's *All The Lost Souls*. Everything sounds very natural. Your parts are always creative and grooving, while not detracting from James' lyrics. Did you record to a click track? If so, how did you develop the ability to play so effortlessly with a metronome? And how did you get those great vintage-sounding snare tones?

Robert Franklin

Thanks, Robert. When we recorded *All The Lost Souls*, everyone was set up together in a room with headphones on, and we put it down completely live. The producer wanted to have the facility to change stuff later on, so we created tempo maps for each song. Sometimes we pull back the endings a little bit to create tension, or we'll kick it up a notch when we get to a chorus. We do that at shows without a click, so to have to do that in the studio with a click was quite weird at first. But it's all psychological. Simon Phillips once said to me, "If you can't hear the click, you know you're banging in time."

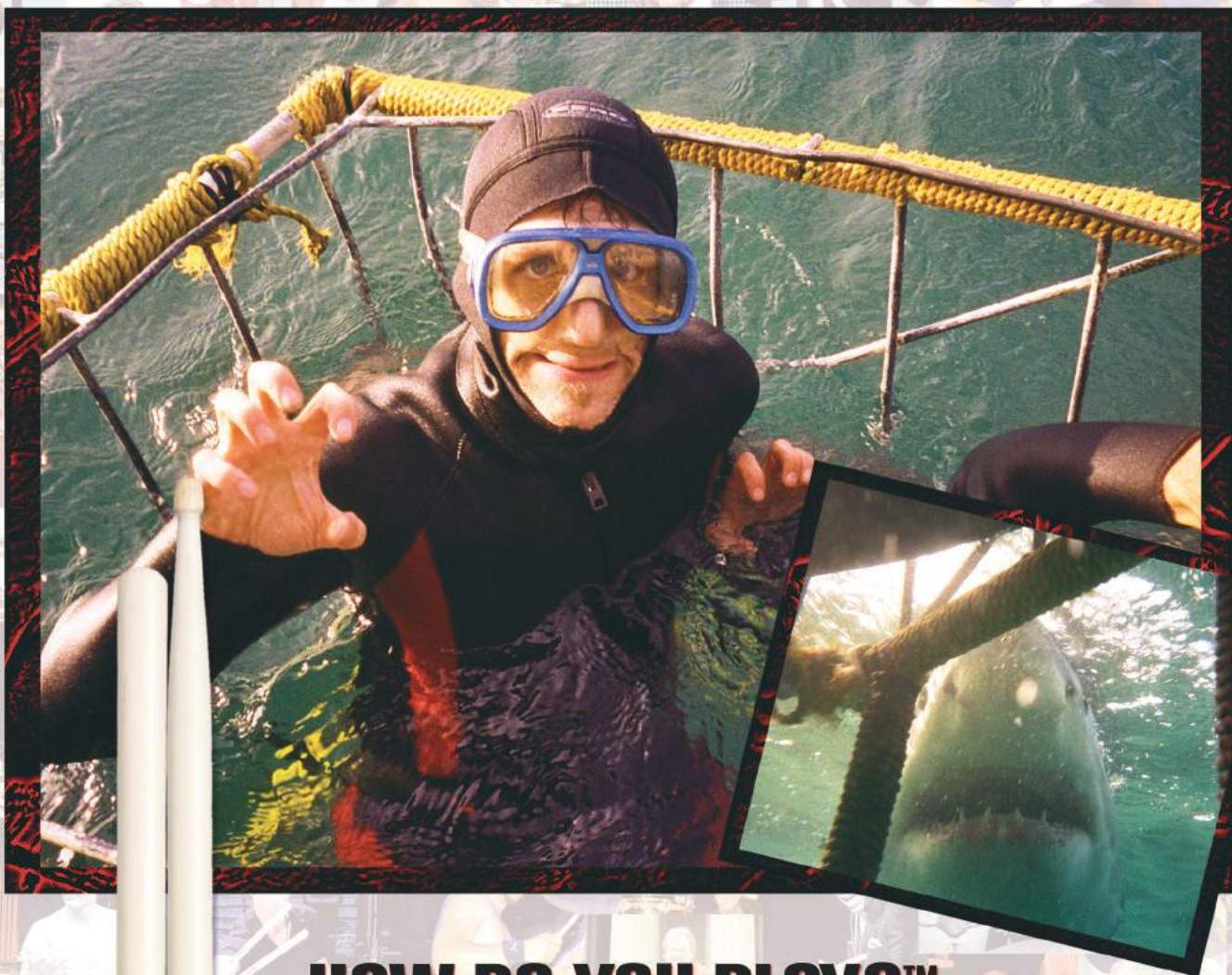
One way to work on your ability to play with click tracks is to practice going out of time with it. Start with a straight 4/4 beat over the click, and then reverse the beat so that the clicks are on the offbeat. Then practice by playing slightly behind or ahead of the click. Experiment by moving around the placement of the snare and kick. Eventually you'll begin to feel it.

It's also important to know when to add subdivisions to your click track. If the song has a very slow tempo, ask the engineer to add 8th or 16th notes to the click. That's really important to make sure that you get the right swing in your groove.

For my drum tones on the record, I had the [LA drum tech] Drum Doctor come in. We messed around with some really old snares, like a Ludwig Black Beauty, a Gretsch chrome over brass, a Leedy, and some other old battered things. We even went to the local drum shop and bought some old marching drums. I tightened the bottom heads as much as I could, tuned the top head slack, and added a couple pieces of Moon Gel to get that "pffft" sound. I used Remo Emperor X heads, which are pretty dry to begin with. On some of the tracks, the batter head was so loose that I thought I was going to fall into it. But it worked!

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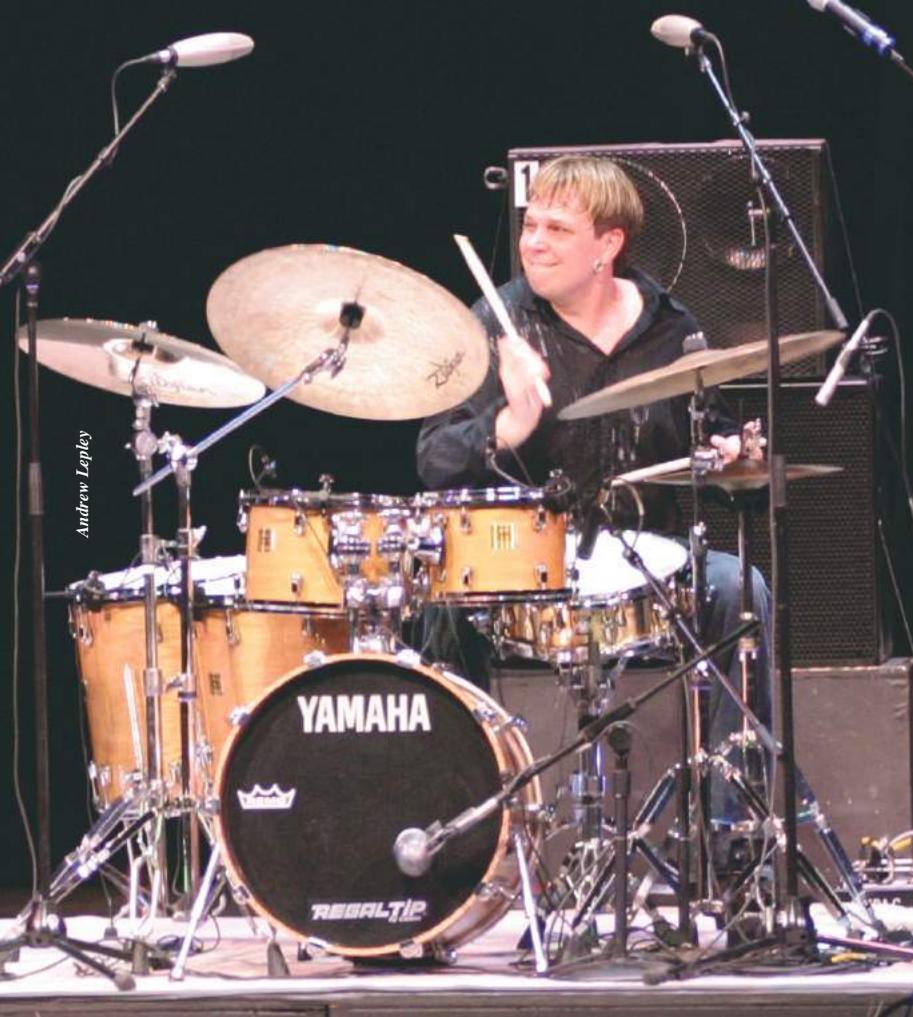
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Andrew Lepley

Keith Carlock

On His Festival Cymbal Setup

You've become one of my favorite drummers. Your deep groove and feel remind me of guys like Steve Gadd and Steve Jordan. I especially enjoyed your performance at the 2005 Modern Drummer Festival. What kind of Zildjian cymbals did you play at that event? They sound great!

Mark

Thanks for the kind words, Mark. That cymbal setup is one that I use a lot. It's a 21" K Special Dry ride, a 20" K Constantinople medium ride, a 19" A Custom crash, and 14" K hi-hats. I often use an 18" A Custom crash as well. Thanks for listening!

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QUICK BEATS

Rod Morgenstein

Text and photos by Joe Perry



- Place of birth:** New York, New York
Hobbies/interests: Swimming, traveling, hiking, songwriting
Favorite album: Joni Mitchell's *Blue*
Favorite drink: Fresh-squeezed vegetable or fruit juice, protein shakes
Favorite food: Lamb chops
Favorite movie: *A Clockwork Orange*
Favorite TV show: *Curb Your Enthusiasm*
Vehicle I drive: A Subaru Forester and a Lexus EX 300
Other instruments I play: Piano, guitar
Place I'd like to visit: Tahiti
If I wasn't a drummer I'd be: An environmentalist
Musicians I would like to work with:
Robert Plant, Joni Mitchell
I wish I'd played drums on:
The Beatles' "I Want To Hold Your Hand"
Most prized possession:
1953 Mickey Mantle baseball card
Largest venue played: Georgia Tech stadium in 1979 with The Dixie Dregs for 50,000 people



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John DOLMAYAN

Former System Of A Down Drummer Branches Out

When System Of A Down went on a self-imposed hiatus two years ago, many knew that it wouldn't be the last time the world would hear from these metallic talents. Soon thereafter, two different projects cropped up from within the act—frontman Serj Tankian's solo project, and guitarist/vocalist Daron Malakian's Scars On Broadway. The two didn't have to look far to locate drumming talent, as System drummer John Dolmayan volunteered his services for both projects. "The bottom line," Dolmayan says, "was that these guys are friends of mine, so I completely supported them in their endeavors."

With Tankian, Dolmayan contributed by performing on a few tracks for his solo debut, *Elect The Dead* (along with drummer Bryan "Brain" Mantia). Dolmayan, who did not become a permanent member of Tankian's band, admits that the recording experience was different from that of a typical SOAD session.

"Tankian recorded everything first, and then I had to go and play to a click track," says Dolmayan. "I don't like doing that, but, you know, it's not my album. I was asked to be a guest, I was honored to do it, I did it as a favor, and that was that."

Dolmayan's most recent work is on the debut album by Scars On Broadway, of which he's a full-time member. Wedging rehearsals between time spent on his new online comic book business (Torpedo Comics), Dolmayan often found himself shuttling back and forth between Los Angeles and his Las Vegas residence to hone the parts with Malakian.

"For the recording of the Scars On Broadway album, it was really a painless effort," he says. "Daron would be like, 'Try to play this vibe for this part.' Sometimes if he saw me getting stuck with something, he'd name a band and say, 'Try something in that vein.' We're very intuitive with each other."

"I'm trying my best not to repeat what I've done in the past," Dolmayan admits, "but I don't want to erase what I've done in the past either. I just want to add to it as much as possible."

Waleed Rashidi

Gene HOGLAN Winding His Atomic Clock

Drummer Gene Hoglan didn't have much downtime after guitarist Devin Townsend put Strapping Young Lad on hiatus in early 2007. Fairly quickly, Gene got a call from Brendon Small, creator of the animated series *Metacocalypse*, featuring the fictional death metal band Deftklok. "Brendon was putting together a Deftklok album for the show," Gene reports, "and he thought it'd be very cool to have me play drums on it."

Despite the overtly comedic aspects of the show, the music is straightforward extreme metal—in other words, right up Gene's alley. "Most of the music in season one is Brendon using a drum machine," the drummer explains. "I just tried to duplicate what I could and give it a human feel. There

were definitely songs where I'd go, 'Is there anybody on the planet who can play that double bass part?' There was some *hauling* stuff on the record, but did my best." *Deftalbum* debuted at number twenty-one on *Billboard's* Top 200, making it the highest-charting death metal album ever.

Gene has also put together an instructional DVD, *The Atomic Clock*, which he plans to promote with a worldwide clinic tour. "Although I've got a face made for radio," Hoglan jokes, "I'm pretty good in front of the camera, so I had fun with it. It's just me jamming on a bunch of songs and showing what I do. I've tried to make it entertaining to watch even if you're not a drummer."

For *Atomic Clock*, Gene focuses on performing songs he's recorded with new projects over the past year. "I've included five songs from one of my new bands, Mechanism. That's the craziest drumming I've ever done," he insists, adding that he also included "non-metal" projects on the DVD.

"I love playing metal," Gene admits, "because it's easy for me. What's challenging is playing other genres, so I threw some grooves, shuffles, and funk stuff on the DVD. I play a song from the new Mr. Plow album, which is an acoustic comedic/punk thing, and a song from a project I'm doing with a girl in Chicago named Jilly C. That's a *really* simple, tasty, funky song that shows you how to lock into a pocket. I'm not concentrating solely on double bass or crazy chops. This DVD shows it's not always just about metal for Gene."

Gail Worley



Greg Watermann



Julian DORIO

Firing Up The Whigs



“Unlike a guitarist or singer, I don’t get the opportunity to play in the van. We get a soundcheck and that’s it, so lots of times I have to wait until I hit the stage to really start playing.” So says Julian Dorio of The Whigs. “The idea is to play the first song of the set like you’re half-way through. You can’t take the first three songs to warm up and then get a feel going. You have to gear up and get ready and then hit as hard as you can—our set is like a long sprint.”

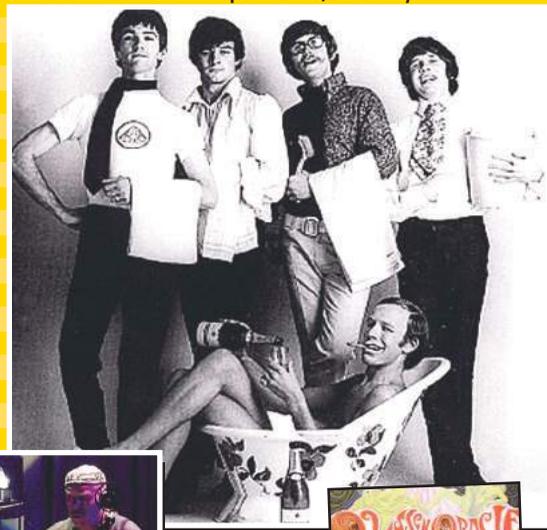
The Whigs, of Athens, Georgia, are currently touring in support of their major-label debut *Mission Control* (on ATO Records). Dorio says that he doesn’t have a particular pre-gig routine, but rather focuses on preparation before the tour. “We practice a lot at home,” he says. “We try to practice like we’re playing a show, except when we’re writing, which is a little more laid back. But otherwise, what’s the point unless you execute? I want to get everything figured out before we hit the road. I try to anticipate everything.”

While *Mission Control* clocks in at under forty minutes, the band covers a range of musical territory, from the punk-aggressive “Like A Vibration” to the crossover appeal of “Right Hand On My Heart” and the lazier feel of the 6/8 “Sleep Sunshine.” According to Dorio, “We wanted to make a record indicative of our live show.”

The Whigs recorded the album at the Hollywood Sunset Sound Studios, where seminal bands from The Beach Boys to Led Zeppelin have recorded. Dorio was thrilled to record there and work with producer Rob Schnapf [Elliot Smith, Beck, Guided By Voices]. Still, for the drummer, nothing compares with playing in front of an audience. “We’re a high-energy, loud rock band,” he says. “A lot of our show just has to do with our energy on stage and with the crowd. There’s nothing more revealing than playing live; that’s when you find out what the songs are made of.”

Harriet L. Schwartz

Hugh Grundy, goofing around in the bath in a famous mid-’60s Zombies promo shot, and today.



The “Odessey” Continues For The Zombies’ Hugh GRUNDY

The Zombies marked the thirtieth anniversary of their gilded pop masterpiece *Odessey & Oracle* in 1998 with a CD reissue that struck a chord with a whole new generation of melody merchants, from lo-fi purists like Apples In Stereo to loud ‘n’ proud rockers like The Foo Fighters.

For the album’s fortieth anniversary, The Zombies’ surviving members reconvened for three warmly received shows at London’s Shepherd’s Bush Empire, where they performed the album in its entirety. Since the band famously split before its initial release, this represented the first time they’d played the songs in public as a group.

Any plans for *O&O*’s fiftieth anniversary in 2018, then? “Ha!” answers drummer Hugh Grundy. “If we’re around, I’d like to do something. It was such a delight to play those songs again—standing ovations after each. The shows were absolutely fantastic.”

Those “songs” Grundy refers to aren’t compositions a unit could hastily whip into stage shape after a forty-year layoff. Like the more celebrated pop masterpieces of that era, *Pet Sounds* and *Sgt. Pepper’s*, the studio (Abbey Road, in this case, with Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick fresh off the *Pepper’s* sessions assisting) played a major role in *O&O*’s style and sonic presentation.

So a fair bit of time and love, and help from an *O & O*-worshipping younger gun (multi-instrumentalist Darian Sahanaja of The Wondermints and Brian Wilson’s band) went into replicating the soaring chamber pop of “Brief Candles” and the swirling melancholy of “Beachwood Park” live, at long last.

“I hadn’t played with Rod [Argent, keyboardist] and Colin [Blunstone, singer] for forty years,” explains Grundy. “So it took us a few rehearsals to get it right. But in the end I think it was stunning. And having Darian on board was really great; his voice and musical insights were invaluable. It sounded surreal, from my point of view.”

Grundy keeps his chops sharp these days with a band called Joe Public—“Just a local rock group,” he says—but to the delight of Zombies fanatics on this side of the Atlantic, he’s fairly certain the world hasn’t heard the last of the reunited band playing *Odessey & Oracle*. “I think it’s almost certain now that we’ll be coming to the USA. We’re just not sure when.”

Patrick Berkery

Avril Lavigne's Rodney HOWARD Not Too Complicated

Touring extensively with Gavin DeGraw, Regina Spektor, and most recently Avril Lavigne, drummer Rodney Howard plays a lot of TV gigs. "What's different about playing a TV show is that you have three minutes to put across the beginning, middle, and end of a song," says Howard, who has played on a number of shows including Jay Leno, Jimmy Kimmel, Carson Daly, and Ellen DeGeneres. "I may overdo the soft parts and the loud parts."

Howard started his musical career in high school as a sax player. But at age seventeen he tried drums, and quickly found his passion, eventually studying percussion at East Carolina University. Howard's first big break came in 2003, when he played on Gavin DeGraw's debut, *Chariot*. He then toured with DeGraw for two years. "Gavin's music is not R&B," Howard says, "but it's informed by R&B and R&B-influenced rock. It rocks, but it also has to swing and have a lilt to it."

Following the DeGraw tour, Howard did session work in New York until he was asked to tour with Spektor. Then in 2006, Avril Lavigne, who he had met a few years earlier, called and asked the drummer to join her tour. Howard's been playing with her ever since.

"In Avril's gig, you must bring lots of energy and enthusiasm," he admits. "It's a very energetic, driving thing. I also try to make it as visually exciting as I can for the people watching. I want it to look like it sounds and sound like it looks."

Lavigne requires her band to create all of the music live, prohibiting the use of loops or prerecorded sounds. To that end, Howard employs three snare drums for the show: a 14" snare centered on the kit, a 12" snare positioned to the left of his hi-hat, and a 10" snare mounted above the rest of the kit. Howard wants Lavigne's fans to hear the same range of snare sound they hear on her records.

While behind the kit, Howard also sings backing vocals. "Too much is made of singing and drumming," he says. "Make sure you sing well, make sure you play well, and then treat your voice as your fifth limb."

Harriet L. Schwartz



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UPDATE NEWS

Steven Spence is on Black Tide's *Light From Above*. The band will be part of the Monster Mayhem Tour with Slipknot and Disturbed starting in July.

Ryan Brundage is on *Jane Doe Loves Me* by Experimental Dental School.

Morgan Rose is on Sevendust's *Chapter VII: Hope & Sorrow*.

Drummer **Paul Wertico** and percussionist **Jeff Haynes** are on The Pat Metheny Group's *Imaginary Day Live*, the new DVD featuring highlights of the band's 1998 Saratoga, California performances.

Jimmy G is on Switches' *Present Lay Down The Law*.

Trivett Wingo plays on *Gods Of The Earth*, the new CD by The Sword.

Mick Underwood appears on *The Glory Years*, a DVD of Gillan's February 18, 1981 concert at Oxford Polytechnic.

Dan Hamilton is on Evangeline's *We're Alright Down Here*.

The DVD *Carlos Santana Plays Blues At Montreux 2004* features the guitar great live with Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown (with **David Peters** on drums), Bobby Parker (**Dion Clay**), and Buddy Guy (**Tim Austin**).

Ed Toth is on Fives Times August's sophomore CD, *Brighter Side*. Ed is also touring with The Doobie Brothers.

Former Low Millions drummer **Erik Eldenius** is in the studio with producer Toby Wright recording the debut album by Dilana, from TV show *Rock Star: Supernova*. Eric is also producing indie artist Tanya Fenmore, and he recently did TV shows with Lili Haydn. You can also catch the drummer in a special feature for Larry The Cable Guy's movie, *Witless Protection*, with his band Blonde From Fargo.

Gil Sharone and **Joe Tomino** are on Outernational's self-titled debut, produced by Tom Morello.

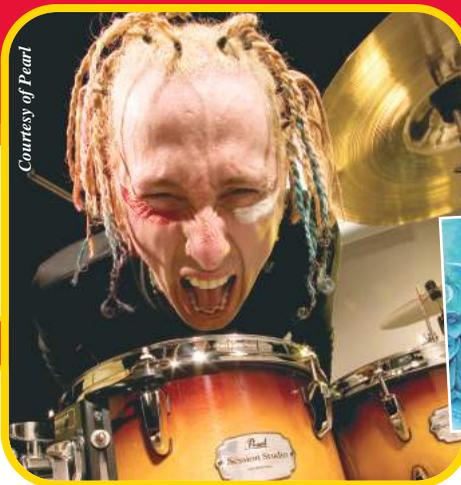
Check out **Nate Morton** on the premiere of MTV's new series, *Rock The Cradle*.

Dennis Chambers is featured on an incredible live recording with Steve Khan and Anthony Jackson, *The Suitcase*. You can also hear Dennis on Paul Hanson's *Frolic In The Land Of Plenty*, Maceo Parker's *Roots And Grooves*, Bill Evans' *The Other Side Of Something*, and Victor Wooten's latest, *Palmystery*.

Ben Smith will hit the road with Heart for a summer tour.

Terence Higgins has been sharing the stage with Papa Grows Funk guitarist June Yamagishi.

Charlie "The Basher" Waymire's Basher Radio has now been updated and features full songs from entire albums, not just samples. Check it out at www.thebasher.com.



Andy Strachan is in the studio with The Living End, recording their new album.

While on a break from Shakira, **Brendan Buckley** is touring with La Ley frontman Beto Cuevas.

Ian Eanes, who won the 2007 Guitar Center Drum-Off store finals in Paramus, New Jersey, is touring with R&B singer Ashanti.

Alicia Warrington is touring with Detroit's Gore Gore Girls.

UK jazzier Ronny Jordan's **Sir Earl Grice** is on the latest CD by Piers Lawrence, *Stolen Moments*.

Bassist TM Stevens' latest project, Temple Of Soul, has released its debut CD, *Brothers in Arms*, featuring **Narada Michael Walden** on drums.

Paul Leim is on recent CDs by Kenny Chesney, Willie Nelson, and Kenny Rogers, as well as on Amy Grant's upcoming Christmas record. Leim's also doing live dates with The Elvis Band and Peter Cetera.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Ginger Baker (Cream): 8/19/39

Airto Moreira (percussion great): 8/5/41

Jack DeJohnette (jazz great): 8/9/42

Danny Seraphine (Chicago): 8/28/48

Sib Hashian (Boston): 8/17/49

Liberty DeVitto (Billy Joel/sessions): 8/8/50

Dennis Elliott (Foreigner): 8/18/50

Tommy Aldridge (rock great): 8/15/50

Anton Fig (CBS Orchestra): 8/8/52

Billy Ward (sessions): 8/24/52

Steve Smith (Journey, Vital Information): 8/21/54

Gina Schock (The Go-Go's): 8/31/57

Jon Farriss (INXS): 8/10/61

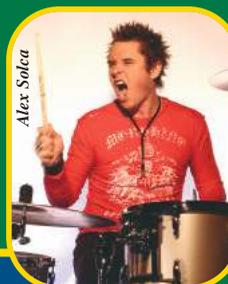
Rich Pagano (Fab Faux/sessions): 8/31/62

Steve Gorman (The Black Crowes): 8/17/65

Brian Tichy (Billy Idol): 8/18/68

Adrian Young (No Doubt): 8/26/69

Paul Doucette (Matchbox Twenty): 8/22/72



DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Big band great **Don Lamond** was born on 8/18/21, Traffic's **Jim Capaldi** on 8/2/44, and The Who's **Keith Moon** on 8/23/47.

Gary Chester passed away on 8/17/87, **Jeff Porcaro** on 8/5/92, **Lionel Hampton** on 8/31/02, The Knack's **Bruce Gary** on 8/22/06, and **Max Roach** on 8/16/07.

8/15/65: The Beatles (with **Ringo Starr**) play a sold-out show for 55,600 fans at New York's Shea Stadium.

8/19/69: Jimi Hendrix appears (with **Mitch Mitchell**) at the Woodstock Festival, held at Max Yasgur's Farm in Upstate New York.

8/24/73: The Fania All Stars (with **Billy Cobham** on drums and **Ray Barretto** and **Mongo Santamaria** on percussion) record tracks at Yankee Stadium for what will become the live record *Latin-Soul-Rock*.



Jim Marshall



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Equipment Choices And Overplaying

I've been having problems breaking crash cymbals. I first noticed a crack on a 16" A Zildjian crash. But it also happened to a 14" Sabian AAX Studio crash of mine. And this was after just a few weeks of play. Is there any way I can prevent this from happening?

I've also broken two bass drum heads in the past six months. I play heels-up, but I don't think that I'm pounding that hard. Is there any way to stop this?

Nick Payne

If you're consistently cracking 14" and 16" crashes, you're probably trying to get too much sound out of too small (or too thin) cymbals. You should consider purchasing larger or heavier models to get the volume (and the resistance to cracking) that you need. Also, make sure that the plastic sleeves covering the threads on your cymbal tilters are in good shape, and that you're not over-tightening the wingnuts that hold your cymbals onto the stands. Both of these things can help prevent you from damaging your cymbals.

If you're breaking through 2-ply bass drum batters, then you need to add additional protection at the beater impact point. Every drumhead manufacturer offers stick-on reinforcement patches for this purpose. In addition, companies like Gibraltar and Danmar Percussion offer special pads designed not only to protect the head, but also to create more attack sound from the beater impact. You also should examine your foot technique. Try to allow the beater to rebound off the head after each stroke.



Heavier cymbals, like this Zildjian A Rock crash, are less prone to breakage.



Impact pads can save your heads—and your money.

Flam Spacing

Should the grace notes of flams be played as 16th or 32nd notes? This question pertains to the paradiddle exercises from the beginning pages of Charley Wilcoxon's *Modern Rudimental Swing Solos For The Advanced Drummer*.

Frank Graham Jr.

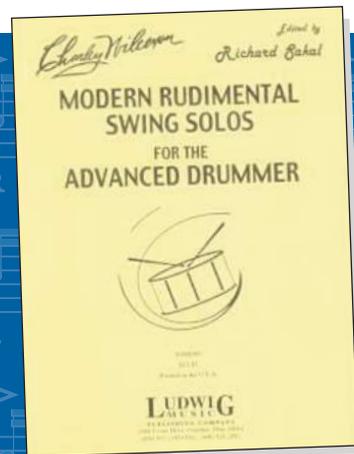
That particular Wilcoxon book is a classic, and anyone interested in studying rudimental drumming should take the time to work through its exercises and solos. In fact, much of legendary hard bop drummer Philly Joe Jones' hip soloing style stems from the patterns found in this book.

When you get to the sections of this or any book that incorporate flams, don't get caught up in determining what the "exact" spacing of the grace notes should be. Instead, think of the grace note as an embellishment of the primary stroke that adds body to the sound. To quote another classic drum text, *The Ludwig Drum Method*, by William F. Ludwig, "The grace note has no exact time value and is

played within the rhythm of the primary note."

You should experiment with different grace-note spacings to see how they affect the sound and feel of what you're playing. Start by phrasing the grace note wide-open (16th note spacing), and then gradually shift it closer to the primary note until both hands are playing at exactly the same time (called "flat flams"). You'll likely discover several spacings that provide interesting musical results.

If you're interested in developing modern drum corps-style flams, you should keep the grace note as close to the primary stroke as possible. The grace note should be played at a very low stick height.



Ginger Baker - Cream

time warp

Ilan Rubin - Lostprophets

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Seat Height And Pedal Positioning

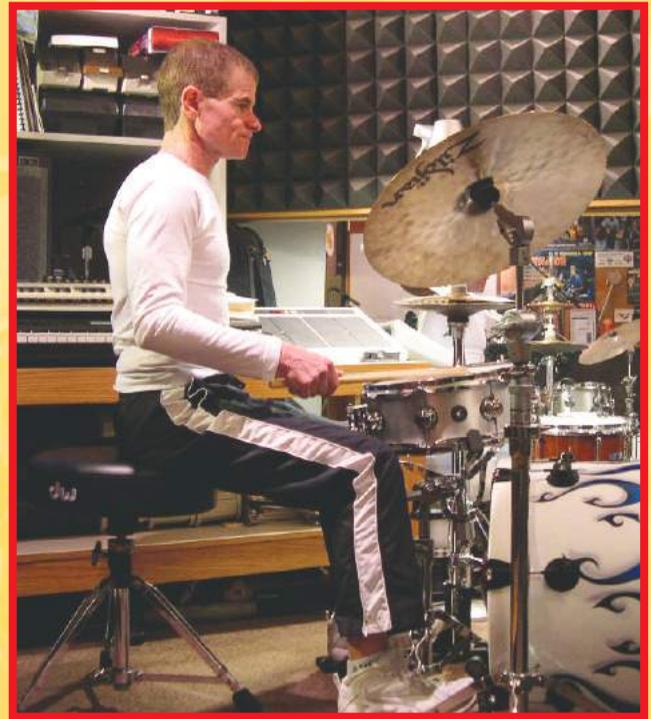
I've been playing drums for three years now, and I'm having problems with my setup. I can't figure out the right height for my seat and how far away to place my bass drum. I feel like my bass drum pedal is too far from my seat, which makes my leg hurt.

Charlotte Cusson

Every drummer will have his or her own "best" seat height and bass drum position. However, most drummers tend to sit at a height that puts their thighs parallel to the floor, or just a little higher so that the thighs slope down slightly. This provides the greatest combination of flexibility and power. Sitting lower decreases the angle between the foot and the ankle, which restricts your range of motion if you play heels-down. If you play heels-up, lower seat heights require you to lift your leg to get a powerful stroke on a pedal. Sitting a little higher allows you to simply "step down" to get that same power.

As for the distance your pedal should be from your seat, try the following exercise: Sit up straight and comfortable on your drum throne. Close your eyes, raise both of your legs up off the floor, and let them drop naturally. Where your feet land is where you should place your bass drum and hi-hat pedals.

For an extensive look at how to best configure your drumset, check out MD's Guide To Setting Up in the November '07 issue.



Noted drummer/inventor Bob Gatzen is the picture of good posture, proper seat height, and the "right" distance between seat and pedals.

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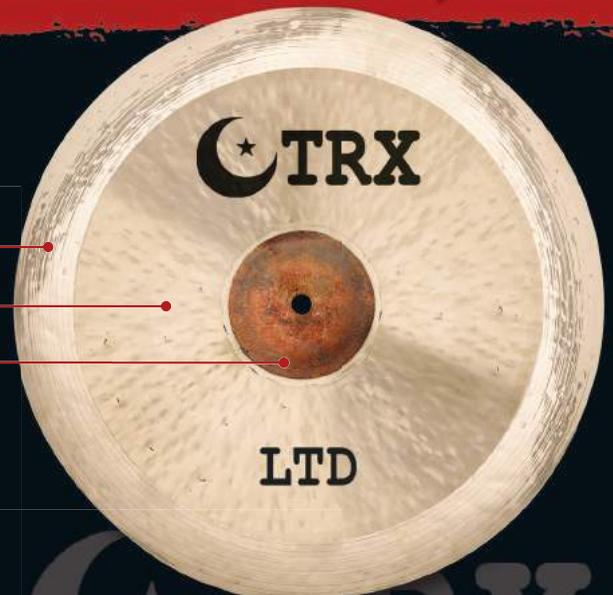
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Cordia's back and Tama's got it! Known for its density and gorgeous texture, Cordia has been paired with Bubinga for a visually striking and sonically robust combination of woods. The sound of these drums is as rich as the grain.

Tama was the first drum company to use Cordia with the award-winning Artstar drums in the early 1980's and drummers have been clamoring for its return. Their patience has paid off: this exotic wood brings a special elegance to Tama's exclusive Starclassic Bubinga series. By complementing Bubinga's power and punch, Cordia's legend continues.



See the new Cordia/Bubinga Starclassic kit in 360° view at tama.com/cb

Special thanks to Elm Street Studios, Conshohocken, PA

Gretsch

Catalina Club Mini Mod Kit

by Chap Ostrander

Gretsch's Catalina Club kits are designed for players who want an inexpensive drumset that looks as cool as it sounds. This particular model, the Mini Mod, is very distinctive. It has modified drum sizes, offset lugs, black hardware, and a stylish modern finish. And it lists for under \$1,000.

The Nitty Gritty Details

As with the other Catalina Club kits, the shells on these drums are 8-ply mahogany with 30° bearing edges. The rack tom is mounted with a mini version of the company's GTS sus-

pension mount. It attaches to two lugs and is insulated from the shell by a soft rubber bumper. This mount does a very effective job of allowing the tone of the drum to ring out.

The drum sizes are slightly reduced from the larger Mod series. The snare is 6x13, the rack tom is 8x12, the floor tom is 12x14, and the bass is 20x20. The kit comes standard with Evans G1 batter heads. The resonant heads are clear, and both bass drum heads are self-muffling. The rack tom has only five lugs per head.

The offset lug design is found on the bass drum and toms.

Unique satin finish with "black widow" stripe, black hardware, and offset lugs give this kit a striking look.





This modification gives the impression of more expensive custom drums. The floor tom has soft rubber gaskets under the leg mounts, which helps improve the resonance and quality of its overall sound.

The lugs, hoops, tom mounts, and bass drum spurs are all black, which blends well with the flat black finish of the kit. The most notable aspect of the paint job is the red "black widow" stripe that runs around the shells. This stripe is part of the hand-painting



Extra-deep bass drum could be difficult to maneuver into tight spaces.

process that's applied at the factory. Each shell is sprayed, sanded, and lacquered in a multi-step process. I have to say that the unique look of this kit really helps set it apart from others in a similar price range.

Now For The Sound

Let's start with my favorite part of this kit, the bass drum. I was initially concerned that the kick might sound too contained since it's only 20" in diameter, and the non-ported heads have built-in muffling rings. To my surprise, the drum felt punchy and huge (most likely do to the extended 20" depth).

The Evans G1 heads did a good job focusing the sound of the snare as well as the toms, which were full-bodied and agreeable to different tunings. I could tune up the whole set into bebop range or tension it lower for a deep, thunderous rock vibe. The snare was responsive and articulate over a full range of volume.

Overall, the kit was very enjoyable to play. While it doesn't have the same rich, warm tone of Gretsch's high-end lines, it does have a balanced sound across the individual drums. My only cause for concern is the depth of the bass drum. If you play small venues with tight stages, it might be tough to squeeze a 20"-deep drum into where you have to set up.

THE NUMBERS

Gretsch Catalina Club Mini Mod
(Five-Piece Shell Set)
List Price: \$999
www.gretschdrums.com

Sabian

APX "High Decibel" Cymbals

by Mike Haid

For their new APX cymbals, Sabian's focus is on volume. But even though these models are designed to be very loud, there's versatility within them that allows for much of the line to work well in various musical styles.

The APX line also has a unique look. The lacquered bronze finish is the predominant color, but the underlying iridescent copper overtones add a uniqueness to the finish that gives these cymbals a personality all their own. I asked Sabian senior marketing manager Wayne Blanchard about the creative process that gives the APX their unique coloring. "The subtle coloring on the surface of these cymbals is the result of tin rising to the surface and oxidizing," stated Blanchard. "This is part of a process that gives APX its cutting power."

I also asked Blanchard about any other interesting processes that went into the APX design. "The uni-rolled alloy is ideal for creating bright, tonally tight, and focused responses," explained Blanchard. "The shape, lathing, and particular innovations used in the production process add up to give this series the cutting power attributable to its 'high decibel' design."

There are two subcategories in the APX line, which consists of regular medium-weight cymbals and a heavier Solid series. Let's take a closer look at these various "high-decibel" plates in all of their ear-splitting glory.

13" And 14" Hats

The 13" regular hi-hats are outstanding for applications where you need a precise, ultra-tight sound. They also deliver a crisp, solid foot "chick." Their thickness gives them a full-bodied tone, with a high pitch for bright attack and excellent stick articulation. The 14" Solid hats produced the best all-around sound with a strong chick, full-bodied closed-hat definition, a mean slosh, and great overall attack and cut. The 14" regular hats are more mid-range sounding, with similar performance characteristics to the Solids. All three sets of APX hi-hats would work well for most louder musical styles.

22", And 24" Rides

The 20" ride is a great all-around ride cymbal. It has clean, bright stick articulation with a subtle wash. I played this ride with heavy nylon-tip sticks and thin wood-tip sticks. It felt and sounded great in both applications. You can drive this cymbal very hard without building up a lot of annoying overtones. The 22" ride is sonically very similar to the 20", but has a much wider spread, more harmonic build-up, and a deeper articulation.

The 22" Solid ride has a heavy, clean attack with ultra-defined articulation. If you lay into this ride, there's substantial build-up of deep overtones. But in a loud rock or metal situation, you're not likely to hear them.



If you've got the room for a 24" ride in your cymbal case, you might want to check out this monster. I was pleasantly surprised at its warm spread. The "ping" is not as pronounced as it is on the 20" or 22", but it has a much warmer overall tone. And when you lay into it, it produces a very attractive wash that could fall into the crash/ride category. For loud musical applications, I really like what this 24" cymbal brings to the table. The

lathed bell on all three cymbals is about 5 1/2" in diameter and sounds sharp and cutting.

18" China, 16" And 18" O-Zones

The 18" APX China will rip your head off! It's bright and explosive, with focused attack and a high-pitched, trashy smack. The 16" and 18" O-Zone crashes are essentially the HHX Evolution O-Zones on steroids. I fell in love with the bright, washed-out sound of these specialty cymbals, and I predict that they'll be a big hit with jazzers, funksters, and fusion players alike. They're great for crash-riding to produce maximum wash with minimal physical effort. But they have a bit more definition than the HHX Evolution model.

16", 18", And 20" Crashes

The APX crashes are best-suited for loud situations where being heard is your main objective. The Solid crashes have a thicker tone than the regular APX crashes. I had to really lay into these cymbals to get them to open up and explode. When they do open up, they're bright, thunderous, and cutting, especially the 18" and 20" models.

The tone of the regular APX crashes is bright and piercing, and they don't require as much effort to play. If you tend to play as loud as possible, I suggest using the Solids, since they're the heaviest and darkest models in the APX line. However, the regular crashes have a brighter, higher-pitched quality.

10" And 12" Splashes

The APX 10" and 12" splashes are fairly thick and need to be played with authority in order to release their bright, cutting tones. These splashes are also best suited for loud situations.

The Big Finish

The terms "bright" and "cutting" best describe the overall tonality of the APX line. The most versatile cymbals of the bunch are the hi-hats, ride cymbals, and O-Zones. The crashes are piercing attention-grabbers that'll have no problem being heard over a wall of guitars and screaming vocals. So if volume and clarity are paramount in your playing style, APX has you covered. Just make sure you've got some decibel-reducing ear protection when you try out these babies.

High-decibel hi-hats and rides are exceptionally crisp and defined.

THE NUMBERS

List prices for APX cymbals range from \$136 for the 8" splash to \$500 for the 24" ride; 13" hi-hats list for \$370, and 14" are \$402 per pair.

Performance Set with 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and a 20" ride: \$1,035
Performance Set with 14" hi-hats, an 18" crash, and a 22" ride: \$1,124
Effects Pack (10" splash and 18" Chinese): \$469
www.sabian.com



The complete line of APX cymbals, in the reviewer's studio

QUICK LOOKS

Hornets Raw And Swarm Sticks

by John Emrich



According to their designer, Hornets brand drumsticks offer an ergonomic, contoured handle and proprietary rubber O-rings designed to relieve forearm pressure and reduce shock to the wrist. Key elements in the design are said to reduce muscle fatigue, reduce stick vibration, and provide a contoured fit to the player's hand.

Raw Sticks

The Raw sticks, a new addition to the Hornets line, are placed at a lower price because the handles are unpainted. We received 5A-, 5B-, and 2B-sized sticks for review. These sticks are made from hickory and have a very nice natural finish. All of the sticks have the same round tip, which offered excellent articulation on drums and cymbals.

The handles on all Hornets sticks feature a contoured shape that allows you to maintain a consistent fulcrum point each time you pick them up. This could be an advantage for young players who often mistakenly hold their sticks in different positions. I have a new student who has some difficulty in this regard. I sent him home with the Raw 2Bs, and within a week he was able to keep his grip in the right place each time he played. His buzz roll was much better when using these sticks, and when I switched him back to a regular pair of sticks, his hands immediately went to the correct position.

The only concern that I have about this design is for players who prefer traditional grip. The contoured handle causes a thick section to be placed in front of the fulcrum, where the thumb and fingers touch the stick. As a result, I found myself pinching the sticks in the webbing between my thumb and first finger more than I would with a regular pair of sticks. This eventually caused my hand to cramp. Perhaps with a little time, I could get used to this feel. (When I used the sticks in matched grip, I didn't have any cramping issues.)

The company claims that the O-rings at the butt end of the stick reduce forearm pressure and shock to the wrist. In this regard, I didn't feel any difference between these and standard drumsticks. However, the O-ring was capable of producing some nice alternate sounds. For instance, you can flip the sticks around and play soft to medium cymbal rolls with the rings. And they produced a nice sound on metal instruments like cowbells.

Swarm Sticks

I really like the Swarm sticks. The contoured handle felt comfortable in my hands, and it did reduce some of the impact shock when compared to other brands' designs that consist of rods wrapped in a thin rubber/ plastic covering. The tips of the rods have small adjustment bands that you can move up and down to create a wide variety of articulations.

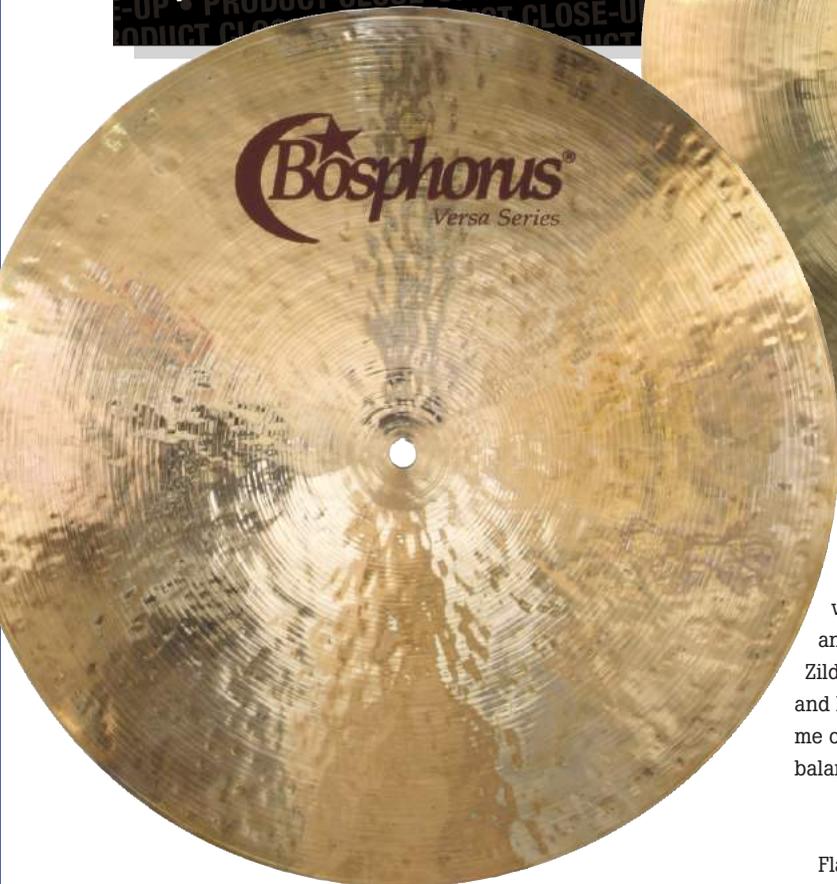
The colored handles also added a surprising benefit when I took them to a gig. I often have a few different pairs of multi-rod sticks in my bag, and I set the adjustment bands at different places on each pair for different tones. Because the Swarm sticks are available with different colored handles, I could easily identify which pair I wanted to use when I needed to make a quick stick change. The dowels themselves seem to be very durable and consistent, although one *MD* editor reported that he only got about five minutes of play out of a pair before they detached from the glue in the handle. I didn't experience that problem, but if you're a hard-hitting player you might want to stick to other models out there that have thicker dowels. Raw sticks list for \$16.99 per pair, and the Swarm sticks are \$35.99.

www.hornetsdrumsticks.com

Bosphorus

Ignacio Berroa Versa Series

by Michael Dawson



THE NUMBERS

20" Versa Ride: \$500

20" Versa Flat Ride: \$500

18" Versa Crash: \$440

14" Versa Hi-Hats: \$520

www.bosphoruscymbals.com

Bosphorus is renowned for making some of the finest hand-hammered cymbals in the world. Their catalog includes everything from the dry and exotic Turks, to the bright and crisp Gold series, to signature designs for some of today's most discerning jazz, funk, and rock drummers.

The Versa series was developed in collaboration with legendary Latin-jazz artist Ignacio Berroa. As the name indicates, this set of cymbals (20" ride, 20" flat ride, 18" crash, and 14" hi-hats) is designed to handle a wide range of styles, from acoustic jazz, to fiery Salsa, to rock and funk. Let's see how they do.

20" Versa Ride

The 20" Versa ride is a cool-looking cymbal that's only lathed from the middle of the bow to the edge. The rest of the surface is completely raw and uncut. While it's questionable whether or not playing between the two sections has any more of an effect on the sound than what you could achieve on a standard-lathed ride, I did appreciate the added visual appeal. Plus, I found that the perfect playing spot was at the point where the lathed and unlathed sections met. So if nothing else, the lathing pattern

provides an excellent target.

The Versa ride proved to be the most all-purpose cymbal in the series. The bell has a very musical yet cutting tone, while the main ride sound has a great balance of pingy attack and smooth, warm undertones. For years, I relied on a 20" Zildjian K Custom Medium as my "go-to" ride for jazz, funk, rock, and big band gigs. The overall sound of the Versa ride reminded me of my K Custom Medium; it's just a little brighter with a more balanced spread.

20" Flat Ride

Flat rides have been some of my favorite cymbals ever since my high school drumset teacher put up his cherished Paiste 602 flat ride and had me play along with Roy Haynes on Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. (Roy used the same cymbal on the record.) The Versa Flat ride has a lot of the qualities that I loved about the Paiste, including a strong "woody" stick sound and a shimmering, controlled wash.

What makes this ride different from other no-bell models is that it's heavier. As a result, the pitch is higher, the timbre is brighter, and there isn't any flange-like spray to the overtones (although I did notice considerable mid-range build-up when I played the cymbal at higher volumes). This ride sounds very clean and articulate, regardless of where you strike it. If you want more complexity, you might want to add a couple rivets. Ignacio added some to his.

18" Crash

This crash is super fast. Even the lightest touch with a brush or dowel rod caused the cymbal to open up with a dark and somewhat trashy voice. It also decays right away. So even if you lay into it to add an exclamation point to the end of a solo section, you don't have to worry about the after-ring lingering through the next two choruses. This cymbal is also very effective for low-

The Versa Crash and Flat Ride feature a shiny brilliant finish, while the ride and hi-hats (not shown) are only lathed on the outer perimeter.

volume gigs where you want to play full-sounding crashes without having to hit too hard.

I had a lot of fun using this cymbal off to the right side of the ride, where I could drop in syncopated Jeff "Tain" Watts-type crash accents with just a quick flick of the wrist. This cymbal would also work well for timbale players who need a cutting crash that also has a throaty bell sound. Hip-hop/R&B drummers might also like this cymbal for its China-like explosiveness.



cushy Papa Jo Jones-type feel. However, these hats do provide a dark jazz flavor that can cut through on louder gigs.

Lasting Effects

Although it might be a bit of a stretch to say that the Versa flat ride and crash would withstand the heavy punishment of some of today's more extreme musical styles, there are a lot of situations in which this series would really shine. So if you find yourself jumping from straight-ahead jazz sessions to salsa parties to big band shuffles—with an occasional funk or light rock gig thrown in—you might find the sounds you need in these all-purpose plates. Plus, if they're good enough for someone as well-rounded as Ignacio...

14" Hi-Hats

The 14" Versa hi-hats have the same half-lathing pattern as the ride. They also share similar sonic characteristics. The overall pitch is fairly low, but still within the "all-purpose" range they're designed for. Closed stick sounds are dry and woody, while partially open strokes give off a raspy hiss. The foot "chick" also has a lot of bite. Some of us at MD felt that overall these hats were a little too "chunky" sounding, which could turn away those of you looking for a



LONGO | 5 1/2 X 14 SOLID-SHELL WALNUT WITH MAPLE TUNING HOOPS

HOW'S IT SOUND?

This hand-built snare came with a note from the guys at Longo describing it as "an all-around workhorse." And they weren't kidding. No matter how I tuned this drum, it responded with a beautifully balanced, dark, and rich tone that made it very inspiring to play. I used the snare on a session where the producer wanted an intimate and mysterious vibe with a somewhat quirky feel. I tuned the batter head medium, added a muffling ring, and did my best Matt Chamberlain impression, using dead-center strokes, light grace notes, and open rolls in the song's middle section. Not only did the drum's warm tone and crisp attack blend perfectly with the track, but its incredible snare response gave every note a lot of presence.

When I tuned the drum high, it had an ultra-articulate and dense character that would be ideal for symphonic percussionists or for jazz drummers looking for supreme clarity without sounding thin or choked. Just below this high tuning was where I found a strong Vinnie Colaiuta-like "crack." When I loosened the snare tension I discovered a flowing Billy Higgins vibe, while a medium-loose batter gave off a classic warm and punchy "Nashville studio" sound.

Even though it's not the cheapest walnut snare on the market, this drum is so versatile that you might not feel the need to use anything else.



Wood for Longo shells is air-dried for at least five years, which is said to contribute to its rich sound.

Trick throw-off has three "locking" points, so you can quickly and easily switch from loose to tight snare tensions.

WHAT'S IT COST? \$1,600

www.longodrums.com

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Mike Portnoy
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Now color makes it easy for you to find the right feel. Because we've created a system that narrows nearly 200 different stick models into five color-coded groups, based on diameter, it's faster and easier to pick the perfect stick. Find the right color and you'll find the right feel.

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Yamaha DTXTREME III

Getting More Than Just A Facelift

by Rick Long

Yamaha is now on the third version of the company's top-of-the-line DTXTREME electronic drumkit series. There are several important upgrades from the previous model, including all-new 16-bit drum samples recorded at 44.1 kHz, natural-feeling cymbal pads, and a hexagonally shaped rack system. These new features take the sound, feel, and look of this kit to the highest level.

In The Box

Our review kit is the DTXTREME III Special, which includes the DTXT3 trigger module, a hex rack, one TP120SD snare pad, four TP100 tom pads, two PCY135 cymbal pads, one PCY155 cymbal pad, one RHH135 hi-hat pad, and one KP125 kick pad. All of the drum and cymbal pads are three-zone. The hi-hat pad is two-

zone, and the kick pad is single-zone.

We tested the kit using Yamaha's MS100DR drum monitoring system, which did an excellent job of reproducing the DTXTREME III's sonic capabilities.

Snare And Tom Pads

The unit's snare and tom pads, which were first introduced on the DTXTREME II, feature a unique three-zone design that lets you program two rim sounds on the same pad. This is particularly useful on the snare drum, where you can program a batter head sound in the center of the pad, a rimshot on the larger rim area, and a sidestick sound on the smaller rim.

You can also use the rims' triggers to play any of the module's 1,115 drum sounds or 211 melodic voices. They can also be used to control loops and repeating patterns. I found that putting a crash sound on one of the rims of the floor tom pad allowed me to improve my ergonomics by not having to reach up to hit a cymbal pad. The rubber pads of this new model have a softer surface than that of earlier DTX models, and there's a significant reduction in sticking noise when compared to the first DTXTREME kit. While rubber pads don't feel exactly like Mylar drumheads, these pads provide excellent sticking response and rebound. And your wrists and arms will appreciate their comfortable surface.



The KP125 kick pad has been enlarged to accommodate double pedal playing. The pad surface is soft and easy on the knees and ankles. The design is sturdy, and the pad remains stable when played hard.

DTXTREME III Standard



Better Cymbals

The cymbal pads on the DTXTREME III feel much more natural than the wedge-shaped pads found on earlier Yamaha e-kits. The pads come in two sizes: 13" and 15". Each has three trigger zones to allow you to play bell, bow, and edge sounds. The zones can also be programmed to play any sound or perform any function the module allows.

The new two-zone hi-hat pad, which mounts on a traditional hi-hat stand, has a special base that senses the position of the pedal. Of all the electronic percussion devices, hi-hat controllers are the most difficult to get to sound and feel like the real thing. But Yamaha has met the challenges. From fully closed to wide open, this hi-hat pad has a natural sound and feel. I found that foot splashes were easier with this unit than with any other electronic hi-hat I've played.

Down To The Sound

The heart of any electronic drumkit is the sound module. The sounds in the DTXTREME III module are entirely new. Even though the total number of drum sounds has been reduced by over 1,000 in order to make room for higher-fidelity samples that require more memory, the new samples have a much more realistic tone. So what you're losing in quantity, you're gaining in quality.

These changes in the sound module are a result of a realignment of the electronic drum division within Yamaha's corporate structure. In the past, electronic drums were developed by the drums & percussion division in Japan. Now Yamaha's electronic drum sounds are developed under a cooperative effort with their electronic keyboard division. As a result of this new collaboration, the DTXT3 comes with a Motif, 205 MB of ROM WAV files, and many of Yamaha's proprietary AWM2 sound samples.

The module includes fifty factory preset drumkits and room for fifty



The DTXT3's LCD display includes more graphics than the earlier models, while twelve function keys align with the bottom of the LCD display. This allows for easier access to various parameters within the software.

user-defined kits. Additional kits can be loaded from memory cards or from a computer with USB connectivity. Many of Yamaha's renowned acoustic drum lines (Oak Custom, Absolute Birch Custom, Absolute Maple Custom, and Absolute Beech Custom) are included, as are more electronic-sounding setups. Any of these sounds can be mixed and matched to create unique kits. So if you want to use birch toms and a maple bass drum like Steve Gadd, it only takes a few button pushes and you're good to go.

A look at the rear panel of the module reveals even more capabilities. A USB port can be used to connect the unit to a computer, USB memory device, or sequencer, and WAV data can be easily uploaded or downloaded for storage. This port transmits MIDI data too, but dedicated MIDI ports are present as well.

The rear panel also includes a headphone jack and six outputs. The output can be configured to send audio from the unit as three separate stereo pairs or as individual outs for different drum voices. Additional pad inputs allow you to add up to four more pads.

The Auxiliary In/Sampling In terminal allows you to connect any music source to the unit so that you can

DTXTREME III Special



play along with pre-recorded music. It's also the pathway to the internal sampler. The terminal can be configured to accept microphone-level signals, which means you can sample any sound you wish, including your own acoustic drums or percussion gear. By installing optional DIMM memory, the DTXXTREME III can load up to 512 MB of external audio samples, which you can then trigger with the pads.

Real Deal Demos

You can hear the entire range of the improved sound module by checking out the three demo songs. Rather than relying on MIDI files to generate the music (as in previous versions), Yamaha used real guitarists and top-level drummers to play their demo tunes. The first song features hard rock legend Tommy Aldridge, the second boasts technical wizard Akira Jimbo, and the third combines solos from Aldridge, Jimbo, fusion master Dave Weckl, and studio veterans Russ Miller and JR Robinson.

These demos are followed by forty-four compositions for practice purposes that cover all popular genres of music. You can drop out the drum track and play along with the other musicians, while monitoring your accuracy with the Groove Check function.

Check Yourself

Groove Check is a very useful teaching tool. It allows you to play to a song or click track and visually see how close your playing aligns to the beat. This type of practice can help you develop your sense of time, including figuring out how to play behind, dead on, or on top of the beat. When you turn on the Rhythm Gate func-

tion, the sound of the drums will only play when you hit the pads within a determined range of time around the beat. This new version of Groove Check is easier to set up and use than its previous incarnations. This function will definitely help improve your time and control.

The Hex Rack

The new Hex Rack is designed with hexagonal-shaped poles for each cross beam. This shape allows the rack to lock in place on the leg clamps, eliminating the possibility of slippage. The tom and cymbal mounts clamp securely to this geometric pole but are designed so that any desired angle for the pad can be achieved. Compared with other racks on the market, this makes for a sturdy design that is easy to break down, transport, and set up. The rack was initially designed for acoustic drums, so it can take the weight of them if you want to build a hybrid electro-acoustic setup.

All In All

Overall, the DTXXTREME III offers great sounds, comfortable playing surfaces, and stable hardware, along with all the electronic capabilities needed for professional studio work and live performances.

VITAL STATS

DTXXTREME III Special
Price: \$5,299.99

DTXXTREME III Standard
(five-piece version with two cymbals and a conventional rack)
Price: \$4,199.99
www.dtxperience.com



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>>SABIAN JIMMY DEGRASSO OVERRIDE AND VAULT CROSSOVER RIDE

The limited-edition 23" Jimmy DeGrasso OverRide weighs in at nearly 10 lbs. and features a raw 8" Power Bell. This cymbal combines intense HH and HHX hammering styles to produce a dark and rich sound that's solid and cutting.

The Vault Crossover ride is a 21" medium-thin model that has a

warm, semi-dark tone that works as both a ride and a crash.

Partial lathing on the top ensures increased articulation, while lathing on the outer perimeter of the bottom allows the cymbal to open up when crashed.

www.sabian.com

>>NEW COLORS AND CONFIGURATIONS FROM ROGERS

Rogers Drums has recently expanded their ultra-affordable Trailblazer and Prospector lines with a few new size configurations and finishes.

New Trailblazer configurations include one with a 20" bass drum, 10" and 12" toms, a 14" floor tom, and a matching 14" wood-shell snare drum. The second set comes with a 24" bass drum, a 12" tom, a 16" floor tom, and a 6½x14 ten-lug steel snare. A new Prospector configuration includes an 18" bass drum, a 12" tom, a 14" floor tom, and a 14" matching wood-shell snare.

The Trailblazer series (below) now comes in Brushed Copper, and the Prospector series is available in Stonewash Blue and Brushed Steel.

www.rogersdrumsusa.com



>>NEW VATER STICKS AND SPLASHSTICKS

Vater's 16 1/4" long, .555"-diameter Sugar Maple Super Jazz stick (\$12.99) is a lighter version of their popular Super Jazz model. Its grip is just under that of a 5A, with a little extra length and a long taper.

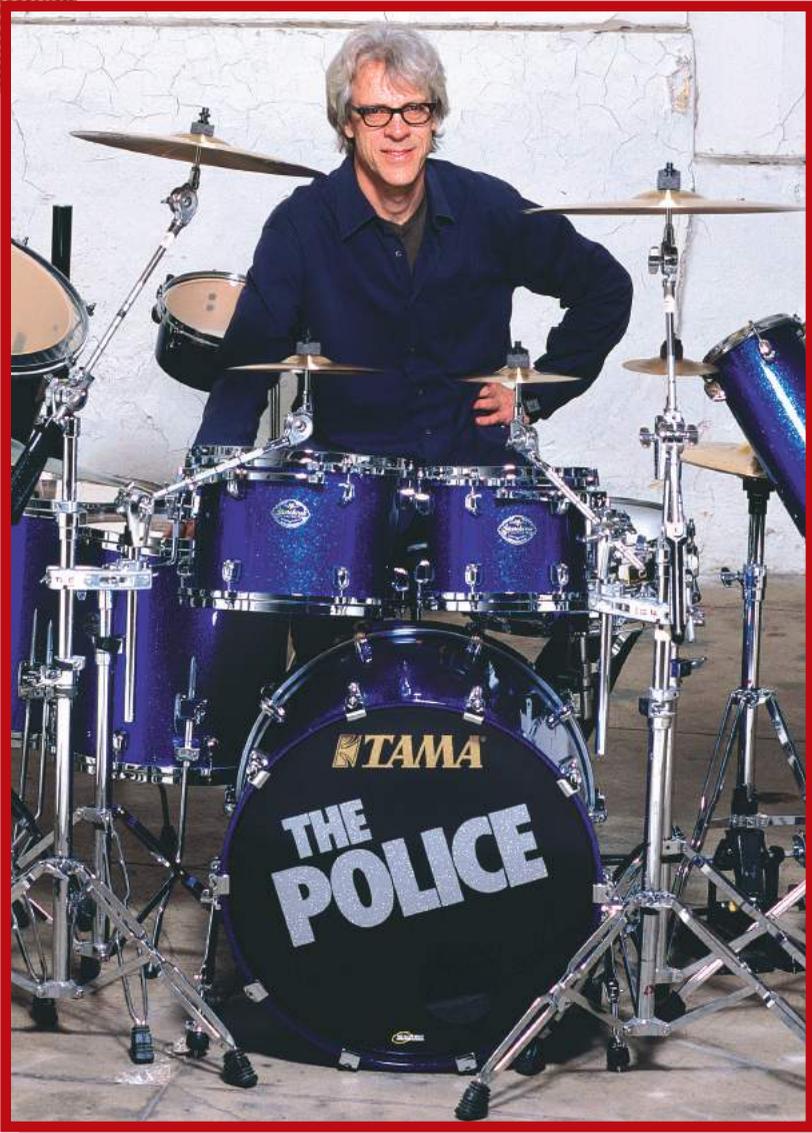
The Jazz Ride stick (\$12.99) has a grip that's slightly larger than a 5A, and it has a long taper to a small teardrop tip for a great ride cymbal sound.

The new SD9 (\$12.99) is just over a 5B in the grip and has an oval tip, appealing to a 5B player who needs a little extra length. It's available in hickory and sugar maple.

Jazz legend Jimmy Cobb's signature model (\$13.99) measures between a 5A and a 5B in the grip, and features a long taper to a medium-sized teardrop tip for warm and defined cymbal tones.

The Heavy Splashstick (\$24.95) is a thicker version of the original, with extra weight and durability for harder-hitting players. The Traditional Jazz (\$24.95), for low-volume applications, is smaller than the Splashstick Lite.

www.vater.com



>>TAMA STEWART COPELAND SIGNATURE KIT

Only fifty of Police drummer Stewart Copeland's "Return Of The Rhythmatist" Starclassic maple kits are being made available worldwide, with fifteen or so destined for the States. The S112S Standard eleven-piece shell kit lists for \$9,750, while an S142S Complete fourteen-piece version lists for \$12,800.

www.tama.com



>>GMS FREDDIE HOLLIDAY SIGNATURE SNARE DRUM

Renowned R&B/pop drummer Freddie Holliday (Boyz II Men, The O'Jays) and GMS have designed a 5½x14 signature snare that features a candy apple cobalt blue aluminum shell, gold-finish die-cast hoops, ten gold-finish Special Edition series lugs, GMS's machined throw-off, and Freddie's signature badge. Retail price is \$1,275.

www.gmsdrums.com

>>LP DRUMSET TIMBALES AND ARTIST PERCUSSION PACKS

LP's Drumset Timbales feature shallow shells constructed from high carbon-plated steel. They're available in two sizes (12" and 13") and in two depths (4" and 5½"). The drums' tubular lugs leave plenty of space for cascara (shell) playing, while the smaller head diameters allow them to be positioned within a drumset where "regular" timbales wouldn't necessarily fit.

LP also added three new artist percussion packs. Antonio Sanchez's pack contains a Cyclops tambourine and a Piccolo Jam Block. Maná drummer Alex González's pack consists of a red Cyclops tambourine, a Rock cowbell, a Gold Rock shaker, and a Mount-All percussion bracket. Heavy rock drummer Matt Sorum (The Cult, Guns N' Roses, Velvet Revolver) has chosen a Rock Ridge Rider cowbell, a Cyclops tambourine in jet black, and a Stealth Jam Block to be included in his percussion pack.

www.lpmusic.com



>>MEINL MB10 16" FAT HAT

These mammoth hats are designed for use in studios, but they can also be used live when a fat and full hi-hat sound is required. They have a warm sound combined with power and projection.

www.meinl.com



>>NEW HOT STICKS ARTISTICK FINISHES

Hot Sticks' new Artistick patterns—Tigerdelic, Widowmaker, and Union Jack—are available in 3S, 2B, 5B, 5A, 7A, and Rock models, and with a choice of wood or nylon tips. These new color options join over a dozen existing Artisticks finishes to provide the comfort and performance of a top-quality, American-made hickory drumstick, plus the added personality and visual impact of permanent, full-color graphics.

www.hotstickdrumsticks.com



>>TOCA ELITE PRO SERIES AND BLACK MAMBA HAND DRUMS

The Elite Pro Series congas and bongos feature slightly tweaked specs to allow for high-quality sounds at more affordable prices. The conga shells, which are 28" tall instead of the standard 30", are available in a choice of 2-ply premium Asian oak or seamless fiberglass. Easy Play hoops provide firm seating for the top-grade bison-skin heads. Hardware is available in chrome or black nickel. List price for the congas and stand is \$690. Toca Elite Pro bongos list for \$199.

The African Black Mamba djembes are hand-carved from environmentally friendly Balinese mahogany. These drums are treated with up to twenty coats of teak oil, which penetrates and protects the wood. Goat skin heads, treated with black dye, are seated and tensioned using a traditional rope system. Each djembe is hand-strung with durable braided rope to keep stretching to a minimum. These drums are available in 7"-13" sizes and come with a padded bag and a Djembe Hat to protect the head. List prices range from \$105 for a 7" drum to \$390 for a 13".

www.tocapercussion.com



>>ALESIS SURGE ELECTRONIC CYMBALS

Crafted from brass alloy and dampened by a clear layer of vinyl, the piezo-based Surge electronic cymbal triggers offer fast, clear response with a realistic feel. Models include 12" single-zone hi-hats, 13" single-zone crashes (with or without choke capability), and 16" dual-zone rides (with or without choke capability). The 16" ride cymbal pad can be used with many industry-standard drum modules, as well as for triple-zone triggering applications.

Surge cymbals are sold individually or in combination packs. They're also available with select Alesis drumkits, including DM5 Pro and USB Pro sets.

www.alesis.com



>>DW DANIEL DE LOS REYES PRACTICE PRO PERCUSSION PAD

The Practice Pro is a practice timbale and realistic-sounding conga in one portable package. Its compact design incorporates a 10" Remo Fiberskyn conga head and a die-cast curved crown hoop for a realistic feel. The top of the conga sits on a specially vented shell that provides full conga tone, making it usable on gigs or in the studio. The drum also comes with a foam-rubber insert to muffle the sound for quiet practice.

The bottom side of the Practice Pro features a dual-surface timbale practice pad with simulated cowbells. The right-side pad has a hard surface that's high-pitched to replicate the 14" drum, while the left side has a softer, lower-pitched surface to represent the 15" drum. The cowbells are removable and mounted on an adjustable bracket. One bell simulates a mambo bell, the other a cha-cha bell. List price is \$165.99.

www.dwdrums.com

>>NEW SILVERFOX DRUMSTICKS

Silverfox's Boston Basher model, with an olive-shape tip and short tapered shoulder, is designed for hard rock and heavy metal players. With a 16" length and a diameter of .620", this durable hickory stick achieves heavy volumes without feeling heavy in the hand.

The Sweet Pea is a smaller stick (15³/₄" long, with a diameter of .565") that features a small ball tip for fast response on cymbals, while producing a warm sound on drums. With a similar feel to that of a 5A, this stick is ideal for combo jazz drummers. All SilverFox sticks are strengthened by an exclusive Duracrilyx finish.

www.silverfoxpercussion.com



>> TYCOON RALPH IRIZARRY SIGNATURE TIMBALES AND PINSTRIPE CONGAS

Tycoon Percussion is celebrating the addition of famed timbalero Ralph Irizarry to its artist roster with the introduction of his Signature model timbales. The 14" and 15" stainless-steel shells are fitted with heavy-gauge, die-cast, chrome-plated counter hoops and finished in durable black gloss, providing a distinctive look without affecting the shell's bright, cutting cascara sound. A heavy-duty angle- and height-adjustable stand, a cowbell bracket, a tuning wrench, and a pair of sticks are included with each set.

The Master Handcrafted Pinstripe congas feature an 11" quinto, an 11³/₄" conga, and a 12¹/₂" tumba. The drums are made from Siam Oak shells with premium-grade water buffalo heads. They also are equipped with reinforced side plates, die-cast handles, and low-profile counter hoops in antique copper. Matching 10" requintos, bongos, and djembes—along with a wide range of stands, cases, and accessories—are also available.

www.tycoonpercussion.com



AND WHAT'S MORE



DP Drumplates are designed to prevent drums from sliding and to allow for consistent setup positioning. The Drumplates also provide extra resonance to a drum's sound, enhancing bottom- and top-end frequencies. Drumplates are available in a variety of configurations to

accommodate most setup requirements and budgets. Prices range from \$229 for the JP1/Junior-Pro Series 1 to \$799 for the S-Pro Series.

www.drumplates.com

REVOLUTION DRUM's new computer-based bag design program allows drummers to custom design their own gig bags. One of the company's designs, the Cymbal Silo, is currently being used by touring pros Raymond Herrera, Alex Acuña, Mark Schulman, and Daniel Glass. This bag features 1/2" closed-cell foam, skid-proof bottoms, and plush removable dividers.

www.revolutiondrum.com

TPDRUMS offers unique stave-constructed drums built to the buyer's specifications. Drums can be made from any species of wood, with many laminate combinations and hardware options. Head selection is left up to the buyer, while edge combinations can be recommended for best overall sound.

www.tpdrums.com



EDIROL BY ROLAND has released the R-09HR, a portable digital recorder that features a pro-quality stereo condenser microphone and an onboard preview speaker for instant audio playback. Users can record up to 32 GB in WAV or MP3 formats with resolutions of up to 24 bit/96 kHz.

www.edirol.com



The **VIA HANDGRIP** is designed to improve finger strength, speed, and dexterity. This device is available in two tensions: Light (Yellow) and Medium (Blue). The light tension is ideal for young instrumentalists and for those who prefer more repetitions with less resistance. The medium tension is designed for adult musicians. List prices range from \$9.95 to \$11.95.

www.viahandgrip.com



MAPEX USA announced the launch of its new MY PRO M program on its Web site (<http://usa.mapexdrums.com/my-pro-m>). This program allows drummers to go online and choose from a wide range of components and finish options to create their own custom Pro M configurations. Exclusively through the MY PRO M program, consumers can order a Pro M drumset with chrome or black chrome hardware, and they can choose from any of the Saturn series lacquer finishes.

In addition, registered users can add any piece of Mapex hardware to their configuration and determine cymbal placement with the application. Mapex also provides over a dozen preconfigured setups that include pre-packaged hardware.

www.mapexdrums.com



Photo: Robert Downs

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Dafnis Prieto

Latin-Jazz Genius

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Paul La Raia

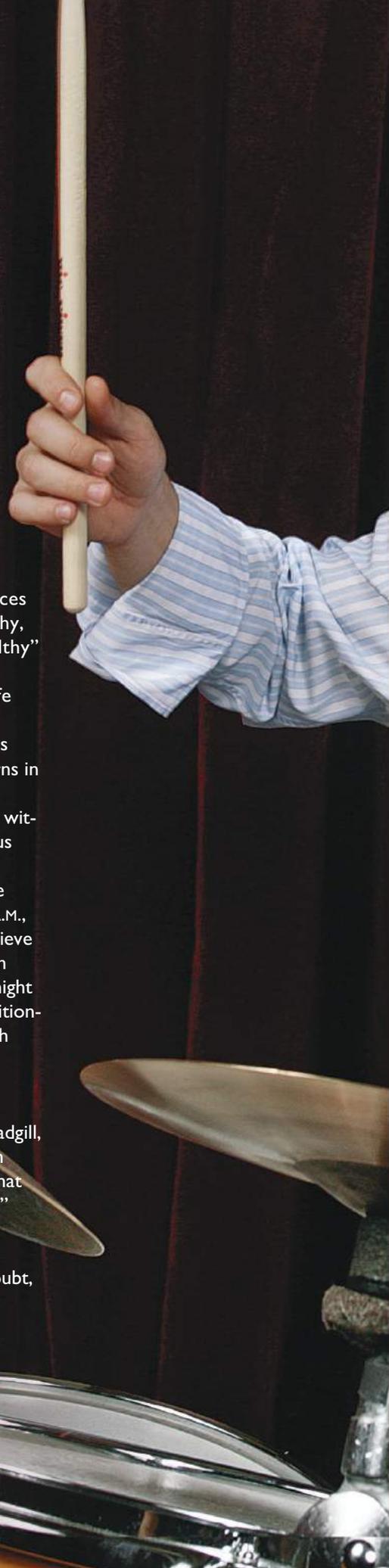
Unlike most musicians, thirty-three-year-old Dafnis Prieto practices the axiom “early to bed, early to rise, makes a [musician] healthy, wealthy, and wise.” While he may still be working on the “wealthy” part, Dafnis Prieto certainly adheres to the spirit of founding father Ben Franklin’s advice, and in eight rather short years has created a career rife with possibilities.

Far from the jazz stereotype of the scuffling musician prowling New York’s late-night clubs, only to return to his bed at dawn, Dafnis Prieto typically turns in early so that the deep musical concepts filling his fertile mind will have full release come the new day. Dafnis wastes not a moment, as anyone who has witnessed him speaking or singing melodic and rhythmic ideas into his ubiquitous MP3 recorder can attest.

When not touring the world with Santo Domingan pianist extraordinaire Michel Camilo or with one of his own groups, Dafnis typically rises at 7:30 A.M., hits the streets of his Washington Heights, New York neighborhood to retrieve his family’s chocolate, hummus, and toast breakfast from a local bodega, then gets down to work. After some stretching and a light yoga routine, Dafnis might work out *Stick Control* variations on a pad, revisit the previous day’s composition-in-progress on an upright piano, and then, after they’ve woken up, he’ll touch base with his family of musicians stretching across the globe.

Somehow finding time to write and record three albums as a leader since 2003, Dafnis has also composed entire suites for various commissions, performed and recorded as a sideman with musicians as diverse as Henry Threadgill, Bebo de Cuba, and The Caribbean Jazz Project, supported his wife’s modern dance troupe, and recorded and toured with Michel Camilo’s Trio, the gig that helped launch the careers of such greats as Dave Weckl, Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez, Cliff Almond, Joel Rosenblatt, and Zach Danziger.

As if that weren’t enough, when he’s not on the road, Dafnis also teaches ensembles and private students at Manhattan’s New York University. No doubt, it’s a full plate for this diminutive human dynamo.









Dafnis's exceptional energy, fire, and ambition can be heard on his Sextet's brilliant new album, *Taking The Soul For A Walk*. As with the title of his first album, *About The Monks*, Prieto's latest grabs your attention even before you play it. Dafnis is a thinker, a drummer/philosopher, a musician as interested in modern dance and Béla Bartók as Tony Williams' flam flurries or displacing songos to the point where "I" is practically abolished.

Dafnis insists that he's trying to advance Cuban tradition, not repeat it, and the songs of *Taking The Soul For A Walk* challenge anyone, or any drummer, who believes a premeditated arsenal of songo/clave/samba rhythms adds up to Latin mastery. Prieto almost never plays a stock Cuban rhythm (he's a native of Santa Clara, Cuba), making deconstruction of his style a difficult task.

Dafnis's new songs—"Taking The Soul For A Walk," "Commandante," and "Just Say It," to name a few—turn standard Latin conventions on their ear. What sounds like songo, clave, or cascara rhythms may actually be stylized rhythms created on the fly to match the composition, or the result of the drummer's meditation on the nature of passing clouds, the limbs of a tree, or a speeding automobile. Within his philosophical compass, Dafnis plays with extreme fire, aggression, and passion—just don't call it machismo!

Instructed in Russian conservatory technique, yet grounded in the hand drumming of his tough Santa Clara neighborhood, Dafnis brings scholarly wisdom and innate ability to bear in blazing single-stroke rolls, incomprehensible full-set combinations, and enough witty solos to set an entire Macanudo factory ablaze.

Modern Drummer readers—and everyone else—can witness Dafnis's fabulous flow at this year's MD Festival Weekend, to be held at The Performing Arts Center at Purchase College, Purchase, New York in September. In the meantime, check out *Taking The Soul For A Walk*. It's by turns thoughtful, incendiary, aggressive, and peaceful. Like Prieto himself, his music expresses the full range of emotions—the mark of a mature musician reflecting, as he says, "the way I live now."

Visualizing The Blur

MD: Your music and your drumming have really evolved since your first album, *About The Monks*. You're playing so much drums on your new record. What has contributed to your growth as a drummer since 2006?

Dafnis: I've been looking more inside of myself, developing my own ideas, sounds, and textures on the drums as well as in my compositions. I've been writing so much music lately, and that's affected my drumming as well. I kind of see the whole thing in more of a holistic way. I'm not just seeing it from a drummer's perspective. I'm trying to see the whole sound of the band and what the band needs at the moment.

MD: What have you focused on purely in your drumming?

Dafnis: I've been influenced by a thousand different things, not just drumming. I've been influenced by musicians as well as by visual artists from different cultures.

MD: Such as?

Dafnis: Illusions. Visualizations of different things. Trying to see, for example, a tree and the composition and reconstruction of that tree. That's what I'm trying to do in the rhythmic part of it. I'm not focusing on how many rolls I'm playing or the technique. It's more about the compositional part of my drumming. It's about getting the ideas out there

that need to be played in that moment.

MD: That matches the idea of songs based on specific emotions.

Dafnis: Exactly. It's all part of my development as an artist and as a human being.

MD: That's a more abstract approach, to say, I'm going to look at a tree or at a cloud and interpret that in my drumming. How has that thinking aided your playing?

Dafnis: Let's say you have a clave on one of your limbs. You take that same clave and deconstruct it. Say you have the clave on the right hand and then on the left hand you start deconstructing the clave. Then you start actually dividing and subdividing it in different ways. You can subdivide, start, and end it from so many different angles.

MD: It's like changing weather.

Dafnis: For me, it's like when you take a picture of a fast car. You see that blur of speed. The clave I'm playing in my right hand is like the beginning of that picture—the clear picture. Then I start deconstructing the clave all the way to the end, and if you relate that to the beginning of the picture or the clave, it makes sense. If you just look at the clave or the picture in the middle of the deconstruction, it might not make sense, but if you relate it to the beginning, it does.

Dafnis's Playground

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom

- A. 6½x14 custom snare
- B. 7½x10 tom
- C. 8x12 tom
- D. 14x14 floor tom
- E. 16x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 14" AA Fusion hi-hats
- 2. 19" AA Raw ride

3. 10" HHX splash (inverted)

4. 20" AA Raw ride

5. 17" HHX Studio crash

6. 14" HHXplosion crash

Percussion: LP

- aa. Jam Block
- bb. Mambo cowbell
- cc. 15" frying pan

Hardware: Yamaha, including an FP-9310 double chain foot pedal

Heads: Evans Power Center Reverse Dot coated on snare batter, Hazy 300 snare-side, coated G2s on tom batters with G1s on bottoms, EMAD on bass drum batter with EQ1 resonant on front

Sticks: Vic Firth SD4 Combo model, Regal Tip brushes





MD: Is this approach an outgrowth of working with modern dance?

Dafnis: Yes, working with dance has helped me to conceive things from more of a visual angle. Drumming and music is an art, and as with any art it can be influenced by many different art forms. I don't only play music influenced by music; I have influences as a human being: reading books, poetry, anything that has a theme, a release, a development, a story. It's all an art to me.

Seeing Is Believing?

MD: What do you teach in your ensemble classes at NYU in Manhattan?

Dafnis: I bring in my charts, so obviously, that involves giving students the basics of where I'm coming from and how that helps shape my music—from Cuban music into jazz or any influence I have. It's not only about bringing the charts in and playing; I also explain the music to them. It's the same with the drums: I

Michel Camilo

The Keyboard Great Speaks Of Drums, Drummers... And Dafnis Prieto

Dafnis has worked with Santo Domingan pianist Michel Camilo for three years, and appears on his masterful 2007 release, *Spirit Of The Moment*. Camilo has worked with some of the finest drummers on the planet, including Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Bobby Previte, Joel Rosenblatt, Zach Danziger, Cliff Almond, and Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez. Here are his thoughts on drumming and Dafnis.

"Dafnis is a very *musical* drummer, very melodic. He has a command of so many different styles: He has a *great* jazz feel and at the same time he has that modern Afro-Cuban beat that his generation possesses; it's an evolution from how Afro-Cuban drumming has changed over the years.

"Dafnis's drumming has a real sense of space. He's very selective about his accompaniment all the time. And since he thinks melodically, harmonically, and as a composer, he leaves a lot of room for me to do my thing. At the same time, when he needs to be big and beefy, he can deliver that texture as well.

"Comparing Dafnis to El Negro, another great



drummer I've worked with in my trio, El Negro uses a much bigger drumset, while Dafnis uses a straight-ahead jazz set. The toms are totally different and the cymbal sizes as well. Negro uses the left foot cowbell, too. He always tries to put it in there somehow; it's his signature. El Negro has incredible independence and technique. Dafnis uses a cowbell too, but he plays it with his right hand, and he can alternate it with the cymbals.

"By having a straight-ahead jazz set and approach, Dafnis inspires the trio to play a different type of music. For certain swing numbers, it's very much right on. It showcases Dafnis's flexible, loose feel. And he goes for extreme polyrhythms in his interactions with us, too. Dafnis puts a lot of subdivisions into the music that are pretty much from the straight-ahead language.

"Being a composer himself, Dafnis thinks in forms and harmony changes and key relationships. He's always orchestrating from the drums based on the musical continuum."

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DAFNIS PRIETO

explain my approach as well as the foundation of different patterns and rhythms that are second-nature to me that they should understand to enable them to develop.

MD: What are the rhythms you cover?

Dafnis: I cover basics of songo and rumba on drumset; that includes all the history behind the rhythms. I give them classical rhythms from Puerto Rico, like bomba and plena; I teach merengue, transitions from one rhythm to another, going from songo to swing and from swing to bomba or samba, rhythms from Brazil. Then we try to combine all of the rhythms. We begin simply and then start developing, doing more improvisation and more embellishment of the rhythms, even trying different time signatures.

MD: What's the most challenging aspect to grasp for American students who haven't grown up with these rhythms?

Dafnis: Besides understanding the feeling, it's grasping the attitude. Every music has its own attitude. That attitude comes from understanding the meaning and the syncopation of all these rhythms.

Music comes through your ears, but many of the students want to see the music written down. I always tell students that you almost never start playing music because you like the way it's written down. You like the music for the way it *sounds*. You should follow that instinct in your life. But the students always want to write out the rhythms so they'll be able to play them. I try to get them to understand the rhythm through their ears. Try to hear it first, assimilate the information through your ears. That is crucial. Some students have trouble playing by ear, but as soon as they see it written, they can play it. What is this? This is not the order of the way things should be.

MD: So even if the students get it wrong at first, it's better that they grasp the rhythms by ear?

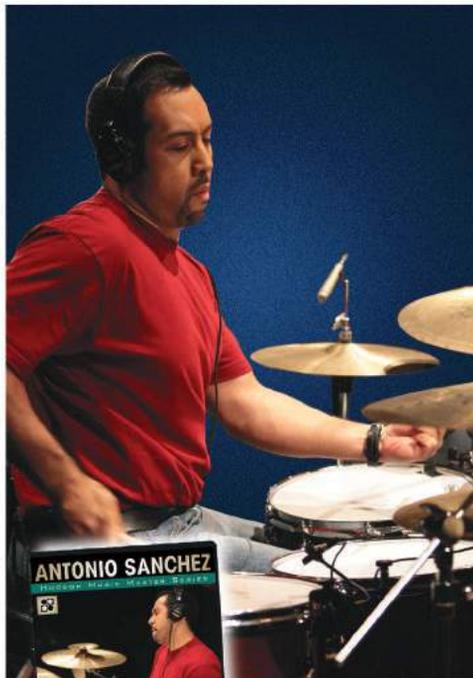
Dafnis: Definitely. I had a student who thanked me last week for this approach. He told me that his books had been stolen, but he still remembered all the rhythms. The only way you can learn the rhythms is to memorize them. If you always rely on a chart, you won't be ready for the music.

MD: But you will write down the basic clave, for example.

Dafnis: I write them all out and explain them; but even after you have that information, if you can get it by ear first, it will be much better for you in the end. In the end you want

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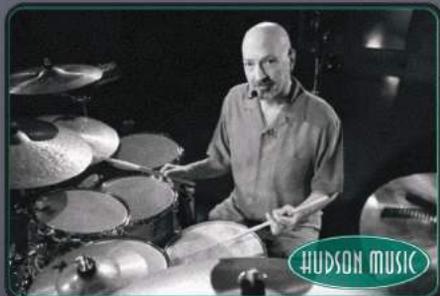
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Thomas Lang

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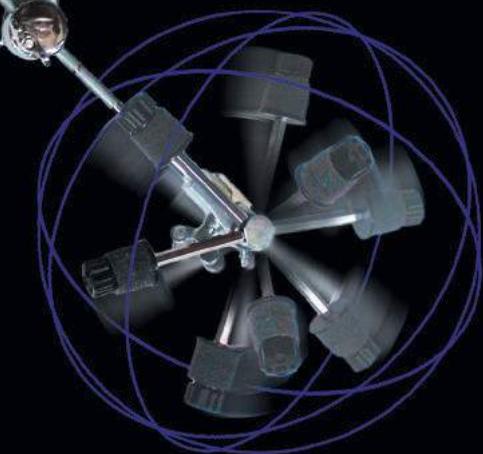
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ALBUM
 Taking The Soul For A Walk
 Absolute Quintet
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 Spirit Of The Moment
 Metamorphosis
 It Is Written
 Bebo De Cuba
 Lucidarium
 The Gathering
 Up Popped The Two Lips

HIS FAVORITES

| ARTIST | ALBUM | DRUMMER |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
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| Egberto Gismonti | Sanfona | Nenê |
| Miles Davis Quintet | all | Tony Williams |
| Henry Threadgill | Makin' A Move | Pheeroan akLaff |
| Hemeto Pascoal & Grupo | So Nao Toca Quem Nao Quer: Only If You Don't Want It | Marcio Bahia |
| Various Artists | Drums Of India | Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman |
| Branford Marsalis | Dark Keys | Jeff "Tain" Watts |
| Los Van Van | Te Pone La Cabeza Mala | Samuel Formell |

to be as free as possible when you play music. That means the less you look at the chart, the better.

Drumming = Aggression

MD: For someone attempting to break down and comprehend your drumming, what should they be listening for within the different rhythms? What is essential?

Dafnis: It really changes. The way I play is

more intuitive than academic. When I play, I wouldn't tell you what you should be looking for. The most steady thing that I play on the drumset, when I play in tempo, is the hi-hat. Sometimes I play it on all four beats, or on 2 and 4. But everything else really varies. I can be playing the clave on the right hand but then move the clave to something else. It depends on the music and who I'm playing with. I wouldn't do

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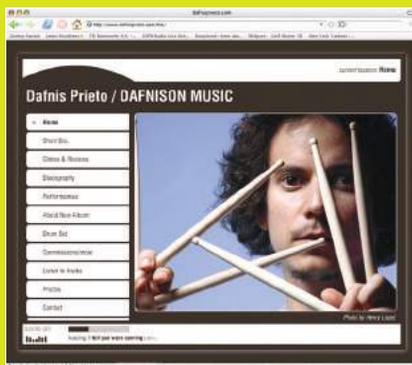
MD: You've released your new album on your own label, Dafnison Music. Why start a label now?

Dafnis: Having my own label allows me more control of the whole product. I have a lot of music written and conceived for different projects: music for dance, for film, and for different combinations of ensembles. It's about time for me to start using all of this information in a very specific way, and the only way I can do that is if I take control of the whole process from the first note played to selling the CDs.

MD: The title of the new album is unusual. What does *Taking The Soul For A Walk* mean?

Dafnis: It's about a journey of the emotions that I've been feeling since I arrived in New York eight years ago. This record is like taking the soul for a walk for me, it's like a whole story, like a book with different chapters. The chapters are represented by each of the tunes. The music represents all of these different emotions. The title of each tune is very related to the music within that composition. These songs were written as part of a commission I received in 2006 from Chamber Music America. At that time it was titled *The Emotions Series*.

MD: Is it harder for jazz musicians to deal with small labels? Might you be better off doing it yourself?



Dafnis: Possibly, although the experience I had with my two previous albums wasn't bad. I had a good relationship with Zoho music. I just felt that it was time for me to make it happen. I know it's possible, and that makes me feel good—though I have to do extra work in terms of selling the album and taking care of so many small details like dealing with retail distribution. But we're talking about my music, so it's enjoyable. The way the business is going, maybe in five or ten years, it might all be downloads and MP3s, so this is the start of something that can grow. I'm only releasing my own music for now.

that with a band that wouldn't soundly accept that information.

MD: But on your record, from song to song, to relate and understand, can we say that you're always playing clave?

Dafnis: Not really. I try to play very intuitively. You can put a clave anywhere. But whether the music needs it or not depends on your taste. I don't think I should be playing clave all the time. I try to escape that. If I don't need it, why play it?

MD: So within a particular song you're not necessarily playing bomba or plena or clave, it might just be a stylized rhythm for that song?

Dafnis: It's an attitude and maybe a combination of all of that information. I'm not trying to represent the style in the traditional way.

MD: You mention attitude, and that reminds me of "machismo," which is associated with Latin American countries. Is machismo part of Cuban music?

Dafnis: Machismo in a different context would be a patriarchal concept, the male over the female.

MD: But isn't it within the aggression of the music? There's nothing laid-back about your music. It's very strong, and the musicians perform at full-tilt: rapid-fire drumming and brass fanfares. It's very declarative, powerful, aggressive music.

Dafnis: It is, and that's good. I like that aggressiveness, because we live in an aggressive world. If I was living in the 1400s, maybe I would sound like Johann Sebastian Bach.

MD: That aggression is part of the Cuban culture, even with older musicians like Buena Vista Social Club. There's some serious burn there.

Dafnis: You give as much as you can. That should be part of the enjoyment of playing. It's not something you can preconceive and think, "You have to play like a man." It intuitively comes to you because you want to inspire the other musicians. Coming from being the leader and drummer, I want to make the music come alive. That's why this record is important, because each tune has specific elements.

MD: In general, and not to lump you in

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DAFNIS PRIETO

with the drummers of South America, but there's an infusion of Cuban and Latin American musicians in American jazz today. Do you see your music as advancing American jazz? And what have you learned from it?

Dafnis: I was influenced by American jazz, and then I merged it with my background. When Latin jazz began, it was more Cuban rhythms with the American harmonies and a combination of both in the melody. Now we've done that a thousand times, and we're looking for other ways to develop that information and take it elsewhere. We're

influenced by Indian, Indonesian, and African music, music from many different cultures. And we live in a different time now: We walk at a certain speed, and we talk a certain way that didn't exist fifty years ago. That's how I see my music: It represents the way I live now.

MD: Very fast.

Dafnis: It's not just about speed, though, although that is a characteristic of it. And being aggressive doesn't just mean that you're fast or loud. Whistling in someone's ear can be very aggressive. It's about the intention.

Tuning For Speed, Adapting For Touch

MD: Does your drumset tuning have anything to do with classical or Cuban tuning?

Dafnis: It does, in a very particular way. I don't really tune the drums to a pitch, but I do like the whole set to be tuned high. I'm mostly on top of the music, let's say. I'm not a backbeat drummer that waits for things to happen, with me grooving for everyone to have fun. It's a different kind of drumming perspective. It comes from my attitude: I imitate the sound of the timbale, the conga, muting the heads with the sticks. If you think about it, a lot of different sounds and character can come out of the drums that you might not associate with the normal drumset sound.

MD: I once saw you using the left hand like a fist to hit the snare drum, at the same time holding the stick in the same hand. It was like you were pounding on the snare.

Dafnis: Overall, I try to use whatever I think is needed. If I have to come up with a sound, then I'll do whatever it takes. It's not based solely on some previous technique.

MD: Do you tune the toms to sound like timbales or just play them with that approach to create that sound?

Dafnis: I'll play with that approach. Generally I tune the bottom head a little tighter.

MD: You have a custom-made Yamaha snare. What is custom about it?

Dafnis: They made it for me in Japan. I wanted a sound that would give me a lot of variety, from a fat sound to a timbale sound. I was looking for a clean and tasteful sound with variety, and this drum has it.

Slow Motion Sensations

MD: When time allows, what you do practice?

Dafnis: I practice coordination. At this point, practice is about getting to the point where anything I can think of, I can play on the drums. I work on that relationship between my brain and my limbs.

I do that in different ways. I can bring something like a 6/8 pattern to the set. I'll develop different independence ideas based on it, or I might go in slow motion around the drums to feel it with my body and try to make the movement and the sound as fluid as possible. That is the ultimate point of practicing for me. That specific point where you're able to reproduce everything you have in your mind.

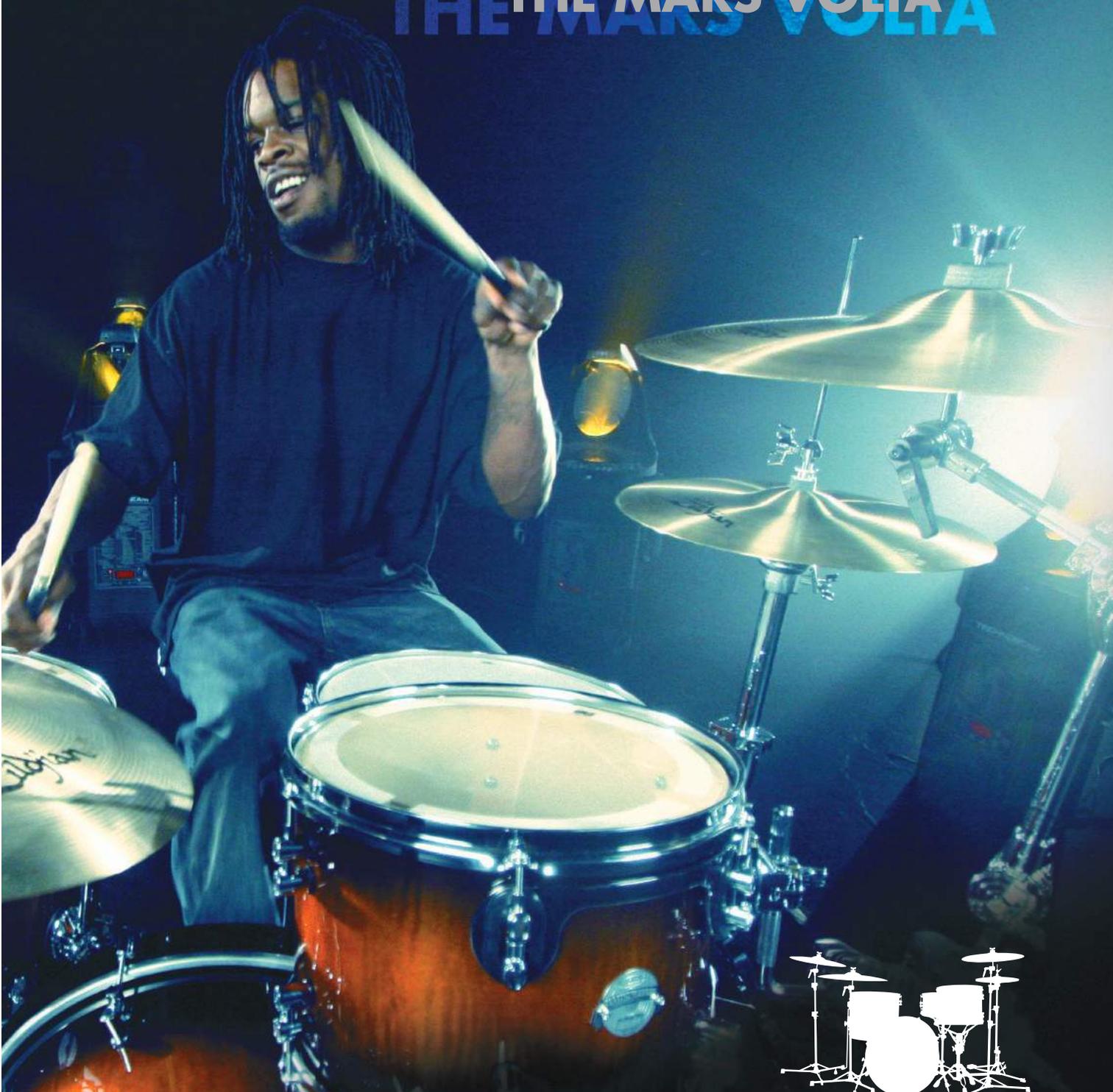
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DAFNIS PRIETO

MD: What does slow-motion practice enable?

Dafnis: It gives me more time to think about it and to breathe.

MD: Do you like to warm up before gigs?

Dafnis: I like to play the drums before a gig as much as I can. It's a different touch when you practice on a pad. I try to stick with the same sensation as much as I can before I play. I warm up and try to stretch my muscles. I might run through some *Stick Control* exercises or rudiments. I work on my weakness.

MD: What is your weakness?

Dafnis: I have many! One of my biggest challenges is to match the left hand with my right. I try to get to that place where the left hand feels good compared to the right hand in the sense of speed, accents, motion, and flexibility.

MD: You play brief but very dynamic solos. Are there some consistent ideas you like to use as springboards into a solo?

Dafnis: It changes all of the time. It really depends on how I feel. You always have things in the back of your mind, things that you do that become your signature. For instance, let's say I'm playing an aggressive

solo in a Latin groove. I'll try to develop some kind of timbale sound within it and make a variation of that, a contrast between that and the regular sound of the drumset. But it's really all about being in the moment, and what's happening onstage between the players you're working with.

Some players enable you to play whatever you want, others won't let you do everything you want to do. Maybe they drift, or drop a beat, or they completely go off rhythm because what you're doing is too complex for them to assimilate. If I'm playing with someone who doesn't have a developed skill with rhythms, then I won't do what I might with another player who can support me.

Taking Songs For A Walk

MD: On "The Sooner The Better," from *Taking The Soul For A Walk*, is the opening, driving cymbal pattern based on samba?

Dafnis: No. It has an off-beat character with both cymbals at the same time. But it's not developed through a samba pattern. I don't really have a name for it. I don't try to pre-meditate what the groove will be before I write a song.

MD: But as a Cuban drummer, I would think playing a songo pattern, for example, is more likely than a heavy metal blast beat.

Dafnis: But it's not related to any traditional background, in that specific song. I'm trying to take the tradition somewhere else; somebody else already played the tradition.

MD: What emotions are represented in "En Las Ruinas De Su Infancia"?

Dafnis: That represents my childhood. I was born in a poor neighborhood. I saw a lot of friends who saw the ruin of their infancy—they were born poor and they're still poor.

MD: Does this song represent music from your childhood?

Dafnis: I'm not trying to reproduce the music from my childhood. At the beginning of the tune I create a pattern, a bar of five and a bar of four. Inside of that you have the cascara pattern played by the horns moving by semitones. Then I start that pattern on the second beat instead of the downbeat. Then the rhythm is in four. It's a complex kind of rhythm, but at the same time it's easy to assimilate.

MD: It's easy for you!

Dafnis: [laughs]

MD: "Commandante" is another interesting groove, with its unusual cowbell pattern

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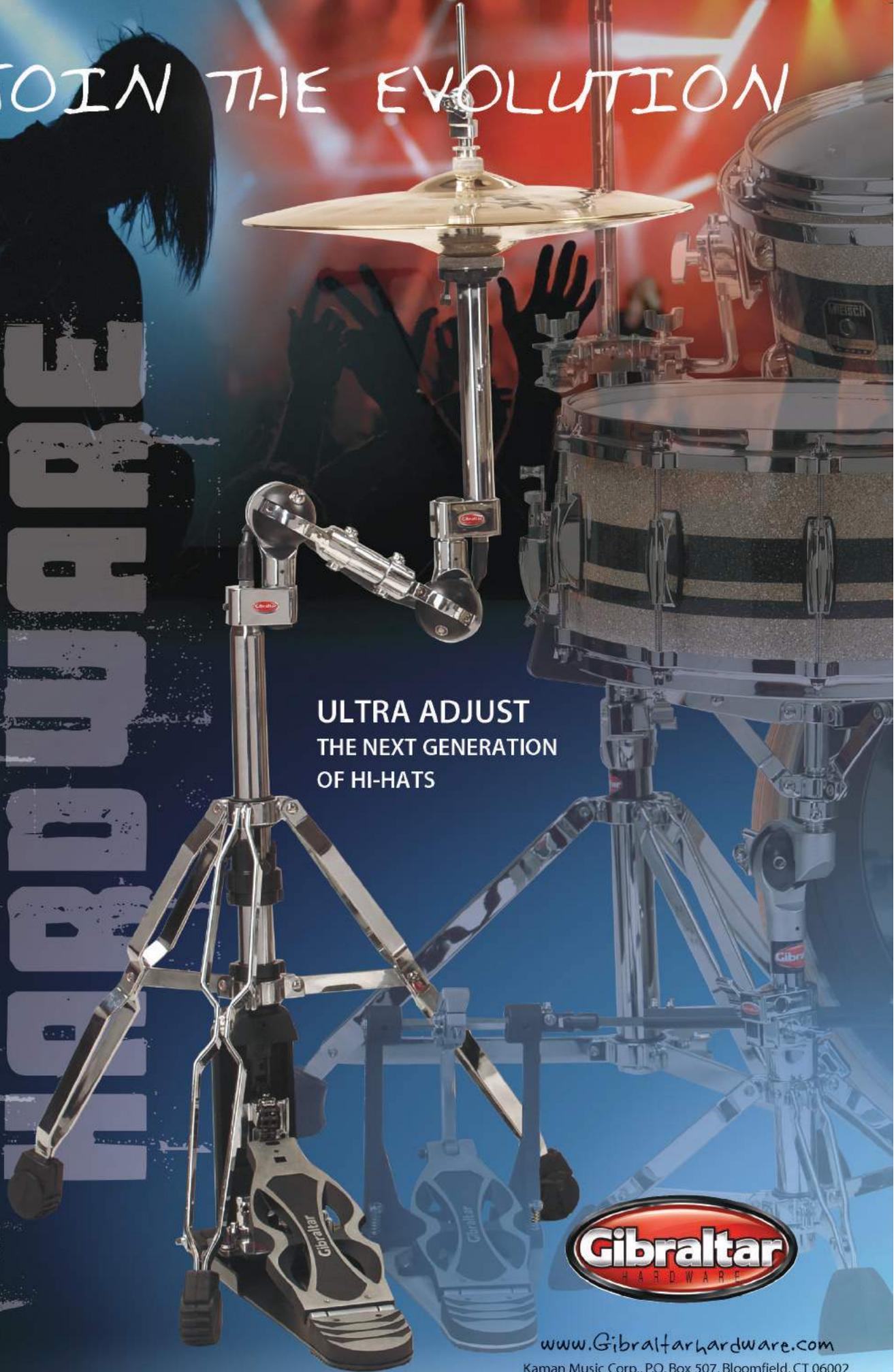
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DAFNIS PRIETO



and the way the bass drum accents fill in after the cowbell strikes.

Dafnis: That's influenced by the rhythm inside of the rumba cycle; the rhythm is called "columbia." I'm not really playing the exact columbia pattern on the drumset. I'm not trying to imitate that. I'm trying to reflect the kind of accents that happen

when you see drummers play columbia. I improvise and try to keep the 6/8 cowbell pattern steady and then do these intricate accents on the drumset inside of that rhythm.

MD: That has a very interesting melody, like chamber music.

Dafnis: In that tune there are only three

that kind of drop-beat syndrome. You hear it one way, but it's really being played in the opposite way. Then I have the opposite approach with the bass line, which is actually playing a more settled, downbeat note.

MD: Is "I Thought You Were Coming" a song with marching elements?

Dafnis: Yes. That has a song approach to

horns and drums. The only thing that is improvisational is the drums; everyone else's part is written, and with no solos.

MD: I couldn't follow "Just Say It" at all. What's happening there?

Dafnis: That's kind of straight to me—it's in 4/4. The only tricky part is the intro with the horns, and then when the melodica plays a pattern. But what confuses people is that the patterns from the melodica and the piano are on the offbeat. So it has

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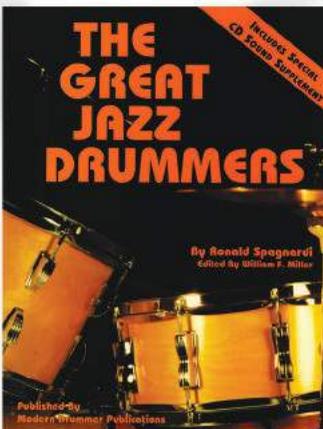
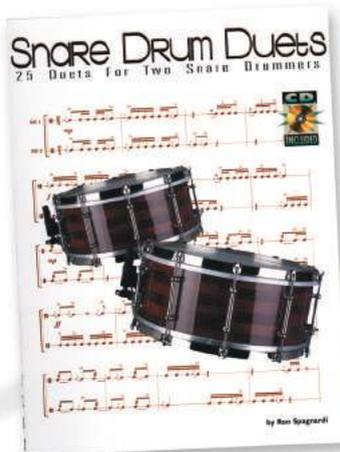
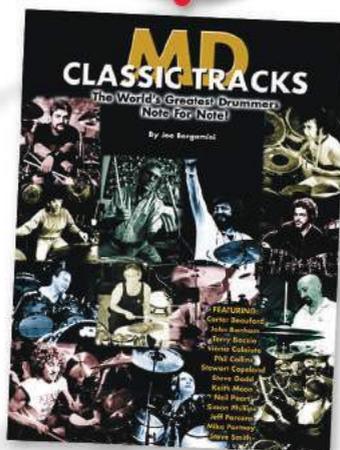
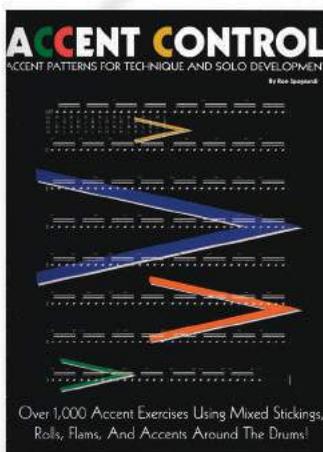
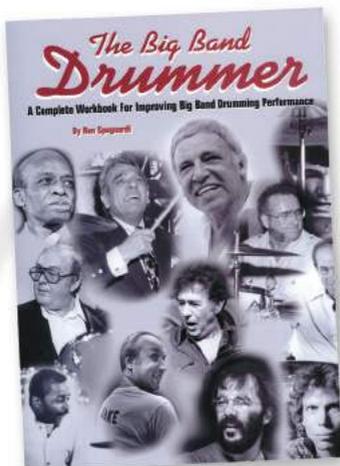
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DAFNIS PRIETO

rhythm, even though some different kinds of meters are involved. In the beginning, I use three bars of four and one bar of six. Also, when the horns start, it's the same kind of pattern, but it goes into 4/4 and then there's a part that features the drums playing through different meters again: 5/4, 6/4, 2/4.

MD: Who did you listen to mostly for your songo drumset conception?

Dafnis: The father of the songo is Jose Luis Quintana, also known as Changuito, from Los Van Van. There's a trapset drummer in Los Van Van now, but it used to be a timbales player, plus bass drum and snare, which Changuito played. Now the drummer plays the timbales as well.

MD: Your drumming often sounds like a full battery of percussion. Do you think of yourself as a percussionist?

Dafnis: I try to balance the two ideas. I have a strong background of percussive culture from Cuba, so I incorporate all of those elements and sounds on the trapset. It doesn't really matter how you tune the drumset or how many different things you use on the drumset. I can make that same sound on any configuration. I believe that

sound is actually already integrated into the player himself. You can put two different drummers on the same set and it will sound completely different.

MD: The song "Emergency Call" reminds me of Tony Williams' *Emergency!* And you play a floor tom/bass drum combination in that song that recalls one of Tony's signature 16th-note patterns. Were you thinking of Tony there?

Dafnis: After I wrote that tune, I heard Tony's *Emergency!* for the first time. I said, "Wow, what a coincidence that I did this tune with this kind of open song form, which was his same approach on that album. I'm influenced by Tony Williams, of course, as well as by a lot of other great drummers. I couldn't think up all of those drumming ideas myself.

MD: The main groove is a four-to-the-bar funk pattern.

Dafnis: Yes, but I think it's a very open funk groove. It doesn't have a backbeat—very open and floating.

MD: In the press release, you refer to "Emergency Call" as "a futuristic opportunity in sound." What does that mean?

Dafnis: It's an alternative, something differ-

ent, from what's been happening on the record previously. It's an alternative for me, which I could explore further in the future, sound-wise.

"Listen To My Voice"

MD: You're evolving so quickly as a drummer and composer. Ultimately, have you thought about where you want to take your music?

Dafnis: The ultimate goal for me is to sound as much like myself as possible, every time I play. I want to look inside of myself every day and see what I can come up with and offer that choice to myself. I have a lot of influences, and I don't stop listening to new sources. But at this point I'm really looking inside to see what I can do in the music that I write and in my drumming.

The goal for me is, when you turn on your stereo and as soon as you've heard two bars, you say, "Oh, that's Dafnis Prieto." I think that's a very important quality to have as a drummer and as a composer. It's about having a voice—you listen to my voice and know it's me.



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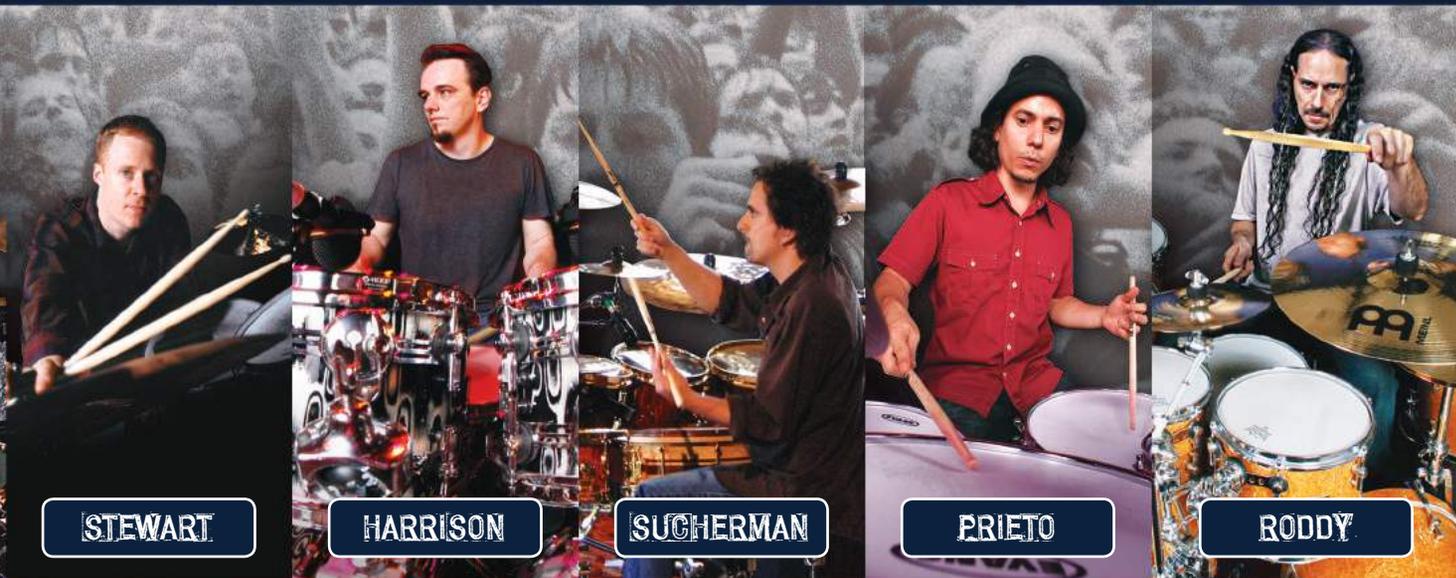
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Deen CASTRONOVO

The Journey Of A Decade, The Career

During the heyday of metal music in the '80s, an underground sub-genre known as "shred metal" emerged. The shred style focused mainly on high-energy, neo-classical instrumental rock, which required a drummer to be fast, powerful, and technically adept at double bass drumming and odd time signatures.

At that time, record producer Mike Varney, who penned the "Spotlight" column in *Guitar Player* magazine, became a major catalyst in the shred movement. Varney would discover and record many of the guitarists featured in his column. Several of these players went on to become the technical guitar wizards of today, including David T. Chastain, Vinnie Moore, Tony MacAlpine, Paul Gilbert, Bruce Bouillet, Joey Tafolla, Jason Becker, Greg Howe, Richie Kotzen, and Marty Friedman.

One of the first acts that Varney signed to his Shrapnel label was a Portland, Oregon-based metal band called Wild Dogs. This group featured up & coming drumming talent Deen Castronovo. Varney was so impressed with Castronovo's drumming that he hired Deen to play on many Shrapnel releases.

The Shrapnel recordings became a training ground for Castronovo, fine-tuning his blazing, syncopated double bass chops and incredible hand speed. He brought a higher level of technical expertise to metal drumming, which continues to inspire new generations of metal monsters to this day.

Castronovo's work on Shrapnel also proved a major springboard for his career, as he went on to work with such big-league artists as Ozzy Osbourne, Paul Rodgers of Bad Company, Bad English (featuring John Waite), Geezer Butler of Black Sabbath, and Frank Zappa sidekick Steve Vai. All of this major-league action paved the way for Castronovo, in 1998, to land the gig with one of the '80s' most successful pop-rock groups, Journey, replacing drumming great Steve Smith—no easy task for any

drummer. Ironically, Journey was one of Castronovo's favorite bands from his youth, and Steve Smith was one of his major drumming influences.

Fast-forward ten years. Journey continues to pack concert halls, and Castronovo remains at the helm, still impressive in every way. The group has just released a three-disc set called *Revelation*, featuring new tunes, remakes of classic Journey material (featuring new lead vocalist Arnel Pineda), and a recent live concert DVD.

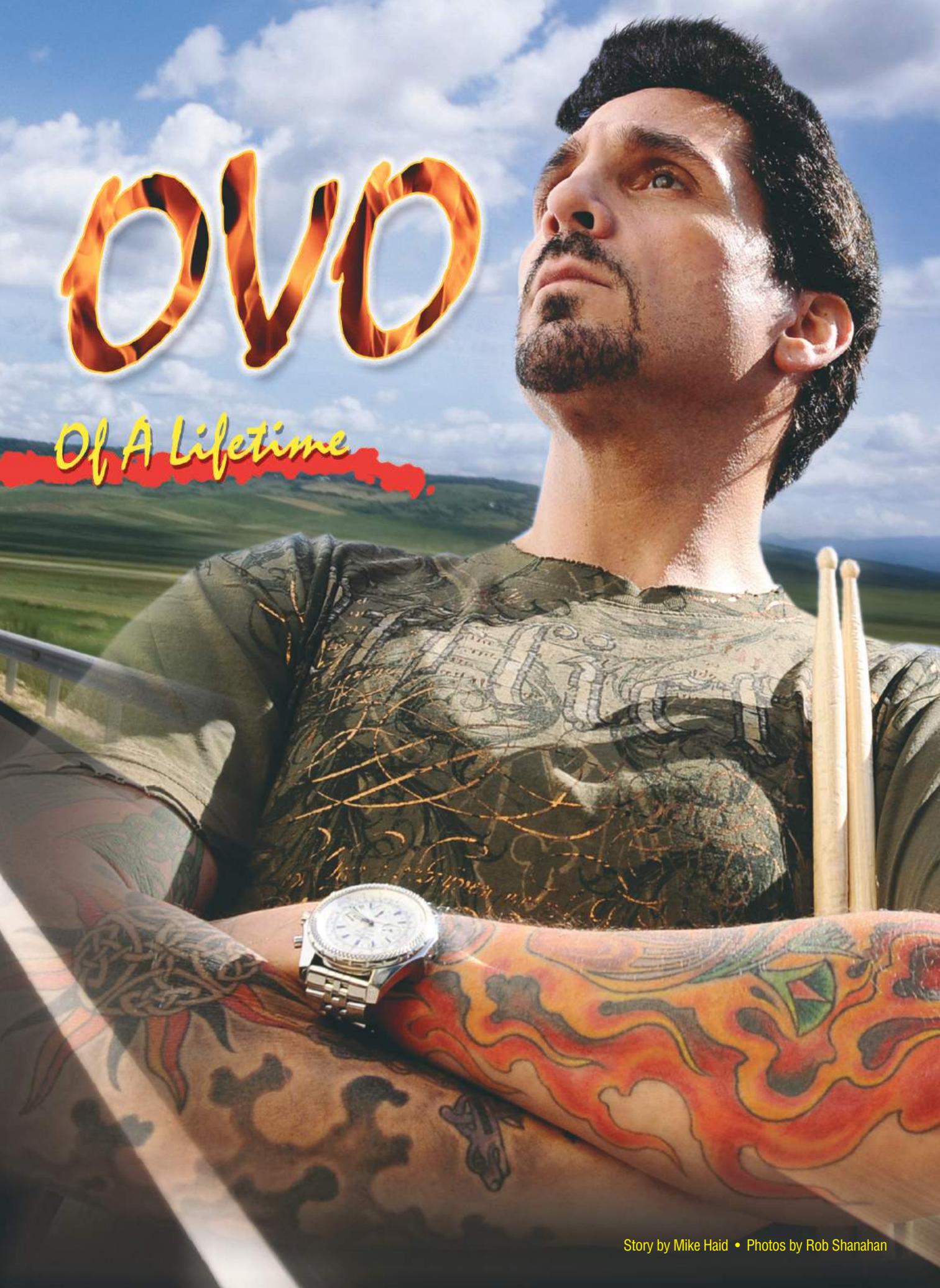
A particularly impressive talent of Castronovo's is his vocal ability. Deen convincingly sang lead vocals on two tracks from Journey's 2005 release, *Generations*. And when former lead vocalist Steve Augeri was experiencing problems with his voice on a recent tour, Castronovo took over the singing on several classic Journey tunes. In fact, Deen's vocal range is in the same league as former Journey vocal wiz Steve Perry. Don't believe it? Check out some of the live Journey clips on YouTube. (While you're there, check out clips of Deen's over-the-top drumming from his 1992 video, *High Performance Drumming*.)

It's immediately clear, upon listening to Castronovo's library of work on Shrapnel, why he's considered so influential by today's metal drummers. Likewise, it's easy to see, when listening to Castronovo in the pop-rock context of Journey, why he's kept the gig for a decade. His discipline for pop drumming and his humble, "team player" attitude speak volumes of why he's still in the driver's seat.

MD recently spoke with the forty-something Castronovo—who still possesses the exuberance of a giddy teenager—about drums, drumming, and his amazing career.

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MD: What's it been like working with Journey for a decade?

Deen: I pinch myself daily! [laughs] I'm so blessed to be with these guys. And to play Steve Smith's drum parts is a dream come true for me. Steve is a drum god to me, and has always been one of the most influential drummers in my career. I've been listening to and learning his licks since I was ten years old, and his playing still scares the hell out of me!

It's an honor for me to still be in this band after ten years. There are so many great players today, and I could easily be replaced by any one of them. The guys in Journey place their faith in me, and I never

take this gig for granted.

MD: I disagree with your statement that you could be easily replaced.

Deen: Thanks. But, there's one guy, Todd Sucherman, who plays with Styx, who scares the hell out of me with his drumming. Journey toured together with Styx, and that kid would wipe the floor with me on a nightly basis. He's one of the most underrated players out there. He's frightening to watch. When I listen to guys like Todd, I think to myself, "Man, I wanna play like that."

MD: Todd is a great player. But Styx is a bit more progressive than Journey. You've been around long enough to know that it takes a

lot of discipline and maturity to play what's called for in a more pop-oriented situation.

Deen: Yes, of course. But I'd love to be able to play like Todd, or Virgil Donati or Marco Minnemann. Those guys are from another planet. But, I know that with Journey, it's all about the song. It's always been about playing for the music with me. The one guy who really helped teach me that was Journey guitarist Neal Schon. He would tell me to save my chops for my solo record and just listen to the music and play only what the song needed.

MD: Do you have a close relationship with Neal?

Deen: I've been with Neal for twenty years.

I haven't played with another guitarist in twenty years, except for a little work with Zakk Wylde. Neal has taught me a lot, and he still inspires me.

MD: Let's go back in time and talk about your early years playing on all those high-energy shred recordings on Shrapnel.

Deen: My first band, Wild Dogs, was one of the first metal bands to record on Shrapnel, along with Steeler [Yngwie Malmsteen] and Exciter. Varney liked my playing and asked me to come in and play on a lot of the shredding guitarists' recordings. I'd play on each record for \$200, and usually do two records a day. I'd go home with \$400 bucks in my pocket. I was ecstatic to make that much money back then.

MD: So Mike Varney was really responsible for giving you your first big break.

Neal Schon On His Favorite Drummer

"Deen Castronovo is *such* an amazing talent," says Journey founding guitarist Neal Schon. "He's definitely one of the reasons our shows have a lot of life today. He and I work off of each other very well. He's like a brother to me, as well as an incredible drummer and bandmate.

"When I'm writing," Schon continues, "or when I really feel like just digging in, there's nothing better than sitting in a room with Deen and jamming. I think there's nothing musically he can't do, especially if you can explain what you want with the music. He gets it."

Schon is equally impressed by Deen's vocal abilities. "I'd like to see Don Henley, Phil Collins, or any other singing drummer out there cover 'Mother Father' as well as Deen does. He's absolutely mind-boggling to watch night after night. Plain and simple, Deen's the shit!"



Mark Rutherford



Deen's 2008 Tour Kit

Drums: DW Collector's Series in custom harlequin color-change lacquer

- A. 7x8 tom
- B. 6 1/2x14 Edge snare
- C. 7x10 tom
- D. 8x12 tom
- E. 10x14 tom
- F. 13x16 floor tom
- G. 14x18 floor tom
- H. 18x22 gong drum
(a standard bass drum with resonant head, mounted on rack with floor tom-style brackets)
- I. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 20" Crash Of Doom
- 2. 12" Trash Hats

- 3. 18" A Custom Projection crash
- 4. 20" Oriental China Trash
- 5. 9" K Custom Hybrid splash
- 6. 15" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats
- 7. 11" K Custom Hybrid splash
- 8. 20" A Custom Projection crash
- 9. 20" A Custom Projection crash
- 10. 20" Oriental China Trash
- 11. 9.5" Zil-Bel
- 12. 24" A Medium ride
- 13. 21" Sound Lab Custom crash-ride
- 14. 22" Oriental China Trash

Electronics: Roland, Alesis DM5 module
aa. Roland trigger pad

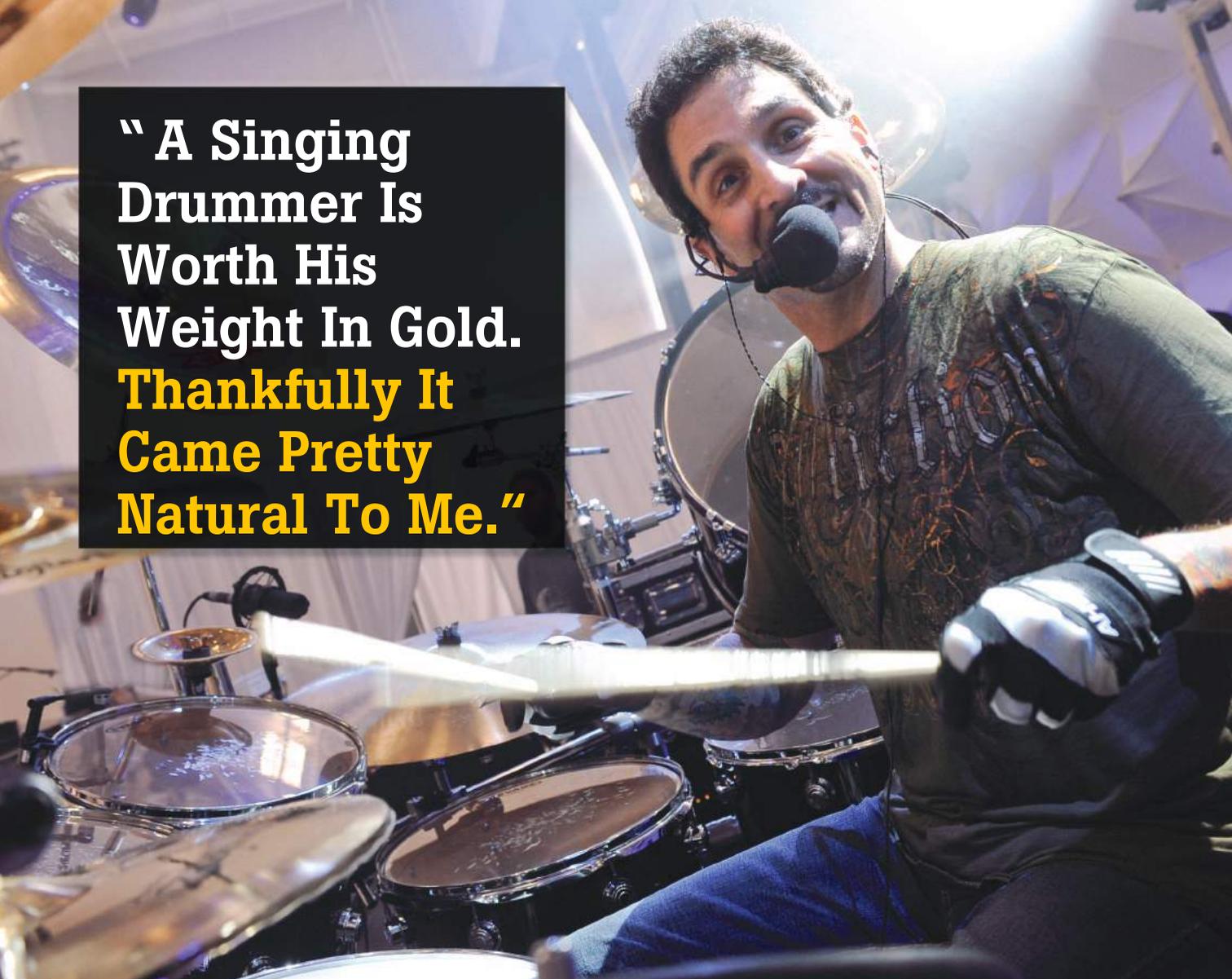
Hardware: DW chrome rack system, 9000 series hi-hat stand, double pedal, and throne (with

Buttkicker system attached)

Heads: Evans Reverse Power Center coated on snare batter, Hazy 300 snare-side, clear G2s on tom batters with clear G1s on bottoms, clear G2 on gong drum batter with DW black resonant, EQ2 on bass drum batters with Evans black resonant on fronts

Sticks: Regal Tip Deen Castronovo signature model

Mics: Audio-Technica ATM23HE on top and bottom of snare, Beyerdynamic Opus 88 on toms, Shure Beta 52 on gong drum, Shure Beta 52 and SM91 on bass drums (both mounted inside), Audio-Technica AT4050/CM5 for hi-hat, AT4033A for overheads and ride, custom-built vocal mic combo using a Crown CM311 and an AT element



**“ A Singing
Drummer Is
Worth His
Weight In Gold.
Thankfully It
Came Pretty
Natural To Me.”**

Deen: Yes. If it wasn't for Mike, and Neal Schon, I would not have a career today. Mike Varney discovered me, and Neal brought me into the big leagues. Varney gave me the freedom to play whatever I wanted on those shred records. I had total creative freedom, and several of the guitarists would usually ask my opinion about what grooves I thought would work best on their music. It was a fun and exciting time for me. I became known as "the fast thrash guy that played on the Shrapnel records." That was a huge door that opened for me.

MD: Many of the new generation of metal drummers cite you as a major influence from the work you did on those recordings.

Deen: That humbles me heavily. I know that many of these young guys that I've influenced can dust me! Guys like Chris Adler, Joey Jordison, and Gene Hoglan have taken it to a whole new level. My son is a drummer, and he's always turning me on to new

young metal guys that just blow me away. They scare the hell out of me because I can't play like that anymore! [laughs] I've been playing "Don't Stop Believin'" for so long that my left-foot speed is gone! [laughs]

MD: How did you develop your chops and speed in the early years?

Deen: Growing up, I was very hyperactive. At the time, doctors were prescribing Ritalin for kids with ADHD. My mother wouldn't allow that, so, instead, she got me a drumset. I started listening to Alice Cooper and KISS. In fact, KISS was my Beatles. I loved them.

Once I started playing, my mom took me to study with a well-known drum teacher in the area named Mel Brown. I didn't want to read, I just wanted him to show me how to play the stuff and I could learn by watching. I had a couple of other instructors along the way, but I'm mostly self-taught from listening to records. I then saw Rush opening for KISS, and that was it. Neil Peart became my

drum god. While the other kids were out playing sports and dating, I stayed home and learned all of the Rush songs. My ears were my teacher.

Then I got a hold of the Journey live LP, *Captured*, and that changed everything. When I heard Steve Smith's solo on that record, it totally changed my life. That's when I got into fusion like Brand X, UK, and Tony Williams. I couldn't understand what they were doing, but I could pick up snippets of things—especially from Steve Smith, because his approach was more pop-based. Basically, my chops were built by stealing Steve Smith, Neil Peart, and Terry Bozzio blind. [laughs]

MD: Who were the metal drummers of that era that inspired your need for speed?

Deen: Dave Lombardo, Lars Ulrich, and a Canadian drummer named Dan Beeler, of Exciter. Also, "Philthy Animal" Phil Taylor of Motörhead, and Les Binks with Judas Priest.



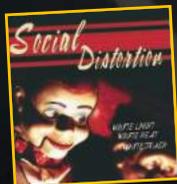
SHANNON LETO / 30 SECONDS TO MARS / 9300 SNARE STAND

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Castroville Cuts

DEEN'S BEST ON RECORD

| ARTIST | ALBUM |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Wild Dogs | Man's Best Friend |
| Wild Dogs | Reign Of Terror |
| Wild Dogs | Wild Dogs |
| Dr. Mastermind | Dr. Mastermind |
| Cacophony | Go Off! |
| Marty Friedman | Dragon's Kiss |
| Tony MacAlpine | Maximum Security |
| Tony MacAlpine | Premonition |
| Matthew Ward | Fortress |
| Joey Tafolla | Infra-Blue |
| Bad English | Bad English |
| Bad English | Backlash |
| Paul Rodgers | The Hendrix Set |
| Ozzy Osbourne | Ozzmosis |
| James Murphy | Convergence |
| James Murphy | Feeding The Machine |
| Social Distortion | White Light, White Heat, White Trash |
| various | Working Man—A Tribute To Rush |
| G/Z/R | Plastic Planet |
| G/Z/R | Black Science |
| Soul Sirkus | World Play |
| Journey | Arrival |
| Journey | Red 13 |
| Journey | Generations |
| The Hitmaker | Don't Stop Believin' |



Those were the main guys who inspired my metal chops.

MD: What was it like working with Ozzy Osbourne?

Deen: To join Ozzy's band was a dream come true. It was one of the greatest things that ever happened to me. Then, to get fired was the most heartbreaking thing that ever happened. I was not the same person I am now. And if I were Sharon Osbourne, I would have fired me too. I was a messed up, arrogant punk. I was full of myself. Ozzy mentioned in a magazine interview that I was the best drummer he'd heard since John Bonham. It was all going to my head. It taught me a big lesson in humility. Thank God, soon after that, I straightened my life out, and that's when Journey called.

MD: To make the leap from metal to Journey is a big jump stylistically. How were you able to adapt to the discipline of pop drumming so easily?

Deen: Even though I was a metal head, Journey was still one of my favorite bands. Steve Smith and Neal Schon are two of the most brilliant musicians on the planet. And Steve



Deen's Favorites

ARTIST

Alice Cooper
KISS
U.K.
Rush
Journey

ALBUM

Killer
Alive!
Night After Night
Hemispheres/All The World's A Stage
Infinity/Captured

DRUMMER

Neal Smith
Pefer Criss
Terry Bozzio
Neil Peart
Aynsley Dunbar/
Steve Smith
Dave Lombardo
Lars Ulrich
Raymond Herrera
Chris Kontos
Chris Adler
Zac Farro

Slayer
Metallica
Fear Factory
Machine Head
Lamb Of God
Paramore

Reign In Blood
Master Of Puppets
Demanufacture
Burn My Eyes
Sacrament
Riot/Misery Business

Perry was a vocal god. If you were a true musician, you understood and respected this. If you were just a hardcore metal head and didn't understand the complexities of what the guys in Journey were doing, then you just didn't get it. I studied Smith's parts religiously, and that's what helped me develop my pop drumming sensibility.

MD: So how did you develop your sound?

Deen: When I started playing in metal bands, I would take all of those fusion licks and put them into metal music, which nobody had

really done yet. Most metal guys were just hammering straight 16th-note double bass grooves. I remember taking Steve Smith's "Where Were You" drum lick [sings lick] and putting it in the middle of a fast double bass song, and it was the coolest thing ever! So, basically, I ended up using all of those Steve Smith chops on metal songs. I just kept listening to Smith on his Vital Information records, grabbing things that I could figure out, and incorporating them into my metal chops.

MD: When did you finally meet Steve Smith?

Deen: I met Steve while I was doing the Shrapnel recordings, and we became very close. I would go to his house and he would just dust me with his incredible chops!

MD: Let's talk about your amazing vocal abilities. I couldn't believe it when I saw the YouTube videos of you singing Steve Perry's parts on Journey songs. How did you learn to sing like that?

Deen: I was in a band when I was twelve years old and the other guys were in their twenties. Since I was the youngest guy and hadn't hit puberty yet, they said, "Okay, you have to sing these high songs." And that was it! So I learned to sing and play those early Journey songs when I was a teenager. Thankfully, my vocal range hasn't changed much since then.

MD: On the last Journey record, Generations, you sang lead vocals on two tracks. All the other bandmembers sang lead vocals as well. Were you thinking of pulling away from the focus on a lead vocalist and making Journey more of a total band effort?

Deen: We just wanted to do something different. We'd been doing the same old thing for a while, the record label had dropped us, and we decided to do our own thing, without any label interference. It was fun, and I felt like I

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DEEN CASTRONOVO

really got to play more on that record and incorporate some of my own personality into the music.

MD: What advice can you give to drummers about singing and playing?

Deen: It's a huge plus! I'm like the band's secret weapon. If somebody goes down, I'm there to pick up the slack. I don't know how I'm still able to sing the high notes, but I feel blessed to have that gift.

A singing drummer is worth his weight in gold. Thankfully it came pretty natural to me. But I've noticed that since I've been singing in Journey, especially trying to replicate Steve Perry's perfect vocal parts, that my drumming has taken a back seat to my vocal chores. Because if the vocals to classic Journey tunes aren't absolutely perfect, the fans will crucify you.

Breathing has become the most crucial element for playing and singing. I have to find just the right place to breathe to hit the high notes and still be able to pull off the drum licks and have it all sound comfortable. So I have

A promotional advertisement for the Pearl Signature Series Snare Drum. On the left, a portrait of Morgan Rose, a member of the band Tenacious D, is shown. He has long dreadlocks and is wearing a black t-shirt with a skull graphic. On the right, a close-up of the snare drum is shown, featuring a green metallic finish with alien graphics and the Pearl Signature Series logo. The text "GET YOUR ALIEN FREAK ON!" is written in a large, stylized, pink and yellow font across the top right. The Pearl logo is at the bottom left, with the website URL www.pearldrums.com below it.

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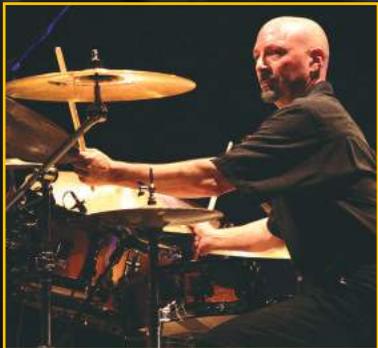
Journey To Journey

Steve Smith On Deen Castronovo

"I first heard Deen on a very obscure record that Rod Morgenstein told me about called *Wild Dogs*," recalls drum god Steve Smith. "I remember being very impressed with his drumming. Later, in 1988, I met Deen in the San Francisco Bay area, after I played on Tony MacAlpine's first record. Tony hired Deen to play the music live and then record his next few albums. I was totally knocked out by his high energy, over-the-top double bass drum approach.

"One time we played a drum duet at the Anaheim NAMM show. To prepare for that, I picked up his instructional video, learned a bunch of his licks, and then wrote a duet that incorporated some of Deen's wild double bass ideas. I recorded a demo of it, sent it to him, and he memorized it. We rehearsed it on a table top in the 'dressing room' before the gig and went out and played it for about 1,000 people, and he nailed it!

"I've seen Deen with Journey, and I think he does a fantastic job of playing the music.



Andrew Lepley

It's true that he 'faithfully' plays many of the drum parts that I recorded on the original albums, but he also has his own interpretation of others. I've always encouraged him to stretch out and play his own thing.

"Deen loves playing with Journey. He brings so much positive energy and enthusiasm to the gig, and that is so important for the band."

to split my brain in half to focus on the vocals and the drumming at the same time.

MD: Do you find it hard to sing and play over certain rhythmic styles?

Deen: Shuffles! Also, it's a challenge for me to sing on a tune like "After The Fall," which has a funky groove. Smith played some wicked grooves in that tune, which I want to play perfectly, but I also have to try to sing Perry's part perfectly. That's a major challenge.

MD: How much will you be singing now that you have a new vocalist, Arnel Pineda?

Deen: So far, since Arnel is such a monster vocalist, I've only had to sing a couple of tunes. But if they need me, I'm there!

MD: The new three-disc set, *Revelation*, sounds like the band is returning to the straight-ahead classic pop tune approach, musically playing it safe, as opposed to *Generations*, where it sounded like the band was letting go and stretching out a bit.

Deen: That's our producer, Kevin Shirley.

In the studio you have Neal Schon, Jonathan Cain, and Kevin Shirley. All three have different ideas of what it should sound like.

But ultimately it's Kevin's call as to what he wants me to play for the song. And what

THE MANGINI CODE

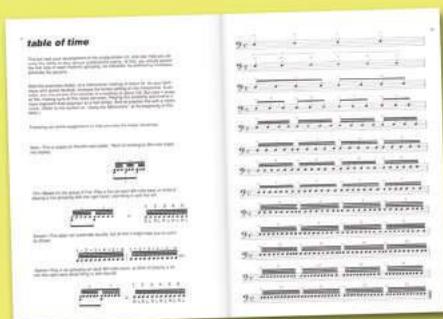
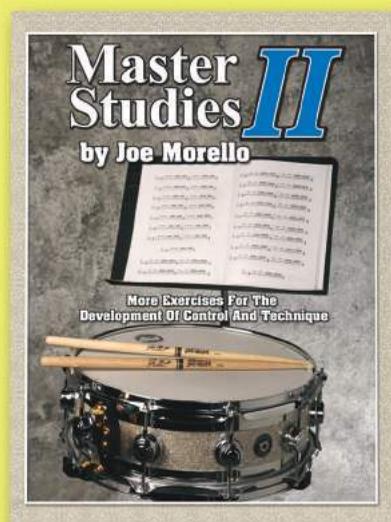
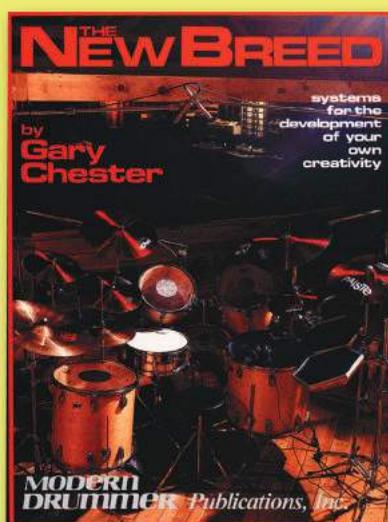
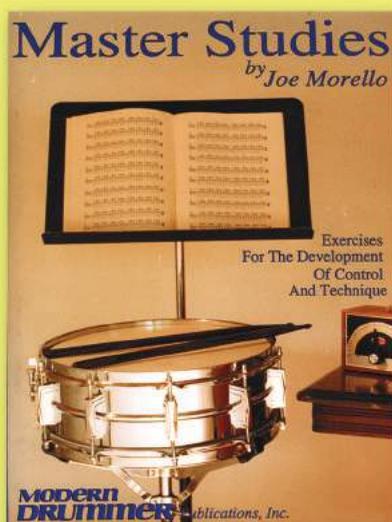
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DEEN CASTRONOVO

he had me play this time ended up being perfect for the songs.

I want to make everybody happy. So if Kevin's happy, and the band's happy, I'm happy. On the Generations CD, I played whatever I wanted. But I've always played for what the producer wanted as opposed to what I thought should be played. They're paying me to do what they think is best for the music, and I respect that. Kevin Shirley got us a Grammy nomination, so I'm happy to give him what he wants. At the end of the day, everyone's happy, and you get to go home with a check in your hand.

MD: Do you get more freedom to stretch out on the live gigs?

Deen: Yeah, they give me a lot of room. But there are times when I get a little too goofy and I'll get that eye from Neal. He's like my big brother, and I can read him like a book. We'll be having a good night and he'll look at me a certain way and we'll just tear it up together. We call it "wiggly-head." When he stares at me and starts wiggling his head a certain way, I know it's time to tear it up. But if he's having a bad night, and he gives me the look, I know I need to stay at home and play it straight.

We're tight, like Eddie and Alex Van Halen. I'm like the little brother he never wanted! [laughs]

MD: What do you think are the biggest differences between what you bring to Journey and what Steve Smith brought to the music?

Deen: Neal once told me that Smith brought a strong swinging groove to the music that always felt great. He said that I put the heavy rock into the music and really make the tunes rock. I am nowhere near the caliber drummer that Steve Smith is. I'm a good rock drummer, but I swing like a brick! I've got the finesse of a jackhammer.

[laughs] That's the way I learned to play, to just go out and kill it. That's what Neal likes about my drumming.

MD: What was it like coming into Journey, knowing you were replacing one of your drumming heroes?

Deen: It was a huge honor, and it was scary. There were parts of songs that I still wasn't sure how to play. So I called up Steve and asked him if he could show me a few parts that he played, because I wanted them to be correct. I went to his house, and for a couple of hours he showed me the exact parts to several songs. After working on the tunes,

we just hung out and he played. He showed me some techniques he was working on and played me some of the new Vital Information stuff. He made me feel like a brother, and he's always embraced me as a fellow drummer.

I have so much respect for the parts Steve created for the Journey tunes, and I play them, to this day, out of respect for him. Because to me, his parts were perfect, and if it ain't broke, don't fix it! He'll come to some of our shows and I'll ask him if I'm still doing his parts correctly, and he's always very complimentary.

MD: Let's get back to your technique. How did you develop such strong double bass chops?

Deen: My concept was to take Bozzio licks and Steve Smith licks and try to play them at warp speed. Basically doing quads, between hands and feet, and practicing them from slow to fast tempos until they felt comfortable.

MD: Are you playing two bass drums or using a double pedal now?

Deen: Since joining Journey, because of all the mic inputs needed for vocals, keys, etc. in our live shows, I use a double pedal, but I

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have two bass drums up there for the big-kit look. I personally don't like the way a double pedal feels. I prefer to feel a bass drum under my left foot. There's a slight delay in the response that I don't like. I can't get the "thud" that I want on my left side. Thank goodness for DW, because they've been able to construct a double pedal that does take away a bit of the "play" in the feel. But I still prefer two bass drums.

MD: Do you play heel-up on both pedals?

Deen: Yes. I position my foot about halfway

down the pedal board. That's where I generate all my speed. I learned that from watching Tommy Aldridge when he played with Whitesnake. For rock double bass technique, there aren't many guys who can touch him. For ballads, I slide my foot up a little more to get a bit more finesse and not as much "thud."

MD: Do you solo in the Journey live shows?

Deen: No. I hate soloing now. I just don't know what to do anymore. In fact, the reason I was so much better at soloing back in the '80s was because I was doing clinics

all the time. I would do ten clinics a month and my chops were on. After not soloing for ten years, to have the guys in Journey spring a solo on me in the middle of a show...I'd be lost!

From being comfortable in Journey for ten years, I haven't challenged myself to push my technique to a higher level. I don't really do double strokes much, and I don't use traditional grip. I actually called Todd Sucherman a few months ago and told him I wanted to come down to his house and have him show me some stuff. I haven't done it yet, but I plan on doing it. I feel like it's time for me to get some new information and get inspired again. The things that Todd can do seem unattainable to me, but I want him to inspire me to open up my mind a little and bring some fresh ideas into my playing.

MD: How much do you practice now?

Deen: When I'm at home after a tour, I don't play. I immerse myself in my family. I don't play again until it's time to rehearse for the next tour. It takes about a week for me to get back on track. I focus on my family when I'm home because I'm gone a lot, and they deserve my attention when I'm home. I do drum tech for my seventeen-year-old son. I watch him play this intense metal, and he blows me away. He's going to kick my butt as a player.

MD: There's a fine art to mastering a strong groove in pop music. And you've been able to capture that magic by the discipline you have attained in Bad English and Journey. What have you learned about the art of pop drumming?

Deen: Play for the song and play with your bandmates. Have fun! I love what I do. After ten years, I still come off stage saying, "I love my job." I hope that I'll end my career playing with Journey. So attaining monster chops, at this point in my career, is not going to help me do what I do with that music. I would like to challenge myself again just for fun. But I'll always remember when I joined Bad English, and Journey's manager, Herbie Herbert, told me, "Chops belong in the butcher shop. If you're thinking, you're stinking. Just play for the song."



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Deep Purple**

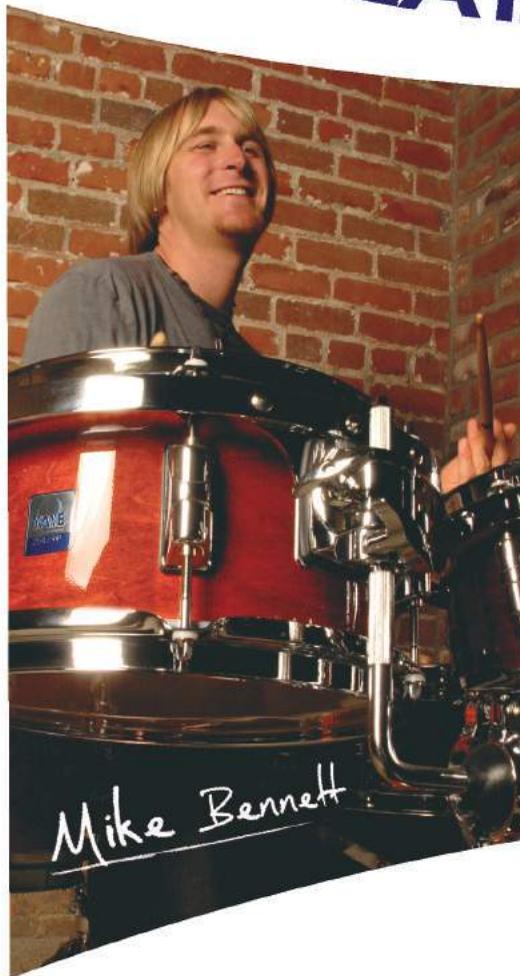
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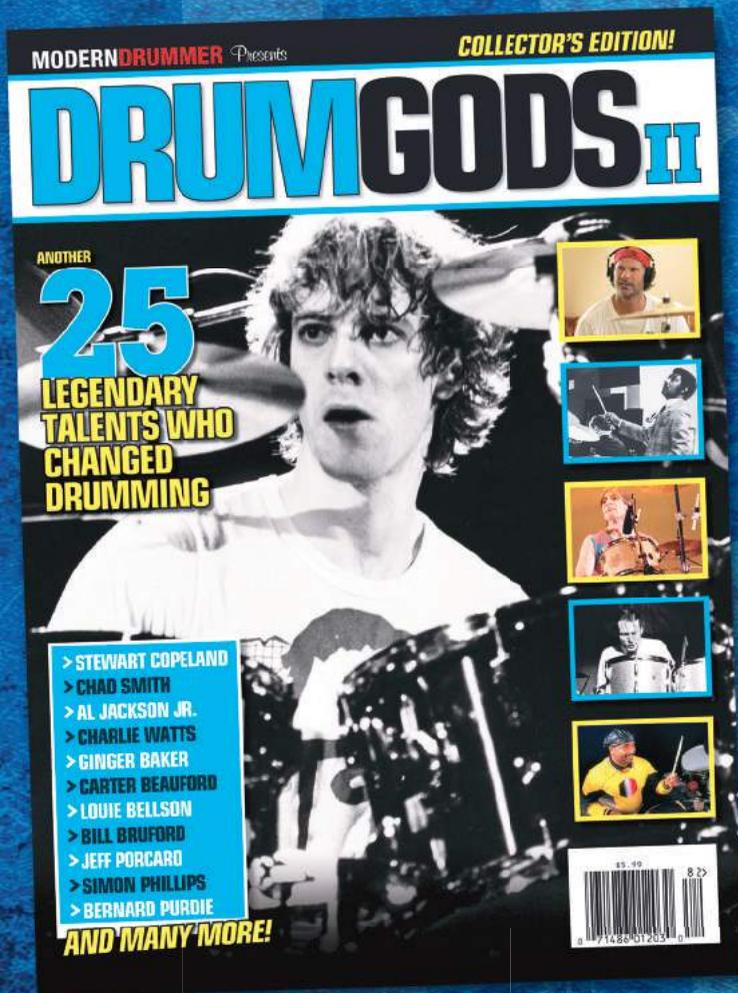
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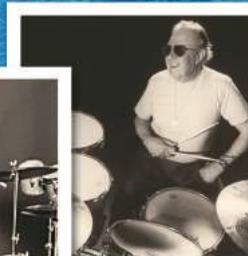
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ADAM DEITCH

U B E R F U N K

LETTUCE'S GROOVE MASTER GUIDES US ON A TRIP DOWN FUNK'S MEMORY LANE WITH THE GROUP'S PERCOLATING NEW ALBUM, *RAGE!*

If you think of funk as a single strain of music, it might be time to reconsider. There's JB's style. Go-go. Second-line. Boogaloo. Afrobeat. Four-on-the-floor. Linear. Rudimental. Bay Area funk. The Minnesota sound. Behind-the-beat grooves. Up-tempo jams. Tight. Loose. Joints from the '60s. The '70s. The '80s....

Each of funk's many subgenres—and let's not forget hip-hop, a groovy world unto itself—has its own language, complete with guidelines for proper grammar and punctuation. Like all languages, these are living, breathing entities that evolve over the years through usage both traditional and slangy. (After all, in music as in language, what begins as slang often works its way into official acceptance.)

It can take a lifetime to become fluent in any one of the above idioms, but Adam Deitch is multilingual. If some people are experts in the Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish), his realm is the Funk languages (James Brown, The Meters, Tower Of Power).

STORY BY MICHAEL PARILLO
PHOTOS BY PAUL LA RAIN



Uniting a slew of these styles in one ruthlessly funky horn-driven ensemble is Deitch's band Lettuce. The core of the group, which includes guitarist Eric Krasno and keyboardist Neal Evans of Soulive, met as teenagers at Berklee College of Music and has been together for fifteen years and counting. "It's eight guys having a blast," Deitch says, "the sound of true fun. We're all best friends—we're homies whether we play or not."

Given Deitch's packed schedule, there's plenty of "not." Since hitting the road for a few years with Average White Band, the drummer has made two records with John Scofield (2002's *Uberjam* and 2003's *Up All Night!*) and has done sessions with Justin Timberlake, DJ Quik, and The Fugees, among many other artists. He's also logged countless tours with Scofield, sometimes in a trio with keyboardist John Medeski.

And now, after two eventful, rhythm-crammed years circling the globe with Wyclef Jean, Deitch is taking a break from long stints of road work to focus on songwriting, production, and his hip-hoppin' Adam Deitch Project. Home in New York City, he'll continue to offer

lessons to a lucky bunch of students as well.

But that said, there's gigging fun to be had—if only in spurts—with Lettuce, which recently released its third LP, *Rage!*, a romp through many of funk's most exciting subgenres that often evokes the styles of specific classic bands. Here, Deitch could be considered a curator as well as a player; as the son of not one but two honest-to-goodness funk drummers, Bobby and Denise, he has groove in his blood and radiates an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of booty-shaking music, from then to now, from jazz to hip-hop.

"My mom and dad had so many of those records," Adam says, "and I know what has and hasn't been done." With a laugh he adds, "Well, it's still gonna take another forty years to get it." Deitch's historical perspective doesn't just manifest itself in the rhythm tracks; he wrote or co-wrote about half of the tunes on *Rage!* "I feel I know how everyone in Lettuce shines," he says. "Duke Ellington wrote everyone's name on their parts—he knew what they could do and what made them special. So I wrote music coming from that perspective."

MD: It's pretty cool to have funk drummers as parents. Do they still play?

Adam: They still play. They're my number one and two influences.

MD: In no particular order?

Adam: In no particular order. I would not be the same without either one of them.

MD: Could you sum up their styles?

Adam: Mom has a Bernard Purdie, Grady Tate thing—a real old-school, funky groove. She's got the mellow pocket. And Dad, his love is horn bands—Earth, Wind & Fire, Tower Of Power. And he plays big band.

MD: Has grooving always been your natural direction?

Adam: Yeah. I'm a firm believer that if you immerse somebody in a certain style of records when they're young—play it while they're in the crib—it does something. What made me want to play was playing along with those records. You play along with a Tower Of Power record and you feel like you're driving an eighteen-piece funk band, or whatever they are.

MD: Is there any advice you could give to, say, a rock drummer who wants to get deeper into funk playing?

Adam: Knowledge is power. Know those Zigaboo Modeliste records with The Meters, know Steve Ferrone with Average White Band. I give my students a list of fifteen or twenty records that are important to me as far as what I think defines all the subgenres of funk: "Go get these records now. There's nothing I can tell you." I refuse to let me be the sole influence.

If you want to be a straight-ahead guy, you should not only learn all those songs in the Real Book but learn the lyrics, learn who the composers were, and get into that 1930s, 1940s songbook. It's all that knowledge you put into learning those songs that

allows you to improvise over them.

It's the same thing in funk. You have to know the vocabulary. So I break down the different styles—Clyde Stubblefield versus Jaboo; Steve Gadd and Harvey Mason, the marching-band guys; and Zigaboo and James Black bringing the second-line thing from the snare to the hi-hat. We go around the world and break down as many cats as

possible, even up to the '80s guys, like the drummer for Cameo and bands like Slave and Brick.

MD: Do you talk about learning to play behind the beat?

Adam: That's always in relation to the style. If you lay behind the beat on an Earth, Wind & Fire tune like "Getaway," for instance, it's not right. It's up-tempo, it's energetic.



ADAM'S LETTUCE SPECS

This is Deitch's setup for Lettuce only; he changes it depending on the gig.

Drums: Tama Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune

- A. 14x14 floor tom (not in photo)
- B. 5x10 snare
- C. 7x14 snare
- D. 8x10 tom
- E. 16x16 tom
- F. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" K Constantinople Dry hi-hats
- 2. 16" K Constantinople crash
- 3. 20" K prototype
- 4. 12" K Constantinople crash (smaller than cymbal in photo)

Percussion: Factory Metal Percussion, Ghanaian cowbell, Brazilian pandeiro, assorted walnut shakers

Hardware: Tama, including an Iron Cobra bass drum pedal (medium-loose spring tension), Vater Bomber beater

Heads: Evans Genera Dry coated snare batter with Hazy 200 snare-side (tuned high, with passport and wallet for muffling), clear G2s on tops of toms with clear G1s underneath, EMAD on bass drum (batter and front, no hole on front)

Sticks: Vater 5B hickory model with wood tip

MD: How can you keep things groovy at higher tempos?

Adam: I was in a band in college that rehearsed from 5:00 until 11:00 seven nights a week—full-out sweating, dying rehearsals. You just build it, man. You know where to switch to fingers, where to switch to wrist, where to use your arms. If you're hearing the melody, the bass line, the horn parts, even if they're sparse—as opposed to thinking about

what you're playing—it helps with the momentum. You gotta be on automatic pilot when you're up that fast.

MD: What about the second-line feel, like "Ideofunk" on Uberjam—did that come easily?

Adam: I covered Meters tunes in junior high and high school, and I was hip to it a little bit. And then I played JazzFest. You go to New Orleans and you're just swamped—literally swamped [laughs]—with the most groovin'

players you'll ever hear in your life. I started going every year. I'd completely immerse myself—eat nothing but fried oysters and hang out. The drumming is insignificant compared to the culture. That goes for hip-hop, rock, and reggae too.

I was sitting in on Bourbon Street, playing shuffles with all these old cats, and it started to make sense. I tell my students: Okay, you just played a second-line groove. Envision

"YOU'VE GOTTA BE A CHAMELEON SOUND-WISE, KIT-WISE, AND LET YOUR PLAYING BE THE COMMON GROUND."





WYCLEF JEAN'S Carnival Of Rhythm



MD tracked down hip-hop artist/producer Wyclef Jean to ask a few questions about his funky drummer, Adam Deitch.

MD: What has Adam brought to your group?

Wyclef: I'm from the band era. I went to Five Towns College, and I just love musicians. When I play with *musicians*, I see what they can add. Adam complements everybody, from Jerry [Wonder] on the bass to Arden [Altino] on the keyboards. He makes it sound full. I call him the man with a thousand hands. I don't know how he's able to do all these sounds at one time.

MD: He needed to have a lot of styles under his belt to play with you.

Wyclef: Yes. I taught him the compas style and a lot of rasin, which is roots music from Haiti. He picks it up very, very fast. He impressed us. Adam, by far, is the best drummer we've ever played with. We grew up with church music, and a lot of that compas is the natural swing in Haiti. So to see him play that, we definitely think he takes it to another level.

MD: Adam said you're pretty handy on the kit yourself. How's your drumming?

Wyclef: Man, Adam is an incredible drummer. I just play the vibe, you know what I'm saying? When I play the drums, I play like I'm in the mountains of Haiti. [laughs] I'm more of a viber. Adam's the player.

taking a can of pig lard and dumping it on your snare. Now play the same thing. And they always play it greasier. It's gotta be greasy...and imperfect.

MD: When you're sitting in with people you've never met, what's your attitude?

Adam: That's the history of Lettuce, actually, sitting in: "Let us play for a minute..."

You get thrown into the fire, and it builds character. You feel people out and keep your head up. You don't get into yourself. Playing with your head down is when you're with the same guys for thirty years and you're in the zone. I'm an eye-contact player. The jam-band scene knows me as the sit-in guy. I love it.

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MD: Do you have a preferred tuning for funk?

Adam: It's all style specific. With the Dap-Kings, the drum sound on their records is the standard for the '60s vibe. Sometimes it's having a Steve Gadd sound, where everything's tight and taped up. There's also the big, open sound where you want to Bonham out. I don't have a preference. You've gotta be a chameleon sound-wise, kit-wise, and let your playing be the common ground.

MD: Those concepts come into play on Rage! On each tune, you recall a different style.

Adam: I tried to. We got close. Our engineer, Joel Hamilton, has all the records at the studio. So we'd throw on a Bootsy Collins record from '78. James Brown live from '61...a Curtis Mayfield record, and just try to get vibes.

MD: Is it different to drive such a big band as opposed to a trio or quartet?

Adam: I can live out my Earth, Wind & Fire/Tower Of Power fantasy with Lettuce. Your heart's pounding in your chest because you know those horns are coming and they're gonna be sop! You can write that: s-o-p, sop! They're the kings of the sops, those guys. Everyone in the band has uncanny, drummer-like rhythm. They're funkier than me. Ryan [Zoidis], the sax player, snaps his fingers on 2 and 4, and you'd better be right where his hand is. It's the most fun you could possibly have—playing with a bunch of drummers.

MD: Were you thinking about specific bands and drummers for each song?



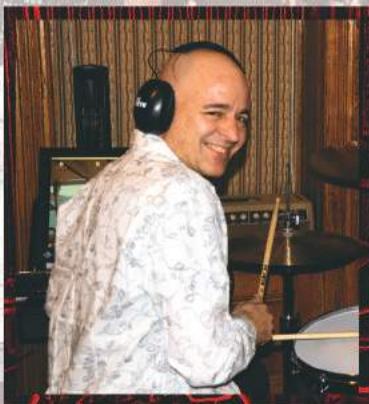
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| John Scofield | Uberjam |
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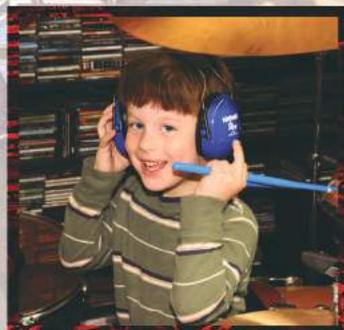


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| Maceo & All The King's Men | Doin' Their Own Thing | Melvin Parker |
| Herbie Hancock | all | Mike Clark |
| Tower Of Power | East Bay Grease | David Garibaldi |
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Adam: They're always in the back of your mind. Obviously, with "Last Supper" .David Garibaldi plays an intro to, I believe it's "Squib Cakes." I wanted to write a song and horn hits based around that vibe.

MD: You really take off at the end.

Adam: I wanted to take a solo, but I didn't want to just blow. I tried to leave space, hit the hits, and be exciting and musical about it. And then the guys say, "Do another take, but go crazy!" It ended up having a couple little fills...we call it "hilgas." You know: "hilga, hilga, hilga, hilga..." I try not to

hilga too often. [laughs] I appreciate a good hilga when it's appropriate.

MD: What inspired "Makin' My Way Back Home" ?

Adam: That's a go-go tune. [Washington] D.C. go-go: Chuck Brown, Trouble Funk. I love when I get a student, a jazz cat, and I ask, "Do you know about D.C. go-go?" And they're like, "No, I never heard of it." We go through it and then they go buy all the records. I get a lot of calls: "Thank you so much, man."

The groove is unstoppable. That's where

hip-hop came from. Obviously hip-hop sampled James Brown, but go-go was in between James Brown and hip-hop. If you go back to the early hip-hop days, like '79 through '82, most of those records, like Kurtis Blow's, were sampled go-go records. If you look up Trouble Funk on YouTube, you're gonna see the funkier shit ever, and you'll see how hip-hop came from that. It's early rapping, and it's all about the crowd. It's not about "I'm so introspective." It's not a concert—it's a party. And that vibe is where Lettuce is at.

MD: On "Speakeasy," I imagine you were thinking about The Meters.

Adam: Absolutely. The New Orleans vibe. I don't get a chance to play that stuff that often, and I was really looking forward to doing my thing with it, which was basically Zigaboo Modeliste's thing. I tried to get the open sound. Zig is very chordal, he's non-linear, and I think people don't grasp that too much. Stanton [Moore] and Russell Batiste get it. When he was a little kid, Russell used to fall asleep in front of Zig's kit at Meters rehearsals.

MD: You're using "chordal" in the sense that a chord is several notes at once?

Adam: Yeah. You're hitting the snare drum and bass drum at the same time, or the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum at the same time. It's the opposite of what Garibaldi and guys like Mike Clark do. They're super linear, which is the shit also. But on a tune like "Speakeasy," I tried to play all the drums together a lot of the time and get that thick sound, that swampy, pig's-grease thing. Fried-oyster feel. [laughs] With rémoulade sauce.

MD: When you're not used to it, it's tough to play bass and snare together, like four-on-the-floor.

Adam: Right. One of the first things I do with my students is play a P-Funk-style four-on-the-floor. I say I want the snare and bass drum to sound like one instrument: sop! I'm still trying to get it right. Frankie "Kash" Waddy, who played with Parliament, is the four-on-the-floor king. It's this chordal feeling, and it takes a minute to get that.

MD: "Need To Understand" and "Sam Huff's Flying Rage Machine" make me think of James Brown.

Adam: Absolutely. "Need To Understand" is just James all day: "JB's Monorail," Funky People era. "Sam Huff's" is a little more

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Prince—and Morris Day & The Time—than James. Well, Prince is James. But it's his take. Prince, if you're reading this, keep that James Brown vibe alive, baby. It's all up to you. And call Lettuce—we're waiting.

[laughs] That's my dream: Prince, with Lettuce. I just want to put that out there.

MD: Your choice of snare for each track is crucial. How many did you use?

Adam: Probably four or five. I just tried to go with the correct musical choice. We're doing the Tower thing, I bring out the thin popper. We're doing the New Orleans thing, I want a nice wide-open vibe.

MD: Let's switch gears and talk about Wyclef Jean.

Adam: I just did two years with Wyclef. He and his cousin [bassist/producer] Jerry Wonder brought me around to all these islands. I thought I'd been everywhere with Scofield, who's Mr. Europe, Mr. Asia. But with 'Clef we're hittin' Barbados, we're hittin' Haiti... And he says he wants every good band from each place to open up: "Adam, I want you to see this drummer." All these island guys that no one's ever heard of. Killin' compas drummers from Haiti, playing some brand-new shit. The soca stuff, the

way they play it live is incredibly bad.

We'd do this forty-five-minute calypso/soca thing every night where my armpits were on fire. And then, toward the end of the tour, we'd go out for the encore, and he'd say, "This is my drummer, Adam Deitch!" And here I am taking a ten-minute solo in front of a hip-hop/pop crowd that didn't come to see a drum solo. I love playing for non-musicians. When musicians are staring at you, it's hard to break the thing of: What are they thinking?

MD: Sounds like an amazing worldly education.

Adam: Wyclef just kicked my ass, man. He would teach me traditional Haitian music, and he would get on the drums and show me the really rough-around-the-edges version of the stuff. Things I'd never seen before, really unorthodox. And he'll play stuff on guitar where I have no idea where it is. They'll all start laughing: "White boy doesn't know where it is!" They're playing off the "e" of 1, the "e" of 2... Where's 1? There's no way you can tell. So they trained me over years of laughing at me. They've enjoyed the ride of teaching me as much as I've enjoyed learning. Great guys, great musicians.

MD: In terms of mechanics and feel, is there a difference between playing hip-hop and funk?

Adam: Well, certain funk songs have a hip-hop beat. Like Sly Stone [sings "Sing A Simple Song"], if you go to the drum track, that is what hip-hop is. And it's a funk tune. So in certain ways they cross over. The new shit in hip-hop—bounce and crunk music—is very syncopated. It's almost Garibaldi-esque hi-hat stuff on top of half-time grooves. They definitely differ in sound. The bass drum's got to be accentuated.

I was just hanging with Questlove at a session the other day. They invited Eric Krasno to sit in, so he brought me and I got to see Questlove just in a room playing. What a sound, what a vibe. And his fills are hip-hop specific, meaning he knows the vocabulary of what's acceptable, what producers do to do a fill.

I embrace the entire spectrum of hip-hop, from its inception and the very early super-quantized, robotic style of Africa Bambaataa. And then you have the '80s and '90s with the triplet vibe, and you have J Dilla, which is more human and loose. Then there's what's on the radio right now, the half-time

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groove with the electro double time. It's vast—that stuff is so different from the way Questlove plays. He does the more organic stuff, the Tribe Called Quest and De La Soul era.

It's always gonna change, because hip-hop's about the drums, and the drums are intertwined with the dance. When the dance changes, the drums gotta change. That's what makes it African in a sense—back in the day, rhythms went with steps. That's where hip-hop's at now, with Soulja Boy and all that.

MD: When you're producing a track, is it hard to decide whether to play or to program the drums?

Adam: If it's for, say, The Pussycat Dolls, am I really trying to force live drums down their throats? Not really. At the same time, you can do cool things with live drums. Here's what I did yesterday: I played drums over a whole tune, and then I used the mute button and only used a little bit of the live drums, in and out.

You're gonna hear live drums on my stuff. I'm sneaking it in. I want it to be more a part of urban music, but it has to be done correctly and in context. That's what I

feel my calling is as far as producing: getting live drums heard more in hip-hop, R&B, and dance pop, and not being so damn "programming only." I'm a programmer, but I'm a mixed-media man. I mean, you get some snare ghost notes underneath your sampled clap, and all of a sudden your track comes to life. I'll put the mic right up in there and do some ghost notes only and add that to the track.

MD: Like all good funk drummers, you use ghost notes well to deepen the groove.

Adam: It's three-dimensional. And also, not using ghost notes. Some guys are stuck on ghost notes, but in certain hip-hop situations they aren't needed. When I'm playing Fugees songs with Wyclef, I'm not forcing ghost notes. I'm playing 2 and 4 only. So the ability to switch 'em on and off is important.

MD: Do you ever try to make live drums sound programmed?

Adam: Live, Scofield would give me a drum 'n' bass thing sometimes, and I saw that as more of a challenge to sound programmy than just to blow fast fusion. Which is what I hear a lot from the drum 'n' bass cats: an excuse to play fast fusion. I love all that, but that's not what drum 'n' bass is. Drum

'n' bass is programmers' music.

MD: How do you bring drum 'n' bass to the kit? It's fast...

Adam: Yeah, it's up there, and I do more finger control. I like doing 8th notes on the cymbal and keeping that steady, almost like a jazz ride, and having a dialog between the left hand and right foot. The ride is what's gonna keep it going. As soon as you start breaking that up and doing your Garibaldi stuff, that's when it becomes fusion. I like having that ride be the workhorse, the support rhythm, and the foot and the hand do the other shit.

MD: With The Adam Deitch Project, are you on the kit the whole time?

Adam: Yeah, I'm on the kit. A lot of tracks that I produce at home are way too left field for radio play. ADP combines the tracks with live drumming and the super-sub bass of [Dub Trio's] Stu Brooks. The keyboard player, Borahm Lee, has all these amazing samples and sounds. He can do a DJ Spooky, DJ Shadow kind of vibe and still not play too much—it's not a fusion band. It's not about chords, and there are hardly any melodies. We're trying to figure out what's going on in the year 4000 or 5000. It's a musical cyborg.

MD: And then we have Fyre Dept., your production team with Eric Krasno.

Adam: For the first time in my life I've had a good touring gig and said, Listen, I have the responsibility to go make these records. Narada Michael Walden is a big influence. He's a great drummer, but he also went on to produce Whitney Houston. He really did it as a drummer-producer. And Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis were in Prince's band playing keys. They had a choice: Either start working with Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson's little sister, who may or may not become a star, or stay on the road with Prince. They decided to make that record, and now they're household names as producers.

So I'm going to continue playing drums with Lettuce and ADP, but I'm looking forward to building a thing. I love the road—it's been a solid ten years of heavy plane riding. I look forward to doing it again, but right now it's about making these records and getting live drums into the pop/hip-hop stratosphere.



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When rock 'n' roll emerged in the mid-1950s, it was not a fully formed style of its own, but rather a patchwork of influences thrown together with the brute force of an atom smasher. One of the most important elements within rock's musical hodgepodge was a Southern style known as rockabilly. By way of a small Memphis-based record label called Sun, rockabilly captured the world's ear and unleashed some of early rock's biggest stars, among them Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, and Roy Orbison.

In its initial form, rockabilly spent only a few years, between 1954 and 1960, in the spotlight. But it proved to be one of the most enduring and influ-

ential styles to emerge from rock's nascency. Elvis Presley—rock's first superstar—began his career hollering out rockabilly at Sun. And rock legends from every generation thereafter, particularly the bands of the British Invasion, have always listed rockabilly as one their chief influences.

Rockabilly's success was not based on the technical proficiency of its players. In fact, most were barely out of high school, and largely self-taught. Rather the music's appeal came from the raw energy and instinct with which it was delivered. The rockabilly drew from black rhythm & blues, hill-billy boogie, Gospel, and country, then forged all these elements into their own original style. This was youth music, untainted by the glossy production value of the mainstream music biz, and it stormed the world from the ground up, creating shock waves not unlike later "street" styles such as punk or hip-hop.

Sun's contributions to rock music resonate to this day. The raw recording style and slapback echo developed by founder Sam Phillips rewrote the book on what a rock record could and should sound like. Incendiary rockabilly hits like "Blue Suede Shoes" helped establish the electric guitar as the dominant instrument in rock, and forever imprinted the twang of country onto the American pop culture psyche. Finally, Sun's artists—many of whom penned their own songs—sent a very populist message to the youth of the world: Anyone could write and play their own music; you didn't have to be a "professional."

A photograph of four men standing in a room with wood-paneled walls. Behind them are several large posters of rockabilly musicians, including one of Elvis Presley in a white shirt and one of a man in a yellow suit. The man on the far left is wearing a black jacket, a purple shirt, and a black cap. The man next to him is wearing a black leather jacket and a white cap. The man in the center is wearing a black t-shirt and light blue jeans. The man on the far right is wearing a dark suit and has white hair. The floor is made of wood.

At the International Rockabilly Hall Of Fame, in Jackson, Tennessee. From left: Bobby Crafford, J.M. Van Eaton, Daniel Glass, and W.S. Holland.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of rockabilly, however, was that for the first time the drums were being prominently featured in a country music setting. In fact, it was the marriage of drums and country that most defined the rockabilly sound.

To dig deeper into the story of rockabilly and Sun Records, *Modern Drummer* brought together three of the most prominent names associated with the label: J.M. Van Eaton, who can be heard on more than two thirds of Sun's entire catalog; W.S. "Fluke" Holland, the shuffle behind "Blue Suede Shoes" and the first man to bring a full drumset onto a rockabilly session; and Bobby Crafford, who recorded and toured with a variety of Sun's premier artists, from Sonny Burgess to Roy Orbison. Along with other legends of rockabilly drumming, such as D.J. Fontana, Jerry Allison, and Buddy Harman, these three gentlemen produced a body of work that was extremely influential on later generations of drumming superstars, guys with names like Al Jackson Jr., Ringo Starr, Charlie Watts, and Hal Blaine.

All of our interviewees remain active today. Van Eaton continues to record at Sun (still in its original location) as part of various all-star projects, or with the endless parade of talent that comes from all over the world to glean a little magic from rockabilly's most hallowed shrine. Holland records and tours with The Tennessee Three, Johnny Cash tribute collective comprised of original members of "the man in black"'s band. And Bobby Crafford is into his fiftieth year with Sonny Burgess & The Pacers, one of the last of the classic Sun acts still performing.

The setting for our roundtable discussion was the International Rockabilly Hall Of Fame Museum in Jackson, Tennessee, about ninety miles east of Memphis. Jackson is the birthplace of Carl Perkins, who many credit as being the father of the rockabilly sound. Perkins' perennial "Blue Suede Shoes"—released on January 1, 1956—was Sun's first million-seller, and became the first record of *any* genre to sit atop the pop, country, and R&B charts at the same time.

As we discussed their careers, their contributions to music, and the state of rockabilly today, all three of these drumming pioneers remained good humored and self-effacing about their abilities and accomplishments. But make no mistake, their legacy is worthy of the highest praise. You might say it shines as brightly as...well...as the midday sun.

Daniel: I'd like to begin by asking each of you about the artists you've worked with and some of the recordings you've played on.

J.M.: I first went to Sun Records with a band when I was still in high school, kinda like Elvis Presley, where you pay \$15 to cut a little acetate demo. Sam Phillips had just hired Jack Clement as an engineer. Jack heard me with this little high school band, and asked if I'd like to play on some records. I started hanging around the studio and recording with guys like Billy Lee Riley.

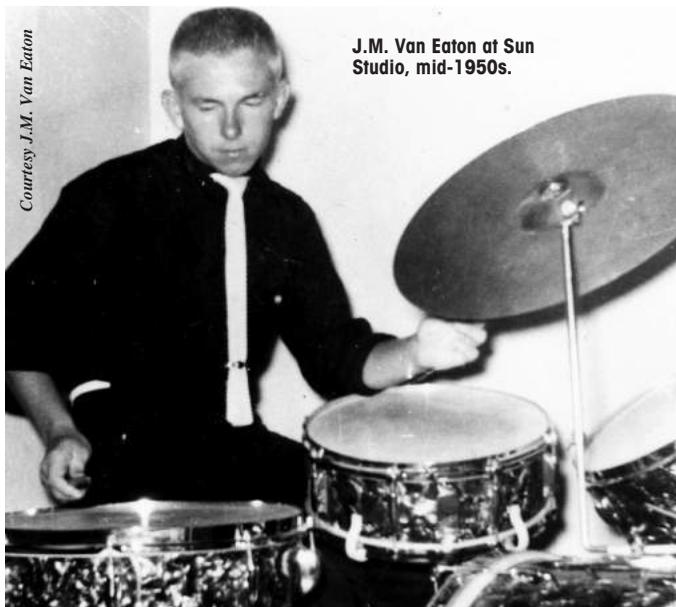
The next guy to come through the door there was Jerry Lee Lewis. His first release was a thing called "Crazy Arms," and it didn't have nothing on it but drums and piano—that was it. That was the first record that I played on that got released, and it was a pretty good-sized regional hit. Then we did "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," "Great Balls Of Fire," and all of Jerry Lee's big hits. So right off the bat, I just

waltzed into a situation with all of these cats who could play.

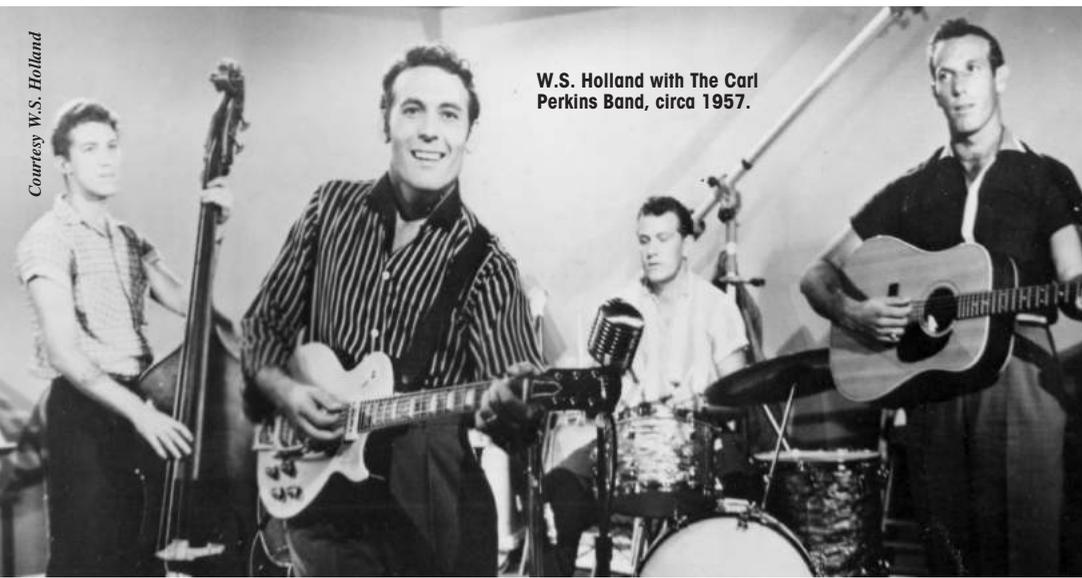
After that, I started working with a lot of artists. I recorded Billy Lee Riley's "Red Hot," Charlie Rich's "Lonely Weekends," and all of Johnny Cash's big hits [on Sun]. That's how I got to play on so many records. And that's how I got to meet these two guys. We all ran in the same circles.

Bobby: Y'all would be playing at the Wagon Wheel in Ball Knob, Arkansas on a Wednesday night, and then we'd be in there on a Thursday.

J.M.: Yep. Even though everybody was trying to outdo the other one, there was still a lot of camaraderie. You know, people often ask who influenced me, and I always give them the same answer. We—all of us here—were influenced by a lot of music, everything from Gospel to country to Joe Turner's style of rhythm & blues. But it was when guitars and drums collided that music changed forever. Rockabilly



"I COULDN'T BELIEVE ALL THE HIT RECORDS I WAS PLAYING ON. I USED TO THINK IT WAS THE EASIEST THING IN THE WORLD. WE'D CUT A SONG, AND THE NEXT DAY IT WOULD BE ON THE CHARTS."—J.M. VAN EATON



W.S. Holland with The Carl Perkins Band, circa 1957.

"I REALLY BELIEVE THAT IF WE'D BEEN SCHOOLED AND KNEW EXACTLY HOW TO PLAY, ROCKABILLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS. IT'S GOT TO BE PLAYED A LITTLE 'INCORRECT' TO COME OFF LIKE IT DID."
—W.S. HOLLAND

happened when they finally took the guitars and drums and brought 'em out front. **W.S.:** That's my take on it, too. Carl Perkins did mostly Hank Williams-type stuff prior to me joining the band. It was still country. But doing the same songs when you added drums, it became rock 'n' roll. All the instruments—piano, bass, guitars, etc.—were already there, but when drums came along, that's what changed it. In 1954, when we first went into Sun, we were the first country-style band to use

guy on the road. Roy Orbison didn't have his own band, for instance, so we'd back him up. We also backed up The Collins Kids on tour, and we did a lot of stuff with Bob Wills' band.

Daniel: Did you record at Sun?

Bobby: Yes, absolutely. That was the first studio I ever went into. I did the last two singles that The Pacers recorded for Sun, and a whole bunch of other stuff that wasn't released until later. One of my favorite memories of Sun relates to the

and his two brothers lived near Jackson, and they were playing some of the little clubs around the area. Clayton played bass and J.B. played acoustic guitar, but they didn't have a drummer. I met the guys and started hanging around at the places they were playing. One night, for some reason—I never did think to ask why—I walked up to the side of the big upright bass, and there's a place on the curvature of that bass that sounds kinda like a drum, and I just started tapping out a beat.



Bobby Crafford with Sonny Burgess & The Pacers.

"ANY TIME YOU WENT INTO SUN AND RECORDED, THE QUESTION WAS ALWAYS, 'WELL, CAN YOU DANCE TO IT?' THAT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT."—BOBBY CRAFFORD

drums.

Daniel: Bobby, what about your career?

Bobby: I joined up with Sonny Burgess in 1957. The Pacers were already on Sun, so we were doing a lot of traveling with guys like Johnny Cash, Billy Riley, and Carl Perkins.

Daniel: So the Sun artists would do packaged tours?

Bobby: Yes, playing in different auditoriums. I got to play with a lot of different

song "Find My Baby For Me." Roy Orbison sang the background on that song, and you can hear him back there with his high voice.

Daniel: W.S., let's hear your story.

W.S.: I actually started right here in Jackson in 1954. But I never thought about being in the music business at all. I graduated from high school and started working in the air conditioning department of S.M. Lawrence & Company. Well, Carl Perkins

Well, this went on for a while, and one night, Carl said, "We got an appointment on Thursday morning at Sun Records with Sam Phillips. Borrow some drums and go with us." So Tuesday night, I went down to a little place called The Cotton Bowl, just south of here, and played with the guys. That's the first time I ever actually played a set of drums on stage. Then Thursday morning, we drove over to Memphis and set up at Sun. The first song we recorded

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ROCKABILLY

was called "Movie Magg" –it's a song about taking your girlfriend to the movies on the back of a mule. [laughs]

J.M.: I love that song. I bought the record, I think.

W.S.: We got us a recording contract that day, and that was the second time that I had ever sat on a drum stool! This was in late 1954. "Blue Suede Shoes" was our third record, but all through 1955, before that was recorded, we toured together with the other Sun acts, which by now included what we call "the big five," Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, and Jerry Lee Lewis. We all started working within a couple-hundred-mile radius of Memphis.

Daniel: Maybe you guys could talk about attitudes toward drummers and drumming in the South during the 1950s. It's been said that there was a bias against drummers in country music, and that's partly why the music you played was so revolutionary. You guys were the first to inject some heavy grooves into Southern music.

J.M.: Well, I was always welcome, if that's what you're asking. Even with the country stuff that we did, everyone seemed to welcome the drummer being a part of it. There was no resentment as far as I could tell.

Daniel: W.S., you mentioned that Sam Phillips had some reservations about drummers.

W.S.: I remember I was in the studio a day or two after Elvis hired D.J. Fontana on drums, and Sam had been to the show. And he came in fussing: "Aw, I went to see Elvis and all I could hear was boom, boom, boom."

J.M.: I think Sam was the kind of guy who, once he had a hit record, he wanted to use that same instrumentation all the time. With a record like "Crazy Arms," where it was just me and Jerry Lee—well, once that record sold, then Sam wanted the drums out front all the time.

Daniel: W.S., what about when you went into Sun for the first time with Carl Perkins?

W.S.: No, it wasn't a problem per se. Sam just didn't think it was necessary, because the upright bass players had been doing the job of the drummer. What made those guys unique was that they were really playing the bass and drums at the same time. With country music, since there were no drums, they would pluck the notes on 1 and 3, and then slap the neck on the 2 and

4. So they were imitating the kick and snare parts.

Daniel: W.S., maybe you can talk about the first time that you brought drums into the Grand Ole Opry with Johnny Cash. What year was that?

W.S.: 1960.

Daniel: And how was the reception?

W.S.: Well, back then we didn't have roadies; we had to unload all the stuff ourselves. So I'm setting up, and the manager of the Opry says to me, "You can't set this full set of drums up here. We don't allow that." I said, "Well, I got this letter from a fellow I work with [Cash], telling me to bring my full set of drums, even the little things that go 'clang, clang.'" [laughs all around]. He just shook his head and went to the office. And that night I played the full set. When I look back, I don't know why John asked me to do that. I mean, it was against all the rules.

J.M.: That's the reason right there; it was against all the rules! But seriously, I think that the more you could make it sound like the record, the better it was.

Daniel: Buddy Harman, who was the original drummer in the Opry house band, told me that he was only allowed a snare drum and brushes.

Bobby: When did Buddy start playing on the Opry?

Daniel: I believe he started in the mid-'50s. He had to stand behind a curtain, and then he'd bring the snare out front for a song or two. Other than a few isolated instances like W.S. playing with Johnny Cash, there wasn't a permanent house kit onstage at the Opry until 1974!

Bobby: Is that right.

Daniel: The records you guys made fifty years ago still sound incredibly fresh, so let's talk a little bit more about "the Sun sound." J.M., since you did so much recording there, maybe you could give us your perspective.

J.M.: First off, Sam was a soundman. He had lots of talent walk through his door, but Sam really created that studio. I think simplicity was probably the biggest thing—that whole place didn't have but five or six microphones. The only thing that Sam would tell anybody was, "Don't get too close to that mic," and those type of things. He never really told me how to play.

Daniel: Can you explain a little more about the slapback echo? How did that work?



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J.M.: Sam had two Ampex tape machines, and my understanding is that one was just a hair behind the other. Now I'm not that technical, all I know is that they'd press the two record buttons one right after the other. I don't know where Sam learned to do that, but certainly Elvis was the first artist where that slapback was really dominant.

W.S.: The other thing I liked about the Sun recordings in the early days was that everybody set up in the middle of the floor—no baffles. Whatever was coming out of the drums and amplifiers went into all of the mics. Strange as it sounds, I think we succeeded [at Sun] because none of us really knew anything other than the basics. I think that if everybody had been a schooled musician, it never would have worked.

J.M.: It would have lost the feel. These days they try and make it too complicated, and too perfect.

W.S.: Sam didn't try to make someone play in a way that they couldn't. I cut a record with Carl Perkins called "Honey Don't." If you listen, there's a break at the beginning of each verse. But I kept going on the hi-hat through that break—I didn't stop. It was my mistake, and anyone else would have made us cut that over, but when we went to listen to it, Sam said, "It's not a mistake, leave that on there." And that's one of the things that made that record different.

J.M.: That's like [Jerry Lee Lewis' s] "Crazy Arms." That was probably the first time I'd played with a piano player as the lead instrument, and I was just trying to find something that fit. By the time I did, the take was over. So I said, "Okay, let's take one more, I think I've got it now." But Sam said, "No man, that's cool." And we were done. That's why so many people today are into the Sun box sets: They want to hear your mistakes and your false starts—all of that.

W.S.: Bobby, I was so glad to hear what you said earlier, that when we went in to record, no one ever rehearsed.

Bobby: No, we never knew what we were gonna record.

Daniel: J.M., that's what you were saying about "Whole Lotta Shakin'."

J.M.: Another one-take song. That very first cut had that little shuffle thing going on. I actually added an extra measure going into the solo, but nobody thinks of that as a mistake.

W.S.: It was the same with Johnny [Cash].

But I think that's what made it exciting—nothing was "perfect."

J.M.: I couldn't believe all the hit records I was playing on. I used to think it was the easiest thing in the world. We'd go and cut a song one day, and the next day it would be on the charts. I was saying, "Ain't nothing to this"—until I quit having 'em, and then I realized how hard it is to have a hit.

Daniel: What happened after Sun's peak years in the late 1950s?

W.S.: Sun lost a lot of the big artists. In '58, both Carl [Perkins] and John [Cash] went over to Columbia. [Elvis had already left for RCA in 1955.] By 1960, it seemed like it was pretty well all over. I decided to retire. I was getting married, and I figured I needed a real job. But just as I was planning on that, I got a call from Johnny Cash. This was 1960, and he had got his first big engagements at that time—a week in New York and a week down at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City. He remembered me from his days at Sun, and asked me to come out for two weeks. Those two weeks ended in 1997!

Daniel: So that's you playing on all those classic Cash records from the '60s like Live At Folsom Prison?

W.S.: Uh-huh, everything John did from 1960 on. Then in 1997, when John got sick and couldn't play anymore, I was going to retire again. Well, about that time Bob Wooten [who started playing with Cash in 1968] and I decided to record a tribute to Johnny Cash. Some agents heard it, and now here I am again, touring more than I ever have in my entire life. And I still didn't get to retire! [laughs all around]

Bobby: The same thing happened to me. Sometime in the '70s, I got out of the music business completely, sold everything I had. If you'd have told me fifteen years ago that I'd be back in this, I'd have said you were crazy.

J.M.: I never really quit playing—I just quit traveling. Roland Janes, who played guitar with Jerry Lee [and was also an important part of the Sun house band] opened a studio in the '60s, and I did quite a few things with him. And then in the early '80s, we came up with the Sun Rhythm Section, which was an all-star band that got invited to Washington D.C. to play for the Smithsonian. That thing took off like I don't know what! But I had a pretty good day job, so I couldn't go out on the road



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and be gone for weeks at a time.

Daniel: Well, the great thing is that you're all still playing.

W.S.: What's so awesome is that this many years later, we're all still able to play and to be involved with what they're doing here with this rockabilly museum.

Daniel: I'd like to talk a bit about the term "rockabilly," because I know that people have a lot of strong feelings about that word. From my understanding, it wasn't in widespread use until the 1970s, when the revival got underway.

Bobby: Until a few years ago, I had never heard the term widely used. All the early clippings and posters that I've got say "rock 'n' roll" on 'em.

W.S.: I also don't remember hearing "rockabilly" much in the 1950s. I wish that whatever came later would be called something else, because really, what we were doing was rock 'n' roll. Maybe because we were from Tennessee—the hillbilly part of the world—and we were playing rock 'n' roll music, people decided that what we did should be called rockabilly.

J.M.: It was kind of a put-down at first. But once it caught on, everybody wanted to claim it. It had this respect when it came back around the second time. Look, if there's a special niche that you've carved out, it don't matter what it's called if you're always going to be remembered for it.

W.S.: That's right, if it's going to be called "rockabilly," that suits me fine. Who knows, if it hadn't been called rockabilly, it might not have been as big a deal for us.

J.M.: When we played in Washington—and this was kind of a compliment—the crew that worked on our stage, their T-shirts said "Workabillies." [laughs all around]

Daniel: Since the '70s, there has been a renewed interest in the rockabilly style all over the world. Lots of guys from your generation have had second careers as a result, and lots of younger guys are playing the music as well. Now there are hybrids like Psychobilly, which is essentially rockabilly meets punk. What do you think about what you're seeing today?

J.M.: Well, imitation is the greatest form of flattery. So, if they want to try to do what we did, I think it's complimentary. But some of this new stuff is just way too fast for me; we tried to play music you could dance to.

Bobby: Any time you went into Sun, the

question was always, "Well, can you dance to it?" That was really important.

W.S.: Don't get me wrong, I think it's an absolute honor if a group tries to sound like we did in the '50s. But for some reason, nobody can duplicate it exactly. Again, I really believe that if we'd been schooled and knew exactly how to play, rockabilly wouldn't have been a success. It's got to be played a little "incorrect" to come off like it did. But here's something I'm glad to see: When the Tennessee Three does a show nowadays, our audience is young! It's incredible to look into the crowd and see people who are the same age as the people I played for in 1955 were.

Bobby: You got to have the younger ones, 'cause a lot of 'em that we played for back then are dead! [laughs] A lot of our fans are young, too: twenty-five to thirty-five years old. The European ones know who we all played with and what records we're on. It's amazing how every person you talk to at these festivals has been to Sun, some of 'em two or three times.

J.M.: They can tell you more about yourself than you can even remember.

Daniel: Any final thoughts?

J.M.: With Sun, I think it was one of those things where God just dumped a bunch of blessings on that studio at that time. You can't explain it any other way—it's a spiritual thing. You can walk in there even today, and you can feel there's something about that building.

W.S.: I just look back at it and think, man, I'm really glad we didn't know how to do it exactly like it was supposed to have been done! [laughs all around]

Special thanks to Henry Harrison and the International Rockabilly Hall Of Fame Museum for making this gathering possible. For more information, please visit www.rockabillyhall.org.

Daniel Glass works with the "retro-swing" group Royal Crown Revue. He has also recorded and performed with Bette Midler, Gene Simmons, Freddy Cole, Mike Ness, and many others. Daniel is the author of two books: *The Ultimate History of Rock 'N' Roll Drumming: 1948-2000*, and *The RCR Drum Transcription Book*. His forthcoming book, *The Commandments Of Classic Rhythm And Blues Drumming* (co-written with Zoro), will be published shortly by Alfred. Visit www.DanielGlass.com to learn more about Daniel's obsession with classic American music.



Photo: Neil Ziozower

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KENNY ARONOFF

Big-Beat Brilliance

by Rick Mattingly



Rob Shamathan

When John Mellencamp gave his acceptance speech after being inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame this past March, he thanked several musicians who'd contributed to his music. As he named drummer Kenny Aronoff, who played on most of Mellencamp's biggest hits, a camera switched to audience member John Fogerty, a previous Hall Of Fame inductee whose most recent album and tour featured Aronoff on drums and who typically introduced Kenny as "the greatest rock 'n' roll drummer in the world."

Plenty of musicians and producers would undoubtedly agree. Aronoff has probably played on more number-one records than most of the artists who are in the Hall Of Fame. His extensive classical percussion training provided him with exceptional technique, reading ability, and discipline, which are vital in the studio. But Kenny can also project the energy and seeming abandon of a rock 'n' roll animal while keeping everything perfectly under control.

Most of what Kenny has recorded sounds pretty simple. But Aronoff says that creating such parts was a struggle when he started recording in the early 1980s. "I had to learn that 'less is more' when you're trying to serve the song," Kenny explains. "I had to be inspiring and creative in a very simple fashion."

Kenny's approach to recording starts with finding the

right beat. "The beat defines the song," he says. "If you change the beat, you change the song. The next thing is that the distance between the first two notes you play defines the tempo. The third thing is groove, which is a combination of your feel, your time, the balance between your limbs, and your personality. The perfect example is John Bonham playing 'Kashmir.' Anybody can play 1 and 3 on kick drum, 2 and 4 on snare, and 8th notes on the hi-hat. But no one can play it like Bonham. It's his groove, his vibe, his uniqueness."

Aronoff calls beat, time, and groove the "cake," to which he adds the icing. "That's the decoration—the creative part—which you get when you add things without disturbing the beat, time, and groove," he explains. "You're adding things to create excitement, tension, personality, vibe. So I'll establish a beat and then add things—a lot of times on the hi-hat, because you can do a lot on the hi-hat without disrupting the basic foundation of what you're playing. There are all kinds of things you can do that are not technically difficult, but it's a musical idea that is relevant to the song."

MD asked Kenny to reflect on several key songs he has recorded throughout his career. Here are his thoughts.





“Jack And Diane”

John Cougar (Mellencamp)
***American Fool*, 1982 (Mercury)**

This was a very important record for me. I didn't play on the album before that because I had only been in the band for five weeks. The producer had a fast timeline for doing the record, so they brought in two session guys. I was determined to prove that I was capable of making a record with John Mellencamp.

Working with a singer/songwriter was new for me then. It's all about how to develop a drum part, and I didn't have a lot of experience with that. So the beat I came up with was very basic. When we went into the studio, the producer, Don Gehman, came in with a Linn drum machine. I was devastated, but I read the manual and programmed my drum beat on this machine. My kick drum became a floor tom sound, the backbeats became handclaps, the hi-hat became a tambourine. But I was bummed out and felt that it was another failure. Then I hear Gehman screaming, “Aronoff, we need a drum solo.” I'm thinking, “You need a drum solo on this ballad?” I'm feeling the pressure of, “If I don't get this, I'm going to be replaced again.” John, the producer, and the whole band were watching me, which was intimidating. So the drum machine played while John was singing, and then I came in on the “&” of 4. I decided to do the same beat, going up the toms, but displace it by an 8th note. Then John yelled, “Hit a cymbal,” so that was cool.

And then I decided that since I had already gone up the toms, now I would go back down, so I did sort of a Phil Collins “In the Air Tonight” fill with a triplet at the end. I'm making it sound like it took ten minutes, but we tried all kinds of things and it took hours.

Then John wanted me to keep playing instead of going back to the drum machine. So for the next part I was influenced by Steve Gadd on “Lenore,” from Chick Corea's *Leprechaun* album. He was always hitting the floor tom. So I mimicked my original part on the drum machine, but I played 16ths on the hi-hat starting on beat 3, which led into a floor tom note on 4.

The song went to number-one. That was a monumental moment in my career.

“Authority Song”

John Mellencamp
***Uh-Huh*, 1983 (Mercury)**

This is an example of how picking the right beat can change the whole song. The original beat was accented 8th notes on the hi-hat, and the kick drum and snare were going “one TWO and-three FOUR.” The bass player, Toby, was following my foot. But then I started to do the classic Charlie Watts beat, lifting my stick off the hi-hat when I hit 2 and 4. When Toby heard that, he changed his bass part, and then the guitar players changed their part. So just leaving 2 and 4 out of the hi-hat changed the feel of that song.

“YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO PUT YOURSELF IN A SCENE AND LIVE IT. THAT’S WHAT I DO WHEN I RECORD BY MYSELF.”

I was also doing little hi-hat things like Stewart Copeland does, and hitting splash cymbal accents. And some of my fills were influenced by the feel of what Stewart did.

When we were about to record that song, John said, “We need an intro.” Larry came up with this guitar thing right on the spot. So I did this tom thing that led into a backbeat, and as the intro progressed, my backbeats came quicker and quicker. It was a real cool way to develop an intro to a song, because you felt the urgency.

“Blaze Of Glory”

Jon Bon Jovi

Blaze Of Glory, 1990 (Polygram)

This was a pretty intense session. The drums don’t come in full-blown until the last chorus. It’s a big buildup to that. I did this big fill with triplets displaced around the drumkit. My right hand was on the snare drum and my left hand went between the hi-hat and the left rack tom, and my right went to the floor tom. It’s pretty wacky.

There’s a section that’s kind of a breakdown, and from my classical background I came up with the idea of combining several snare drum parts to create this marching thing that sounded like something Mahler might have written. I recorded four different snare drums, and we sped up the tape so that when you slowed it back down the pitch of the drums would be lower.

“I’d Do Anything For Love (But I Won’t Do That)”

Meat Loaf

Bat Out Of Hell II: Back Into Hell 1993 (EMI)

We recorded that in L.A., and it was about eight minutes long. A year later they had me come to New York, and they added a two-minute intro. I didn’t think it would ever get airplay, but it became a number-one single in fifteen countries during the same week.

There’s no way I could have recorded that

song if I couldn’t read and write music, because the song form was very complex. It had an A section, B section, C section, D section, E section, back to A section, but not quite the same as the original A, then a variation of B, then F, and it kept going. There were tempo changes, and it was very theatrical. We would record a section one day, and three or four days later we would go back and do it again. The only way I could remember what I had done was to write the stuff out.

The other thing that made it complex was that when you record in two different studios, you’re going to get two different sounds. I had written down which drums, heads, and cymbals I’d used, so I duplicated all that in New York.

“Straight No Chaser”

Buddy Rich Big Band

Burning For Buddy Vol. 1 1994 (Atlantic)

I was asked to play one song on the Buddy Rich tribute record. I was thinking I could do “Straight No Chaser,” but I thought that might be too much to bite off. To me, the song is the whole deal. “Big Swing Face” is an incredible song, too. So I picked that, but then Cathy Rich asked me to pick another song, and before I could say anything she said, “Why don’t you do ‘Straight No Chaser’?” When I got there, Billy Cobham was playing “Birdland,” and he was smokin’. So he finishes, Neil Peart comes out... “Hey, nice to meet you.” Cathy Rich and Freddie Gruber are there, and the band is looking at me like, “Who’s this guy?”

We started playing and the band was amazing. The placement of every note was so snappy and precise. We’re moving fast; no time to get comfortable. We do “Big Swing Face,” and after the fourth take I was just getting warmed up, but they told me, “That’s it. You only get four takes.” I’m freaking out because nobody told me we only got four takes.

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Paul Pugliese

Now we're ready to do "Straight No Chaser," and I'm reading it and playing, and it's kicking ass. I can't believe it's me playing. I did this drum solo, and it just all came together. All I was thinking about was the spirit of Buddy Rich—his personality, his attitude—and I just went for it. I had played jazz as a kid, so I had it in my heart.

"Sister Sara"

Alice Cooper

Dragontown, 2001 (Eagle Rock)

They started the album with another drummer, but it wasn't working out. So I was asked to do the whole album in three days. That's another one I could never have pulled off if I couldn't read and write music. I listened to the song and transcribed the very detailed sequencing they had done with specific beats, because the bass, guitar, vocals, and everything had been done to those beats. I added my own stuff when I recorded it, but the parts were pretty important.

It took me about forty-five minutes to write the chart out. Then I practiced it and made sure I could make all the transitions from sec-

tion to section. And in this song there's regular feel, half-time feel, the choruses are phrased in odd meters of three and five, and there are very specific bass drum parts. It's complex. But once I did that, I could record the whole song non-stop.

If I couldn't read and write music, there's no way I could have remembered all the things that were going on. But when you play a song from beginning to end, you get a whole feel going that you can't get if you record it a few bars at a time.

"Eight Easy Steps"

Alanis Morissette

So-Called Chaos, 2004 (WEA)

I recorded a whole Alanis Morissette album, and I never met her. It was just me and the producer. The tricky part about recording by myself is I have to play with whatever has already been laid down and create the illusion that it's live, otherwise it's boring music. I think what makes music interesting is the interaction between musicians, which makes people feel the human quality. When everything is quantized, lined up, and put

on the grid, it can be stimulating, but you're missing the emotion, soul, and personality.

So at a session like that, I'm trying to put as much human feel into it as I can. You can't just play with the click track—you can play perfectly with a click and sound horrible. I have to make it sound like we're all playing together and make it as live-sounding as possible.

This song starts off with a loop, but when that chorus came in, I was picturing Keith Moon and playing with fury and savagery, keeping just enough control to be in time. I was sweating so much I had to duct-tape the headphones to my head.

I'm like an actor in a movie. Some of the greatest actors have done big scenes with the other person not there. You have to be able to put yourself in a scene and live it. That's what I do when I record by myself.

"What You're Living For"
Tony Iommi/Glenn Hughes
Fused, 2005 (Sanctuary)

I went to Wales to record with Tony Iommi and Glenn Hughes, and they said that they had written all the songs but that if I had any ideas, I should bring them to the table. So I listened to the songs and realized that nothing was up-tempo. It was all the heavy Black Sabbath medium-slow tempos. So I sat in my room and pieced together different beats into an intro, verse, chorus, maybe a bridge... Then I came back in with six sketches.

On this song, the beat in the intro and verse is influenced by Queens Of The Stone Age and Led Zeppelin. The chorus beat was influenced by Audioslave. The intro beat and the verse beat is 8th notes on the kick drum except for 2 and 4 on the snare. The intro is quarter notes on open hi-hat, but when you get to the verse you have to segue flawlessly into 8th notes on the hi-hat while you keep the same pattern going on the drums. I practice that now as a technical exercise. On the chorus we played a little slower than half time to get that real heaviness. The song went back and forth from the fast tempo to the slow tempo.

What was difficult for me technically was that from all the years of playing simpler beats, I could slam the bass drum beater into the head. I could do that with this song on the choruses, but on the intro and verses it's a totally different bass drum technique. I had to distribute my weight back toward

my heel so I could get that beater off the head. I remember practicing that for an hour before recording it.

"Famous"
Puddle Of Mudd
Famous, 2007 (Geffen)

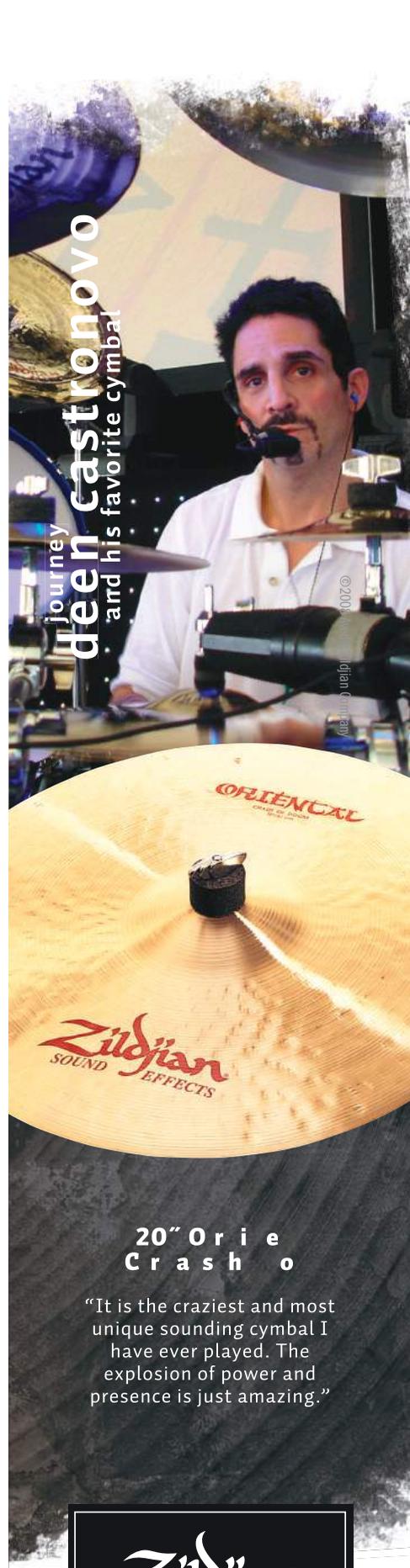
This was another case where the artist wasn't there, so the producer played me the song on acoustic guitar. I wrote the chart out to get the form, and then I came up with a beat that fit the acoustic guitar. I asked the producer if he wanted me to kick the crap out of it, and he said, "Yeah. It's a pop song, but we want to take it to the next level." I decided it needed something interesting at the beginning, so I came up with a drum fill and then displaced it by an 8th note.

When the band heard it, the guitar player thought it was cool, but it threw him off. So they added a whole intro to my thing and made it sound like there's a 9/8 measure after seven measures of 4/4. Then in the outro, I went into half-time to add weight to it. So the drums created the direction for that song. When I laid down the drums, that was all they had. They built the song off of that.

"Broken Down Cowboy"
John Fogerty
Revival, 2007 (Concord)

The way John did this record, we'd rehearse five songs in five days, recording every take. And after every take we'd listen and he'd make adjustments. On this song, he asked me if I had any wood snare drums. I had twelve. So we recorded a take with each one. He narrowed it down to a Tama bubinga drum, taped and tuned very low. Then he asked me to hit the drum with the butt end of my stick. Then he asked me to not hit a rimshot, just to hit the center of the drum. So I did that and got a deep thud sound, but he was missing a little bit of crack. So he asked me to play so that thirty percent of the sound was the hoop and seventy percent was the drum. I said, "No problem!" [laughs] We're talking about the simplest beat in the world, and he's being very articulate about what he wants me to do.

This beat isn't going to blow anybody's socks off technically, but to do anything with extreme excellence can take a lifetime of experience and hard work. It can be simple, but it's perfect down to every little detail.



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John Bonham

"Moby Dick"

transcribed by John Kerr



MUSIC KEY

| | | |
|--------|---|------|
| open | ○ | cow- |
| H.H. | ● | bell |
| T.T. | △ | |
| S.D. | □ | |
| F.T. | ■ | |
| B.D. | ⊗ | |
| H.H. | ⊙ | |
| w/foot | ⊗ | |

Few drum solos capture the spirit of rock music like John Bonham's legendary performance on Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick." Bonzo's controlled abandon in this solo practically grabs you by the throat. But it's the drummer's level of finesse and sophistication that keeps us intently listening nearly forty years after its release.

Bonham's live solo spotlight was initially referred to as "Pat's Delight" (named for the drummer's wife). Typically beginning with a reference to the foot ostinato in Max Roach's classic solo piece "The Drum Also Waltzes," in concert, Bonham's solo was much longer than the 1969 version included on Led Zeppelin II

(the one shown here), which was edited together from tapes of him jamming in the studio.

The solo begins with Bonham playing, with his bare hands, conga-style phrasings, muted and open taps/slaps, and pitch bends on the snare drum with snares off. He goes on to intersperse quick double strokes on the bass drum, rapid-fire "quads," rhythmic modulations, and his trademark thundering triplet rolls between the hands and feet. Bonham plays this solo free-form and out of tempo, so some of the licks look more challenging than they are. Make sure you listen to the recording to get a feel for the actual phrasing.

The last time Bonham performed "Moby Dick" with Led Zeppelin was on July 24, 1977 at Alameda County Coliseum in Oakland, California.

[Snares Off]

[With Hands]

[muted]

ff *p*

[finger roll] *p*

mf *p* *mp*

f slight ritard *mp*

♩ = ♩.

JOHN BONHAM

mf

slight accel.....

ff

[stop accel.]

slight ritard [back to sticks]

slight accel.....

mf

6 3 3 3 6 6 3

6 6 6 3 6 6 6 3 6 6 6 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3

slight ritard

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 6 6

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6 3

a tempo

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

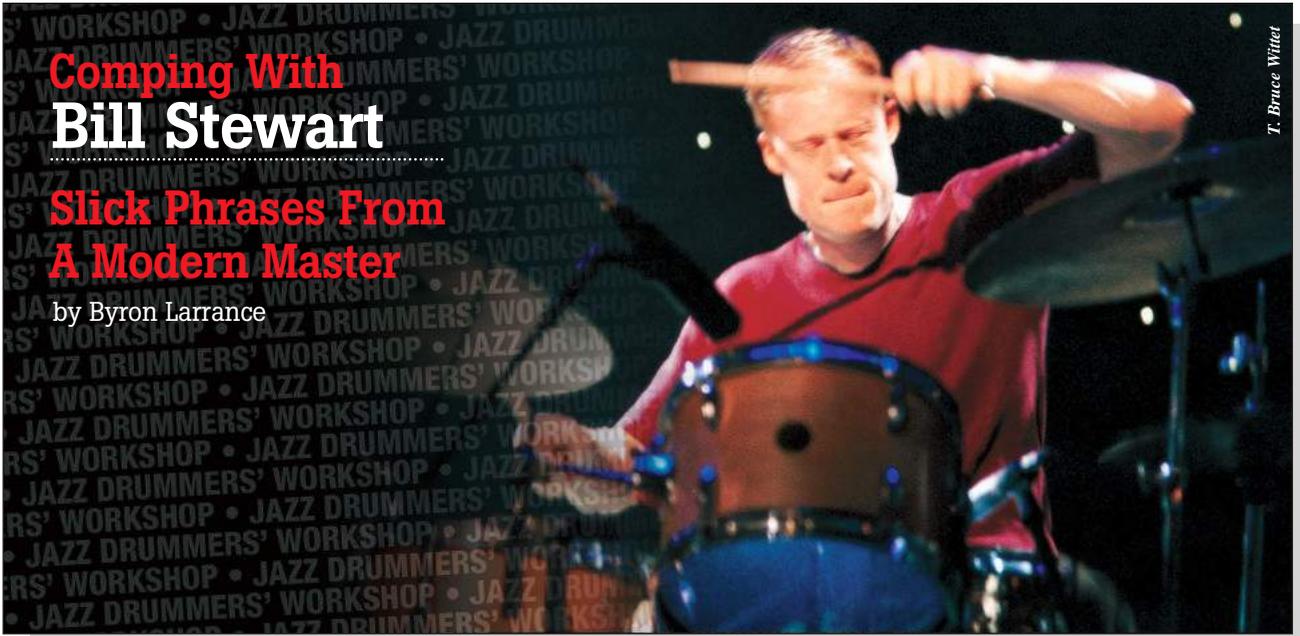
Fine



Comping With Bill Stewart

Slick Phrases From A Modern Master

by Byron Larrance



T. Bruce Wittet

| MUSIC KEY | |
|-----------|--------|
| open | ○ R.C. |
| H.H. | ○ |
| T.T. | ○ |
| S.D. | ○ |
| F.T. | ○ |
| B.D. | ○ |
| H.H. | ○ |
| w/ foot | ○ |

There's only a handful of jazz drummers whose playing is so distinctive that it's altered the way we approach the instrument. Bill Stewart is one such drummer. Stewart's unique drumming voice is built on a foundation of influences such as Bernard Purdie, Tony Williams, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Max Roach, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Higgins, and Ed Blackwell.

Think Before You Think, Stewart's first album as a leader, was recorded in 1990 and released in 1998 by Evidence Music. Stewart describes his performance in the album's liner notes, writing, "I'm trying to be between a groove drummer and a color kind of player, mixing the time with different colors."

This article focuses on Bill's comping on the album's track "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You." The form of the song is thirty-six bars (AABA) arranged into eight-bar sections, with the last "A" extended four measures.

The first example begins in the "B" section, or bridge. The third measure begins with a quarter note-triplet idea, a response to saxophonist Joe Lovano's rhythmic activity from two measures earlier. The triplets are played in a melodic fashion between the toms and bass drum. Measures 6-8 feature linear triplets, which Stewart uses to build the intensity of Lovano's performance. The section finishes with a backbeat-inspired idea. (1:23)

This next example demonstrates Stewart's brilliant use of phrasing. Beginning four measures before the bridge, the idea is a form of call & response: The call is a buzz-idea on snare, and the response is a melodic groove. (2:12)

Here's an example of Stewart's distinct drumming personality on the last "A" section of the form. The fifth measure contains a motif based on double strokes where the hands move seamlessly from 32nd notes to 16th notes, giving the impression of a loose and elastic time feel. Measure 11 contains a great example of Bill's hi-hat comping. (2:26)

Example 4 (on the following page) illustrates Stewart's incredible ability to create vivid textures on the drums. This example begins in the bridge. Notice how the drummer mixes triplet phrasing with 16th notes. In measures 5-6 he stops the time and plays 16th-note crescendos, and then seamlessly returns to a triplet phrase. Also, check out the impressive execution of straight-8ths on the hi-hat underneath the triplets in bar 14. Bill ends this section with a flurry of triplets grouped in twos between the toms and bass drum, while his ride cymbal plays a backwards swing pattern. (3:13)

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Toni Braxton

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Billy Idol

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Atreyu's Brandon Saller Lead Sails Paper Anchor

by Ed Breckenfeld



MUSIC KEY

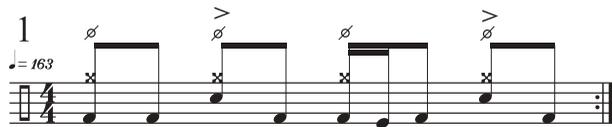
| | | | |
|--------|---|-------|-----------|
| open | O | R.C. | C.C. |
| H.H. | ⊗ | Bell | ⊗ |
| T.T. | ⊗ | | |
| S.D. | ⊗ | | |
| F.T. | ⊗ | | |
| B.D.1 | ⊗ | | |
| H.H. | ⊗ | | |
| w/foot | ⊗ | B.D.2 | Addl T.T. |

The rise of Southern California metal band Atreyu has been a steady one, from independent releases and relentless touring, to Ozzfest and a new contract with Hollywood Records. The quintet's latest album, *Lead Sails Paper Anchor*, showcases the contrast between screamo vocalist Alex Varkatzas and the melodic singing of drummer Brandon Saller.

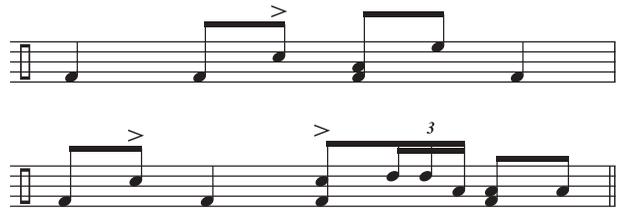
Perhaps due to his role as co-lead vocalist, Brandon's playing is strong and supportive without being intrusive. And he always finds the perfect spots to shine. Here are a few examples.

"Doomsday"

Saller's groove for the album's up-tempo opener is a perfect example of his tasteful use of double kick to get the right amount of impact without trampling on the vocals. (0:29)

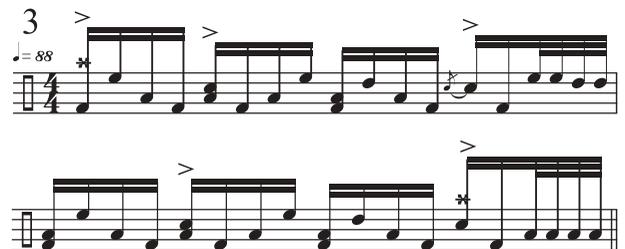


On the bridge, Brandon plays this breakdown groove. The quarter notes on the kick drum supply momentum under an off-beat snare and tom pattern. The 16th note-triplet lick is an effective wrap-up to this four-bar sequence. (2:14)



"Honor"

This track features a heavy half-time verse and a double-time chorus. For contrast, Brandon uses this tom groove for the start of the second verse, varying the placement of his repeating 32nd-note fill to keep things interesting. (1:11)



"Falling Down"

This single opens with Saller's tom shuffle, making the song instantly recognizable for radio. A couple of well-placed open hi-hat accents and a cymbal bell help to color the beat. (0:02)



Andrew Goetz

Two staves of musical notation for the drum part of "Becoming The Bull". The first staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents and triplets. The second staff continues the pattern with a triplet and a dotted quarter note.

"Becoming The Bull"

The verse and chorus grooves in this song are separated by a one-bar drum fill. Brandon's two-fisted approach at the end of the fill gives a potent launch to the chorus. (0:42)

Three staves of musical notation for the drum part of "When Two Are One". The first staff starts with a tempo of 95 and features eighth notes with accents and triplets. The second and third staves show a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and eighth notes.

"When Two Are One"

Below are Saller's beats for the verse and pre-chorus of this speedy thrash tune. Notice how the tempo shift from one groove to the next enhances the dramatic change in feel between the two sections. (0:57)

Three staves of musical notation for the drum part of "Lose It". The first staff starts with a tempo of 159 and features eighth notes with accents. The second and third staves show a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and eighth notes.

"Lose It"

Brandon flashes some double bass chops in this song with a nice quad fill at the end of the sequence. Notice how the space he leaves allows the drum part to breathe. (0:15)

Four staves of musical notation for the drum part of "Can't Happen Here". The first staff starts with a tempo of 77 and features eighth notes with accents and triplets. The second and third staves show a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and eighth notes. The fourth staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents.

"Can't Happen Here"

The kick drum pattern from this cautionary tale syncs up with the band's pulsing guitar and bass riff. This creates an appropriately menacing mood for the track's lyrical message. (0:21)

Two staves of musical notation for the drum part of "Can't Happen Here". The first staff starts with a tempo of 100 and features eighth notes with accents and triplets. The second staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents.

Brandon saves one of his flashiest fills to set up the song's instrumental section. Notice how he inserts bass drum notes to break up the rhythm before he launches into a quick move around the kit. (2:09)

Two staves of musical notation for the drum part of "Can't Happen Here". The first staff starts with a tempo of 9 and features eighth notes with accents and triplets. The second staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents.



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



Stretch That Groove!

Part 3: More Beat Permutations

by David Garibaldi



MUSIC KEY

| | |
|---------|------|
| H,H. | L,H. |
| T,T. | H,H. |
| S.D. | |
| F.T. | |
| B.D. | |
| H,H. | |
| w/ foot | |

In this mini-series of articles, we've looked at ideas that will expand your ability to venture across barlines and take your groove to higher levels. This process takes time, but the reward is well worth the effort.

In Part 1 (November '07), we looked at the basic concept of permutation, which can be applied to any rhythm in any time signature. That article's examples were all based in 4/4.

In Part 2 (March '08), we applied an odd meter (9/8) within an even meter (4/4) and looked at some ways to create unusual time feels.

This time we're going to continue with the odd-meter permutation theme, with a goal of attaining total rhythmic freedom. (For an example of someone with total freedom behind the drums, check out jazz legend Jack DeJohnette on the various DVDs he's recorded with The Keith Jarrett Trio.) Keep in mind that learning this type of drumming is a lifelong process. Over time, the walls will come down.

As you work through this month's examples, remember to count aloud. Counting is often overlooked, but it's extremely valuable. If practiced regularly, counting will help you break down any barline. After a while, you'll always know where beat 1 is.

Also, practice slowly, working through one measure at a time. After you can comfortably play the first measure, add the second, and so on, until you can play straight through the entire cycle.

The concept is the same as in Part 2, but with a different time signature. Now we're playing a pattern in 11/16 and applying it to 4/4.

Here's the basic eleven-note pattern. I call these "Eleven-a-diddles." The figure consists of two backwards five-stroke rolls (RLLRR, LRRLL) and a bass drum note.

BASIC RHYTHMIC CELL: 11 NOTES

Practice this phrase until it's comfortable, and then start working through the written exercise. Use a metronome, count aloud, and connect each measure—one by one—until the entire 11/16 phrase can be played within 4/4. The entire phrase takes eleven measures of 4/4 to complete.

Once you can perform the cycle as written, try these voice substitutions.

- 1) Move the right hand to the bell of a cymbal or a cowbell.
- 2) Play the left-hand ghost notes on the hi-hat.
- 3) Play the accented notes on the snare.

Each individual measure can also stand alone as its own groove. Or you can combine measures to create longer grooves. For example, you can create two-bar beats by repeating measures 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, etc. You should also experiment with combining measures randomly.

To hear how all of this sounds, check out the song "Escape From Oakland" on my DVD Tower Of Groove. I played these eleven-a-diddles at the end of my solo. Good luck, and I'll see you next time. Enjoy!

♩ = 96

1 R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L

3 F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L

5 L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R

7 L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R

9 R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F R L L R R L

11 R R L L F R L L R R L R R L L F

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



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Dynamic Independence

A Musical Way To Improve Coordination

by Eric Novod

MUSIC KEY

- open ○
- H.H. ●
- T.J. ●
- S.D. ●
- F.T. ●
- B.D. ●
- H.H. ✕
- w/ foot ✕

There are many excellent drum books available filled with independence exercises. Unfortunately, most of them don't focus on executing these new ideas in a dynamic, musical way. This article will focus on combining independence exercises with accents and dynamics.

As you master these increasingly complex examples, you'll find that the process of adding accents will give you a heightened level of independence. This type of practice will add a new dimension to your drumming.

Begin with simple snare and bass drum combinations. Start with no accents (measure 1) and play the measure four times. Then move to the second measure, where the snare is accented but the bass drum remains unaccented. Play this four times. Then move to the third measure, where the snare drum is unaccented and the bass drum is accented.

This might appear to be a simple exercise, but the ability to seamlessly shift from unaccented to accented notes (and vice versa) is more difficult than it seems. Be sure that when you switch from measure 1 to measure 2, the bass drum remains at the same volume. When you switch from measure 2 to measure 3, make sure the dynamics switch immediately. Repeat this three-measure exercise using each of the additional sticking combinations listed below.

1

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

In our next example we're adding a floor tom stroke and altering the rhythm from 8th notes to triplets. As in Example 1, repeat each measure four times, and seamlessly (with perfect dynamic control) shift from one measure to the next. Measure 1 has no accents. The snare drum is accented in measure 2. The floor tom is accented in measure 3. The bass drum is accented in measure 4.

2

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

Once you're comfortable with Example 2, try shifting accents on every beat instead of every measure, as in Example 2A on the next page. You'll begin to see how altering dynamics can lead to some cool independence/coordination ideas.

2A

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

L R L R L R L R

The final step is to expand from triplets to 16th notes and incorporate all four limbs. Once again, the same principles apply: Repeat each measure four times, and make sure that the dynamic contrast between measures is immediate.

3

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

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

L R L R L R L R

Now try these slightly more advanced accenting patterns. The accent switches on every beat instead of every measure.

3A

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

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

Once you've mastered the previous examples, come up with your own combinations. For instance, combine two beats from one accenting pattern with two beats of another. Then begin adding more than one accent on each beat. As you progress through these exercises and begin inventing your own, you'll find that adding dynamics within independence exercises will expand your drumming vocabulary in all areas.

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



Purposeful Playing

Tips For Sounding Like A Pro

by Ben Sesar



Throughout my musical upbringing, I've always felt a large disconnect between the information being fed to me via curriculum, and practices put in place in the real world by people who were actually doing something. I'm talking about players who we all recognize as having unique and un-teachable qualities, distinguishing themselves as musical pioneers. It's these understated qualities that have always fascinated me.

We've been led to accept that certain things cannot be taught. To a degree, that's true. But as someone who often questions the common wisdom, I've discovered some unique—and perhaps teachable—commonalities among players of vastly different musical

“Don't ride a helpless wave of emotion. Use your emotions to create depth and meaning in the music you play.”

styles and approaches.

While discussions of these concepts may continue to fall through the cracks in the setting of traditional education, it's my intention to bring some of these simple yet overlooked concepts to the forefront of musical discussion. There are too many of these to list in this article alone. But let's start with one quality that most of my drumming heroes seem to have in common: They all seem to play with purpose.

What Does Playing With Purpose Mean?

Playing purposefully is having something to say with every note you play—including the rests—every time you sit down to make music on the drums. We're not talking here about the content, or specifically what you play. Rather, we're concerning ourselves with the way you phrase that content—or how you play. This also

includes your personal touch or attack on the instrument. It's why drummers who are recognized for playing with heart, soul, vibe—whatever you want to call it—are in a separate league from others who haphazardly chug along, or worse: play like they're practicing. Drummers with purpose do the opposite: They practice like they're playing.

Let's start with the purposeful use of space. Many drummers focus a lot of concentration on note attacks, but don't pay enough attention to the spaces between attacks. When you treat the rests and the notes equally, your playing starts to open up, and the space starts to become a means for you to say something—just like when you strike a drum. But in order to manipulate space, you must learn to be aware of and master your emotions. And you do this by practicing patience. It's the same kind of patience you use, say, waiting for a traffic light, only we're dealing with a moving pulse, so we're working on a smaller scale.

Between each beat of the pulse, you use patience, in microscopic intervals, to hold yourself back and place the notes where you want them to be placed. This is hard to do, on account of the fact that playing music is an emotional experience. Varying factors—a weak bandmember, the occasion of a big gig—will “pull” on you while you play. Even syncopated rhythms are hard to play with patience, because we tend to want to hurry through them, neglecting all the little spaces between the note attacks.

Controlling Your Emotions

Emotion is obviously a good thing, but try to channel it away from the underlying pulse in which you're trying to convey, and into something else: Perhaps lay into the kick and snare a little harder. Don't sacrifice technique, though. Once you learn to master your emotions and become patient at the “microscopic level,” you'll be able to recognize your emotions and let them pass through you without adversely affecting the music.

Consider this: I treat every gig like it's the kick-off at the Super Bowl. The lights go out, the curtain goes up, and I'm immediately faced with 10,000 screaming fans. But the first song we play is kind of a mid-tempo, at just the speed where it wants to take off. I've got to be cool, patient, and balance all that energy from the crowd so that I don't speed up. I've mastered the ability to feel the excitement from the crowd but stay in control of the music.

When you let yourself get carried away with emotion, the music gets carried away as well, and purpose goes out the window. Don't ride a helpless wave of emotion. Use your emotions to create depth and meaning in the music you play. And always remember that patience is the key to effectively channel your emotions in the proper direction.

Defining Your Sound

Another aspect of playing purposefully is that doing so goes a long way toward defining your playing apart from other musicians. Your unique purpose is what makes your playing sound unique to the listener. Most of us assume that our playing is defined by the content we choose: the choices of grooves and fills. For some, in certain musical situations, that's true. It's a lot harder for those of us playing any form of popular music, though. Most of the content is very simple, recycled, and limited in that we're expected to play a lot of the same grooves and fills used over and over by those who came before us.

Take the simple 2-and-4 rock groove, for example. We've all heard it played before, but some drummers play it with a flare that's unmistakable. The best example I can think of, one that we could perhaps all agree on, would be John Bonham. He played with so much purpose, it oozes from the music.

So how do you distinguish yourself when the music you play is rudimentary or requires very little in the way of creativity? You concentrate on your purposeful touch on the drums, your purposeful use of space, and, when you can get away with it, your choice of content. In my approach to playing time, I tend to think like a professional archer or marksman. I use aim, and I try for the middle. If I want to lay back, I'll do it knowingly and aim slightly

behind the middle.

You can practice this by playing a basic rock groove to a slow click: 1 and 3 on the kick, 2 and 4 on the snare, 8ths on the hi-hat. Now think of a flam. When you play the snare drum, let the snare become the main note (the second note of the flam), and land it right with the click. (You're essentially flammimg the snare with the click.) Do this consistently, and be mindful of how "tight" your flam is. The looser the flam, the farther you're playing behind the beat. Practice different distances behind the click. Try to land your beats intentionally and consistently. Eventually you'll be able to stretch the time at will, like a rubber band.

What Are You Trying To Say?

We all need to re-evaluate, from time to time, the reasons we do certain things, musically speaking. We need to constantly tap into and find the place in ourselves that has a need to express something. Why do you tune your drums a certain way? Why do you set up your kit a certain way? What kind of music do you want to play? What's your reason for playing? And most importantly: What is it you want to say with your playing?

Once you know the answers to questions like these, you can start to break it down in a technical sense, and fold your sense of purpose into your practice sessions. As you practice, be mindful of all the aforementioned questions. If you do, your playing will evolve effortlessly, and the process of becoming a seasoned player will seem more natural.

Ben Sesar is the drummer for country superstar Brad Paisley.



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Producer/Engineer

Niko Bolas

People First, Gear Second

by Matt North



“I’ve been so lucky,” says Niko Bolas when asked to reflect on the drummers of his career. A self-professed drum nut, Niko entered the recording industry thanks to a 1957 Corvette. “I got a job working for Val Garay at The Sound Factory in LA,” he recalls. “We met because I worked on cars and I went to do a photo spread on his ’57 Corvette for a job I had at Hot Rod magazine. While we were working on the car, he offered me a gig, and that’s the last conscious memory I have.”

In 1977, Niko helped build the now world-famous Record One Studios in California, where he served as lead engineer until 1984, when he began producing and recording independently. His résumé is legendary: Neil Young, Warren Zevon, Keith Richards, Herb Alpert, Melissa Etheridge, KISS, Stan Getz, Toto, and, most recently, Herbie Hancock, The Atma, and Los Lonely Boys. It’s simply impossible to go a few days without hearing a song that hasn’t been influenced by Niko’s creativity. (To further gush over his stunning discography, visit www.neeks.com.)

After the interview, I felt a sincere urge to have him invoice me for the drum lesson he so generously handed over. Pay attention to what this man has to say; he’s one of the best there is.

one you’ve never heard of. I was playing congas in a band in the eighth grade, and Chris LaBroche came in to play drums. It was the first time I heard a rimshot, and it was the greatest sound ever, my intro to backbeat.

In the studio, the first drummer to make a big impression on me was Russ Kunkel. I was a kid working my first date at The Sound Factory. Russell got there early and was the nicest guy in the room, bar none. When the band started playing, he went from this quiet guy to leading the charge, and when he played his first tom fill I thought the heavens opened up. That was the first time I knew what an amazing drummer was.

MD: In your mind, why are Russ Kunkel’s tom fills special?

Niko: He tunes his own drums, so the tone always fits inside the chords of the song. Russell’s fills are like an exclamation point to a lyric. He doesn’t do them a lot, but when he does it’s like a waterfall. It’s exactly what you’re feeling in the moment. It’s not like, “I’m a drummer. Look at me, here’s a tom fill.” He accents what you just heard, and it reinforces the singer’s phrasing. His fills are lyrical.

MD: Has Neil Young or any another artist ever made it clear to you what’s wanted and not wanted from a drummer?

Niko: Not rushing helps. Neil Young changes musicians like we change tennis shoes. It just depends on what fits for what he’s

“I think all anybody wants from a drummer is support, communication, and understand-

Everyone Starts Somewhere

MD: Tell us about working for Val Garay at The Sound Factory. Were you engineering or mixing?

Niko: No, I was sitting in the corner. I think the reason they let me stay around was because I could get gas. In the ’70s, there was gas rationing, and I could get gas for anybody because I knew all the guys at the gas stations since I was a wrench. I started with tape legends, because they trusted me to put tape on the machines. One thing led to another, and I went from sitting in the corner to sitting at the board.

MD: Who was the first drummer to make an impression on you?

Niko: The first drummer who gave me goose bumps was some-

doing. I think all anybody wants from a drummer is support, communication, and understanding. If you have a drummer who’s a frustrated artist, you don’t really have a drummer—you have a frustrated artist. So you get a lot of loud fills and cacophony, but nothing that supports the song.

The greatest drummers are the guys you don’t even notice until you realize you’re standing up, dancing around. Ralph Molina, Neil’s drummer in Crazy Horse, can do that. Ralph is like a ballroom dancer—he floats. If you listen through his headphones, all he has in there is Neil’s voice and Neil’s guitar, so Ralph just follows whatever adventure Neil is on and holds down the fort. For Ralph it’s all about supporting the vocals.

Chad Cromwell is another drummer of Neil's who can bounce around the room and let Neil find his way home. Memphis born and bred, Chad sits there like Big Ben—you always know what time it is. Check him out on Neil's record *Chrome Dreams*, on the twenty-minute song "Ordinary People." During those sessions, right before a take, Neil said to Chad, "I'll see you on the other side." That one line taught me everything about the timekeeping relationship between drummer and singer. Time isn't about playing with authority; it's about playing with responsibility. If Neil Young rushes the tempo because that's what the song makes him feel, it's your responsibility to catch up to him.

Jeff Porcaro

The greatest guy on the planet and an inspiration to anyone who knew him, including the parking attendant. He was more than a drummer—he was an unbelievable human. Brutally honest, totally focused, he only wanted to do great. He wanted to do great on anything, whether it was helping his kids color with crayons, making a record, doing demos, or talking photography. He was a consummate artist in the truest sense. Everything was about the essence of creativity.

Jeff came straight from the center of his gut. He was so accomplished in his rudiments and dexterity that they were second-nature, so you got past all of that and it was pure expression. In the studio, he was ridiculous. His approach to record making was just as fastidious as



his approach to drumming, because it was all one thing to him. It wasn't just drums; it was "making a record," making something significant.

Jeff would do the simplest little things to his grooves with his four limbs and create this huge, swinging backbeat that was precise and "pop" . . . as in popular. When Jeff spoke up in Toto, everybody listened—but he didn't speak up much. He had egoless honesty. It's not a self-centered thing. A record is not about the recording so much as a three-and-a-half-minute moment that's going to be timeless. Jeff could track drums into your answering machine and it would sound hip.

Don Henley

We did *Building The Perfect Beast*, probably one of my favorite records I've ever been a part of—especially "Sunset Grill," an amazing piece of music. So many people were involved; I was just lucky to be in the room. I learned a lot about mixing from Greg Ladanyi and production from Danny Kortchmar, who's one of the most brilliant arrangers I've ever met. The secret to great records is great arranging. All of the best recordmakers know it—they all had great arrangers who can get everybody playing something hip, simple, and in their own neighborhood so nobody steps on anybody else, and suddenly you have this wall coming at you.

On Don's records, the drummers—including himself—all fit the arrangements. Back in the day, studio musicians were of a caliber that you don't get to work with too much these days. We'd go from Jeff



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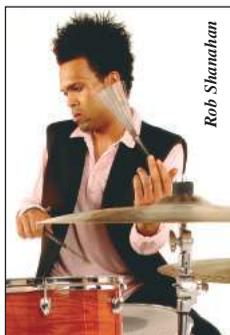
Porcaro to Rick Marotta, just to see what they'd bring. Producers went through musicians like I go through microphone choices and key changes. That's the thing with Don's record: Every drummer was there because they were right for the song—not just because they were available.

The first time I heard Don play drums, I understood why he's such a good singer. He inherently knows how to phrase. He plays drums around the lead vocal—and he's one of the best lead vocalists there is. Everything Don does is to make sure you understand the story of the song. It's not flash. If you're supposed to be waltzing and crying, then he'll make sure you've got a beat to waltz to, and the lyrics will make you cry. He's disciplined in that he won't assume anything. If there are three ways to play a chorus, he'll research all three ideas so there's no second-guessing.

So many highly talented people are carefree and reckless: They get lucky and maybe what they do happens to be smoking, but often you never hear from them again. If Don's going to do something, it's going to be 100% right, or he's not going to do it. This is just a broad gut reaction: Henley keeps time for lyrics, Charlie Watts plays with Keith Richards, Ringo is in between. All three support a melody, but it's a different way to walk in the room.

Charley Drayton

Charley's not just a drummer; he's simply an incredible musician. He grew up in the studios because his dad is one of the top producers in New York. When



Rob Shanhahn

he plays drums, he'll fill in all the spaces that the guitars and bassists aren't filling—and he'll make it completely his own. He's funky, he's infectious, and he immediately hooks you. It's one of those things you don't realize until you find yourself wanting to turn the volume up. And he'll always sneak something in somehow—a little funky hi-hat pattern on top of the simplest beat, the coolest thing you ever heard.

Charley and Steve Jordan were like tag-team wrestlers, and anytime I worked with one the other was hanging around. That's how I met Charley. We've worked on his records, on Robben Ford's records, and I got him down here to Nashville to work for Radney Foster. Charley's been one of my biggest secret weapons since I started producing independent records. He was on Robben Ford's Tiger Walk, but he played bass. See what I mean? Charley is a record-making musician. Steve Jordan played drums on Tiger Walk, but he and Charley can trade chairs whenever they want to—that's what they did on both Keith Richards' solo albums.

Craig Krampf

Craig was the most experimental drummer I knew, and he taught me the most about the width of a groove. He played on Melissa Etheridge's debut, and he was on Kim Carnes' "Bette Davis Eyes," which was the first song to have that electronic, crashing backbeat sound. Craig was always coming in with some gizmo he found or made, and we'd try all this weird stuff. He was the first



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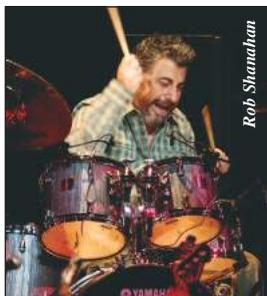
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to come in with a drum machine and sit at the console and just tap those buttons. And he'd play unbelievable patterns. Then he'd go out to the kit and wire up all this stuff with pads, a drum machine, and a direct box, and these great sounds would come through. He always called me "kid": "Look out, kid! The drummer's got wires!"

"Bette Davis Eyes" was just one shot. We wired it up and there was that backbeat. Next thing you know everybody sampled that sound and it was everywhere. Craig was one of the innovators of anything-but-normal drums, the first guy to bring in "devices." He's also one of the best tambourine players on the planet because his hands don't play the tambourine; his whole body plays it.

Rick Marotta

Ricky was on every other session I did for the first five, ten years I worked in Los Angeles. He's a dancer. I don't know if he ever took a real drum lesson in his life; he just loves to groove and dance around the room, and that's the way he plays the drums. It's very wide and very simple.



Ricky was the first guy to teach me that the bass drum doesn't always have to be the same level throughout a cut. When I first recorded him, I thought I was doing something wrong because the bass drum kept going in and out of the song. But it was actually because he was playing with real dynamics instead of straight four on the floor. He truly expresses himself through his playing. If you meet him in person, you understand why he plays the way he does.

That's the only way I can sum him up—he explodes from the center of his heart.

Steve Jordan

We met in the early '80s and became fast friends. He came out to do Neil Young's *Landing On Water*, and that was our first record together. I'm a drum nut, and I was experimenting with all kinds of weird, different mics then. I had three mics on each drum because I wanted to hear what it sounded like inside the drum, on top, underneath—all of it. And Steve's attitude was, "Let's try everything."



Steve was the first musician I met who was completely different from anyone else on the planet. When everybody played big, gushy snares, Steve had a tight, little Brady, and he played it funkier than you can imagine. When everybody had sixteen toms, Steve showed up with a hi-hat, snare, and bass, and just played the shit out of it.

Because of Steve, my idea of the drums went from their being individual instruments to being a kit. It's a collection of sounds coming at you—one big inferno. It changed my approach from trying to record separate pieces to capturing the drummer. You try to have a depth of understanding and let the drummer tell you how it should sound. And if you have any ego, that's difficult. We all have ego at some point, until we fall down and realize, "Hey, this cat knows everything there is to know about driving this train. I better stand out of the way."

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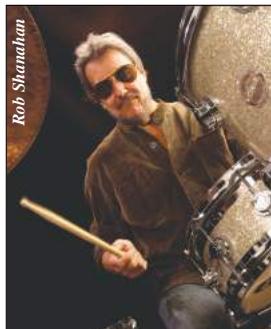
NIKO BOLAS

Steve is the only guy I ever saw Jeff Porcaro hire. We did a Toto thing, and there was Jeff, one of the all-time greatest drummers, who I thought could do no wrong. He said, "You know, I'm not playing the right pocket here. Let's get Steve." So Steve played on the same song, on the same kit. But his interpretation, his pocket, was what Jeff understood. Jeff was smart enough to know that you don't learn or study that—it's in the person. He also had enough respect and love for the instrument to say, "It's not about who it is, it's about what we have when we're done."

Jim Keltner

The thing to know about Jimmy is that he can't play the same thing twice. This guy can't even tie his shoes without it being groovy. Anything he taps on will be hip. The minute you meet Jim you trust him. Honesty is the best way to explain him. He's extremely tender and brutally honest. The thing I love about his drumming is that he really lets himself follow his heart, not his head. So if it inspires him to rattle bracelets, then he'll just go do that because that's what the song inspired him to do.

Jim has a mystifying understanding of the inside of a shuffle. I call it the "Jalopy Shuffle," because it's like this cantankerous old jalopy clunking down the street with the hippest, slickest, most unbelievable



feel you've ever heard. Once I said, "Hey Jim, what's with the sunglasses?" All he said was, "Neeks, these shades are for your protection."

In Conclusion...

The song always makes the decision when it comes to mics, a hole in the bass head, a full head on the bass drum, etc. It's always the song. I think it's best to let the drummer produce the engineer. Most cats are polite, and they respect everybody's gig, but I'm the first person to say, "Where's your favorite place to put a mic? Do you have a favorite mic?" That's how I learn. There is no favorite, no right or wrong.

Some songs call for old-school, Jim Gordon-style bass drums with blankets or sandbags, but another tune might call for a double-headed jazz kit. But, if you don't have a guy who knows how to hit it, it's pointless. It's all about the person and whether or not that person is having a good day.

One of the most important things I can share is this: If you put any microphone over any of the drummers we've talked about in a closet and they're grooving, it will be a grooving drum sound. The mistake people make is they want to know the dimensions of the closet! It has nothing to do with any of that. It's all about the cat behind the kit.

For more info on Niko Bolas, visit www.neeks.com.



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Rock Band

Making Millions Of New Drummers?

by Andy Ziker



One day my drum student Amanda walked into her lesson, sat down at the kit, and played a fast single-stroke roll—a skill she'd never demonstrated before. I asked Amanda if she'd practiced a lot in the past week. With a sheepish grin on her face, she admitted, "No, but I played Rock Band every day."

Now, I'm not one to play video games all day. In fact, I hadn't played one since Ms. Pac-Man was the hottest thing in the arcade. So at first I didn't quite get what my student was talking about. But after seeing what Rock Band had done to improve my student's technique, I had to check it out.

Getting Started

The first thing I did was buy an Xbox 360 gaming system and a copy of Rock Band, which comes with three controllers: a microphone, a guitar, and an electronic drumset consisting of a set of four drum pads and a bass drum pedal. The game allows up to four players to perform music by some of rock's biggest artists. (A second guitar controller has to be purchased in order to play both guitar and bass parts.) The game can also be played online, so you can play with other "rock stars" in the U.S. and Europe.

Assembling the drum-pad controller is a breeze, as easy-to-follow directions on your TV screen tell you what to do. It's as simple as finding your way around an ATM or cell phone.

To figure out how to "play" my new instrument/game, I needed some start-up tips. So I proceeded to the Tutorial mode. I tried both the basic

and intermediate tutorials. Kurt from Boston band The Konks led me through clearly presented lessons on the game's graphics, including the drum track (scrolling drum tabs), crowd and energy meters, scoring, big rock endings, fills, overdrive, and energy phrases. He also gave tips on technique such as how to hold the sticks, body positioning, and how to play the kick drum pedal.

Once I understood how the game works, I entered Quickplay mode. There I picked the song "Say It Ain't So" by Weezer and selected the medium level. (Players can pick between easy, medium, hard, and expert.) Because I've had years of traditional musical training that involves reading musical notation left to right, I had to recalibrate my brain as the "notes" came tumbling towards me in 3-D. Once I got used to this new way of "reading" music, I had loads of fun. The virtual crowd cheered and sang along to the song as I wailed away on the pads.

After playing through a couple of songs, I moved on to the Solo Tour mode. On the "Rocker Creator" page I gave myself a name (I decided on T-Bone) and chose a hometown, attitude (rock, punk, etc.), and body style (weight, height, face, skin color, etc.). From there, I arrived at the Rock Shop and discovered that I could buy



clothing and accessories such as glasses or earrings. I also could change my hairstyle, choose some tattoos, and add makeup and face paint. (You pay for these extras by earning money at "gigs.") I also decided to alter the color/finish of my virtual Ludwig drumset. This entire process was so entertaining that I literally laughed out loud. Even for someone with little video game experience, it didn't take long for me to be up to speed on the world of imaginary rock 'n' roll.

More Ways To Rock

Besides the play modes previously discussed, Rock Band includes two others. In Practice mode, you can focus on a difficult section of a song or slow down a song's tempo up to 50%.

In Band World Tour mode, players devise their own characters and create a band logo. You begin with gigs in small venues until successful performances unlock vans, tour buses, and private jets to take you to additional cities around the world. Success also earns the band more fans and increased amounts of cash (to be spent in the Rock Shop).



What's The Use?

Several drum industry manufacturers have partnered with the makers of Rock Band. Ludwig and Zildjian are the exclusive instrument brands in the game, Vic Firth provides the drumsticks, and Vater gives successful players make-believe endorsements. Vic Firth and Vater also sell merchandise in the virtual store.

It's not surprising that these companies have teamed up with the makers of Rock Band. This game is likely to have a similar effect on drummers that CDs/DVDs, drum machines, electronic drums, Pro Tools, iPods, and the Internet have had in the past.

But how could a video game have such an impact? Here are some ways it's influencing potential musicians:

1) Increases the pool of young drummers. Most young people (as well as many adults) love video games, and Rock Band is one of the most popular. Rock Band drumkits are currently sitting next to the TV in millions of homes in the U.S. and Europe. Even non-musicians are working on their drumming skills in order to advance through the levels of the game. At the expert level, these players are essentially playing the original drum parts note for note. So it wouldn't be a leap of logic to think that many of these video gamers might eventually seek out a drum instructor, buy some drums, and start a real band.

2) Promotes live music. As gamers become obsessed with the amazing virtual experience that Rock Band provides, there's a good

Soundtrack And Downloadable Songs

The fifty-eight play-along tracks in Rock Band include hit

songs from many popular bands. Here's a partial list: The Rolling Stones "Gimme Shelter," The Who "Won't Get Fooled Again," The Police "Next to You," David Bowie "Suffragette City," Black Sabbath "Paranoid," Blue Oyster Cult "Don't Fear The Reaper," The Ramones "Blitzkrieg Bop," KISS "Detroit Rock City," Rush "Tom Sawyer," Bon Jovi "Wanted Dead Or Alive," The Clash "Should I Stay Or Should I Go," R.E.M. "Orange Crush," Iron Maiden "Run To The Hills," Foo Fighters "Learn To Fly," Metallica "Enter Sandman," Nirvana "In Bloom," Stone Temple Pilots "Vaseline," Weezer "Say It Ain't So," Smashing Pumpkins "Cherub Rock," Radiohead "Creep," Soundgarden "Black Hole Sun," Nine Inch Nails "The Hand That Feeds," and Red Hot Chili Peppers "Dani California."

Players can go to the Rock Band Music Store to choose from hundreds of other songs available for download through XBOX Live and the Playstation Network Store. Each additional track costs \$1.99.

chance that they'll begin to go to more shows and concerts.

3) New platform for recorded music. New music is being made available for Rock Band all the time, including full albums like Judas Priest's classic *Screaming For Vengeance*. Motley Crue even released their new single, "Saints Of Los Angeles," as a downloadable track for Rock Band.

4) Education. Drum instructors now have access to an amazing teaching tool, and drum students have an incredibly fun way to begin making music.

An Experiment

After witnessing the quick effects of Rock Band on my student Amanda's basic technique, I decided to do a little experiment. Amanda was already playing "Say It Ain't So" by Weezer at an expert level, so I used her next two lessons to see how well this knowledge transferred to real drumming.

I began by having her try to play along with the Weezer track. As soon as she put on the headphones, she played the song as if it was familiar to her. Next, I put a transcription of the tune in front of her to see if the scrolling note-charts in Rock Band translated over to reading drumset notation. She had difficulty with this at first. But then she asked, "Would you mind if I added color to the noteheads? That way, reading the drum score would be more like Rock Band."

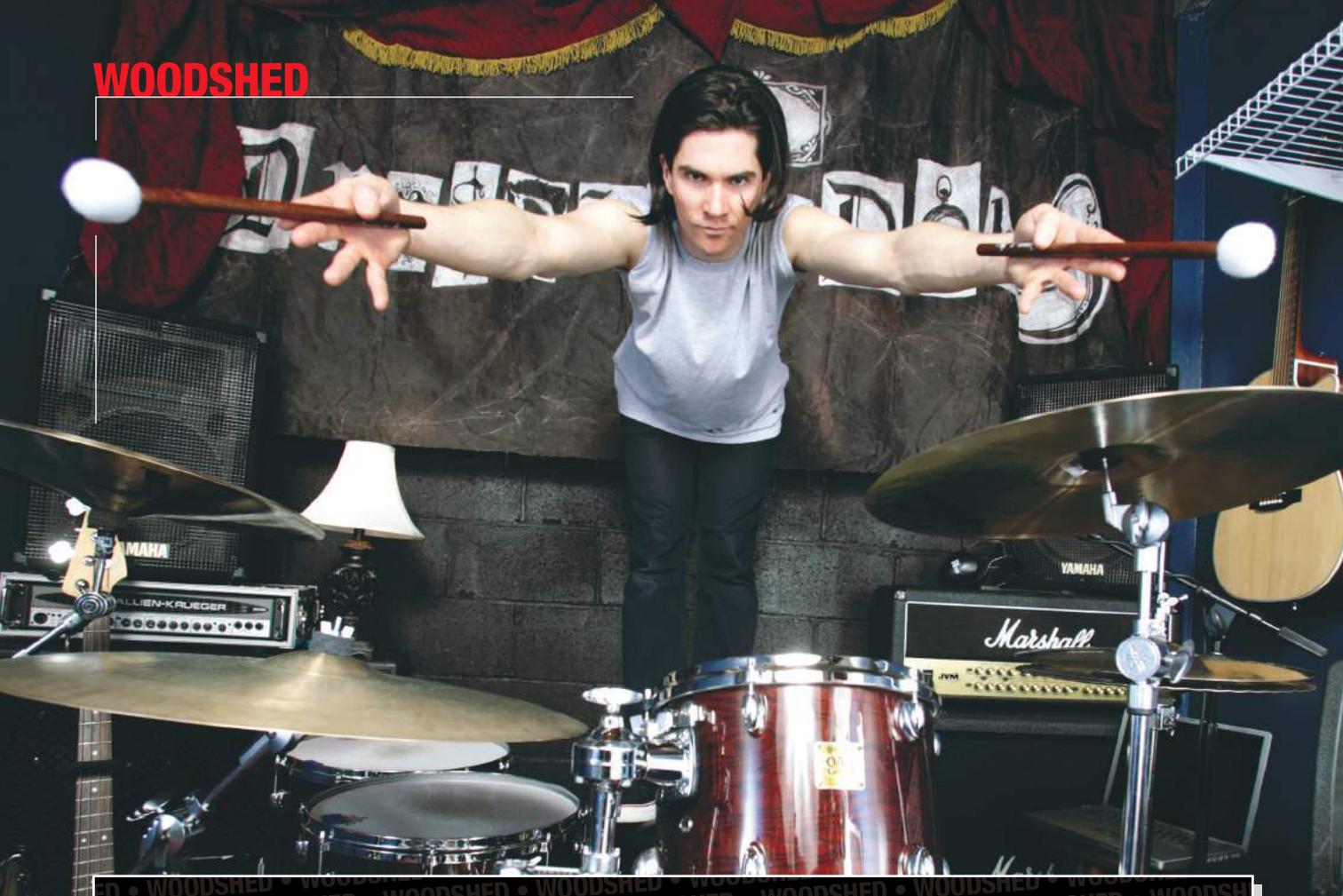
At her next lesson, Amanda showed me how she used different colored pens to highlight the noteheads in the chart (red for the snare, orange for the bass drum, etc.). Then she played through the first part of "Say It Ain't So" by herself flawlessly (while reading the drum chart). After that, we played the entire tune together. "Coloring the notes makes them easier to read," Amanda proclaimed. "You're not just looking at a black and white sheet of music."

Over the course of just one week, Rock Band helped Amanda improve her drumset and reading skills, and she gained confidence in her ability to play "real" drums. So even though it's designed for home entertainment purposes, Rock Band could end up inspiring a whole new generation of wannabe rockers to put down their controllers and head out to the garage for a jam session. And for an aspiring drum teacher, you can't buy that kind of cross promotion.



Andy Ziker performs and teaches in and around Phoenix, Arizona. His book, *Drumscapes*, is available at www.andyziker.com.





The Dresden Dolls' Brian Viglione

Heating It Up At EMF In Cambridge

by Adam Budofsky • photos by Paul La Raia

Imagine a piano and drums duo that is as comfortable performing cabaret shtick as rollicking punk musical theater. Then imagine a female vocalist/pianist with the lungs of Tori Amos and the lyrics of a depraved Noel Coward bent on destruction. Then, finally, imagine a drummer who mashes and meshes a hundred different styles together like some insane Broadway pit percussionist. When you're through imagining, you have Boston's Dresden Dolls, in the flesh.

Amanda Palmer and Brian Viglione have been wowing audiences and trendsetters like NIN's Trent Reznor since their 2006 release, *Yes, Virginia*, widely established the duo as mad as a pair of hatters. Reznor not only asked the band to open for him on a recent tour, he invited Viglione to record tracks for his latest online opus, *Ghosts I-IV*. Viglione has also waxed session duty with Jesse Malin, Jules Shear, The Insect Fable, The Kiss Tried To Smack Me, Franz Nicolay, and Emilyn "Cupcake Punk" Brodsky. But Viglione is most proud of The Dresden Dolls' latest dynamic-dramatic affair, *No, Virginia*.

"Overplaying is brought to the fore with The Dresden Dolls," Viglione explains from his home in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. "I

always feel like I need to find my way within that. You've got so much space in a duo, there's a lot of room to orchestrate, which is especially the case with Amanda's ballads. They're wide open. Any time I've questioned myself, I just listen to the fundamental core of the song and how I should best serve that. Don't let your ego get in the way; if you feel an artistic impulse to play something, explore that."

The EMF Rehearsal Complex, which houses The Dresden Dolls' 20x14 work space, is located in a leafy Cambridge burb, not far from the fabled Middle East nightclub. EMF is a thirty-six-unit building with three floors, and includes a guitar shop and record-label offices. Viglione says the "all local Boston crew" gives the space a "grass roots feeling."

The first thing you notice upon entering The Dresden Dolls' studio is Viglione's beautiful Yamaha Oak Custom drumset (9x12 tom, 14x15 and 16x16 floors, 18x22 bass drum) and Zildjian cymbals (15" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats, 19" K Custom Dark crash, 22" K ride, 19" K Custom China). Viglione takes special pride in his collection of snare drums. "I have a 6 1/2x14 Yamaha Paul Leim model," he starts, "which is beautiful-looking and has a really rich sound—lots of crack and power, a beautifully balanced-sounding drum. I



use a couple others as well for recording: Yamaha's 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 John Robinson Signature model has a birch shell with an outer maple ply. Esthetically that's also a gorgeous drum, with a warmer tone and brass pins underneath the rim, which give it a slightly quicker response time. And Yamaha's 7x14 Elvin Jones Signature model has a particular tone and wood hoops; I use that for jazz combo gigs. It's great when I crank up the tuning. I have Ludwig 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Supraphonic and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Black Beauty snare drums as well."

The room, Brian adds, also holds "lots of weird little percussion things, honker horns, air powered organs, an autoharp, a melodica, tambourines, hand drums, tour gear, random collectibles and merchandise, 45s and 12" singles from our 8 Foot Records label, and fan artwork."

The business end of the rehearsal space comprises a Mackie 8-channel powered mixer, a Marshall JVM 410 head, a vintage 1960 Marshall cabinet, a Martin acoustic guitar, a Gibson Les Paul Studio guitar, a Fender Precision Bass Special/100-watt Gallien-Krueger 10001-RB head, a Kurzweil PC88 electric piano, and Shure Beta 87 and Beta 58 microphones.

Brian and Amanda primarily use the space for rehearsal, but they'll occasionally record there as well. "We'll just run a couple mics into an Apple Mac PowerBook with GarageBand," Viglione comments. "It's usually to do workups when we're developing new material for tours or demos for recording. Amanda and I rehearse with a loose attitude to see what will happen with as much dynamic range and emotion as possible. We don't get too hyper-perfectionist."

And of course, the room serves as Viglione's primary practice space. Brian says he typically works out there four to seven days a week when he's not on the road. "My practice generally consists of working on warm-ups, plugging in the earphones to a click and running through the rudiments," the drummer reveals. "I also do

double bass work, usually just endurance work. I'll set a quick tempo and do 16ths or different patterns, usually from different songs. I might improvise over a steady pace to build up consistency or plug into iTunes and play along to favorite albums. That is how I learned to play, listening to everything from The Beatles to Nick Cave to Mozart to John Coltrane. I reacquaint myself with my favorite players and records in that way as well.

"My room is a good space to play in," Brian states. "It doesn't feel cold and isolated at all. I work on sideman projects there too, through the glory of MP3s and email files. That way I can get a general feel of the arrangements before going into the rehearsal with the artist."

Viglione didn't enjoy the luxury of MP3s or email demos when working with Trent Reznor, an event he recalls with fondness and fear, emotions familiar to Dresden Dolls fans the world over.

"I received an email from Trent last October: 'Wanna come over and jam?' Adrian Belew and Alan Moulder were coming too. I went out in December, and Trent asked me to build an unconventional drumset out of household stuff. I gathered aluminum pipes, trashcans, water bottles, all from around his house. We recorded later that night; I was just playing rhythms from the background of knowing Trent's records and where he comes from rhythmically. He liked it, and wanted me to do some more. So the next day he put me on a full kit and I did the same thing, just improvising styles and ranges, beats that might have come from The Downward Spiral or The Fragile. The one thing he said was, 'Give me something we can sample and loop.' I was grooving, but aggressive, and improvising as I saw fit."

Grooving, aggressive, improvisational... The Dresden Dolls' Brian Viglione is truly a theatrical drummer for all seasons.



Ratings Scale

- ★★★★★ Classic
- ★★★★☆ Excellent
- ★★★☆☆ Good
- ★★☆☆☆ Fair
- ★☆☆☆☆ Poor

RECORDINGS



DAFNIS PRIETO SEXTET
TAKING THE SOUL FOR A WALK

★★★★★

Upon arrival in New York, Cuban-born Prieto quickly proved himself as an important “new” drummer. But that’s only phase one; this corner has Concept. Flowering further as a contending leader and composer, on his third disc Prieto unveils a different ensemble sound stronger in brass. The “Latin jazz” label is unfairly limiting. Favoring angular melodies above shifting, grooving polyrhythms and surprising structures, Prieto’s sextet unfolds a complex, arousing brew that thrills. The leader’s astounding drumming is precise and pointillist yet floats on a turbo-cushion. And it makes perfect sense that Prieto has now taken strides to form his own label. Unstoppable. (Dafnison Music)

Jeff Potter



BIOMECHANICAL CANNIBALISED

★★★★★

The brainchild of **John K**, Biomechanical are the band you’d get if you were to throw Pantera and Queensrÿche into a blender with a liberal dose of aggression. These guys are seriously progressive and brutal, navigating

riffs and time changes at high speed. Throughout it all drummer **JONNO LODGE** delivers a relentless performance, pummeling the band with precision and feel. In fact, part of the fun is seeing just where a song is going to go. It might take a few listens to digest, but for fans of extreme technical metal, this one’s worth the effort. (Earache) **Martin Patmos**

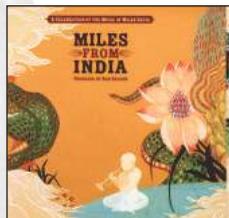


THE BLUEPRINT PROJECT WITH HAN BENNINK
PEOPLE I LIKE

★★★★★

The fourth release from The Blueprint Project proves that free jazz is anything but formless. Modern to the core, this

quartet plays consistently friendly melodies propelled by the unmistakable kinetic thrash of master Danish drummer **HAN BENNINK**. Like Ed Blackwell on too much caffeine or Philly Joe Jones speeding where he should be coasting, Bennink drums with mad glee, whether double-timing the ragtime rush of “Herbie Nichols” or whirling like a dervish in “The Fly And Dr. B.” Bennink plays with such mastery of jazz pulse that whether soloing or playing time, it all becomes one. (Creative Nation) **Ken Micallef**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
MILES...FROM INDIA

★★★★★

Producer Bob Belden had a tasty idea: to flavor the mouthwatering jazz of Miles Davis with the heady spices of Indian classical music.

In this boundary-toppling East-West fusion, we can feast on an “All Blues” where **Ron Carter** and **JIMMY COBB** stir up the rhythm while the melody gets a sweet glaze of sitar. Belden uses cutting-edge production techniques to make it sound as if Indian players (like drummer **GINO BANKS** and percussionist **VIKKU VINAYAKRAM**) are in the same room with Davis-band alumni (like **LENNY WHITE**, **NDUGU CHANCLER**, and **VINCE WILBURN**), when in fact parts were tracked continents apart. Miles, always hungry for new flavors, would surely be licking his lips. (Four Quarters /Times Square) **Michael Parillo**



FROM FIRST TO LAST
FROM FIRST TO LAST

★★★★★

L.A.-based screamo rockers From First To Last have quickly risen to the forefront of their respective underground scene since emerg-

ing five years ago. On their third, self-titled effort, the reckless energy of FFTL’s earlier recordings has been deftly channeled into concentrated, palatable shots, thanks in large part to the stout foundation constructed by drummer **DEREK BLOOM**. Don’t get us wrong, there’s still plenty of swing, swagger, and excitement loaded in his bombastic, crash-heavy passages. But Bloom’s overall performance on *From First To Last* is significantly more mature. From the down-tempo “Worlds Away” to the forceful interludes of “A Perfect Mess,” Bloom knows how to take the listener on a ride down the rhythmic rails of rock. (Suretone) **Waleed Rashidi**



STANTON MOORE EMPHASIS! (ON PARENTHESIS)

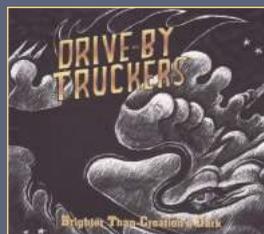
★★★★★

There is some monster drumming on *Emphasis! (On Parenthesis)*. Stanton Moore is intent on playfully turning the beat around on "Late Night At The) Maple Leaf," and he can make the most disjointed part groove, as on "Sitting Through The) African Diaspora." Moore's got a lot of muscle in the part, as well as the finesse to pull off a very cool offbeat hi-hat pattern. Where the album suffers a bit is in the compositions: On "Over (Compensatin)" they just seem to be re-treading MMW's *Shackman*. "Who Ate The) Layer Cake" is odd-time prog rock that sounds too much like a high school garage band. We know that Moore can play half-time funk and JB grooves as well as anyone, but to make a more satisfying record he'd benefit from less jamming and more fully formed songs. (Telarc)

Robin Tolleson

Long Live (Roots) Rock!

by Robin Tolleson



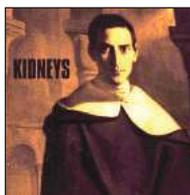
THE HOOTERS, OLD 97S, DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

With mandolin, accordion, and melodic fueling their pop sound, The Hooters can be considered early proponents of roots-rock. Now the Philadelphia-based quintet is back with their first new album in fourteen years, *Time Stand Still*.

Drummer **DAVID UOSIKKINEN** is still driving the good-time grooves with authority. This guy knows how to play a *song*. (Hooters Music)

Old 97s rose out of the '90s indie rock scene, and *Blame It On Gravity* is their first studio album in four years. Drummer **PHILIP PEOPLES** is again charged with combining punk, pop, and country influences into the group's Texas-based rock. Peoples injects nice dynamic shifts in the music, such as the distorted groove he lays on the final verse of "Dance With Me" and the alternating tom and snare workouts on "Early Morning." (New West)

Drive-By Truckers' *Brighter Than Creation's Dark* is a consistently compelling, well-written and played album from the southern rock-grass vets. Large sections of songs go by with nary a drum fill from **BRAD MORGAN**, which is quite a feat for even the very best players. Morgan is as good a rock brushes player as I've heard lately ("The Opening Act," "Daddy Needs A Drink"). And when he needs to lay into some toms, like on "Home Field Advantage," he gives them a good, convincing thumping. This is well-executed, soulful alt-rock. (New West)



KIDNEYS TALKIE WALKIE

★★★★★

BROOKS WACKERMAN is the mastermind behind the punkish-pop music of Kidneys, where the songs are straightforward, but often have a twist. While Brooks has assembled a live band, for the album he

pretty much performed everything himself. Not everyone can pull this off successfully, but Wackerman performs each part with integrity and energy. On a song like "De Lemur" he basically lays down a groove, but finds spots to spice things up with quick fills and a few rhythmic variations. Other songs, like "Fissury," are more upbeat, with the drums pushing the tempo, driving the music forward with enthusiasm. **Martin Patmos**



CHARLES LLOYD QUARTET RABO DE NUBE

★★★★★

Saxophonist Charles Lloyd has many albums to his name, but this 2007 concert recording is among his best. The

quartet here, with pianist **Jason Moran**, bassist **Rueben Rogers**, and drummer **ERIC HARLAND**, plays in ways that inspire and challenge, bringing Lloyd's music to many places. Harland's drumming is phenomenal, as on "Prometheus," where he propels the group with skittish time-keeping, provides color, and turns in a stunning solo. Elsewhere, whether with an easy swing, brushes that shade, or a subtle world-beat pulse, Harland's drumming consistently lifts the music. Contemplative, adventurous, beautiful, daring, and soulful, this group's collective effort offers a rewarding listen. (ECM) **Martin Patmos**



LETTUCE RAGE! ★★★★★

This seven-piece group of former Berklee college buds throws down some bad-to-the-bone old school funk. Recorded on a combination of vintage gear and modern digital technology, this mostly original

instrumental music pays tribute the great funk masters Sly Stone, James Brown, Tower Of Power, The Meters, Herbie Hancock, Earth, Wind & Fire, and Parliament/Funkadelic. Drummer **ADAM DEITCH** nails the retro sound, feel, and technique with masterful funk chops while adding a modern technical flare. His Garibaldiesque technique on "Last Suppil" is super-tight, while his swampy groove on the Meters-style "Speakeasy" is southern-fried greasy. (Velour Music Group) **Mike Haid**

AND FURTHERMORE...

WITCH PARALYZED

Since the late '80s, Dinosaur Jr.'s **J MASCIS** has been a bona fide guitar god to the alter-native rock nation. Those of us who noticed that J simply killed on DJ's '91 album *Green Mind*—on *drums*—had all the more reason to genuflect. *Paralyzed*, the second album from J's side project Witch, is yet one more oozing, riff-laden example of his remarkably attitudinal drum style. Pure fun 'n' guts. (TeePee) **Adam Budofsky**



THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES THESE ARE THE GOOD TIMES PEOPLE

The Presidents Of The United States is still making upbeat, sarcastic power pop, as heard on *These Are The Good Times People*. And drummer **JASON FINN** is still cranking out solid new wave/punk/funk-inspired grooves. A clever player, Finn plays to the offbeat lyrics as well as the driving music. (Fugitive) **Robin Tolleson**

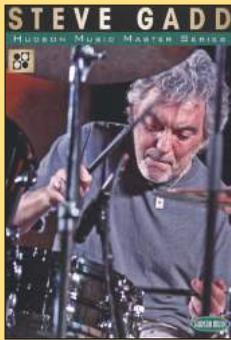
GRAVEYARD GRAVEYARD

Sweden's Graveyard take on the sound of psychedelic '70s proto-metal and make it their own. The overdriven guitars and soulful howl will have you nodding your head along in no time, but the openness of the songs is what's truly refreshing, allowing drummer **AXEL SJOBERG** to play with a flowing groove devoid of formula. (Teepee) **Martin Patmos**

CLINIC DO IT!

Do It! is a breezy ride on an off-kilter pop merry-go-round. With throwback songwriting, fuzzed-out guitar, and Mickey Dolenz-meets-Syd Barrett vocals, it sounds like a product of the '60s, only with superior production values. **CARL TURNEY** remains strictly in service of the song with martial snare rolls, steady thumping bass, and minimal but effectively quirky percussion. (Domino) **Michael Parillo**

GOOD GADD!



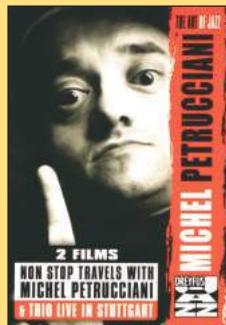
STEVE GADD HUDSON MUSIC MASTERS SERIES

★★★★★

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$29.95

Younger drummers who've been inundated with the "sport of drumming" concept by many of today's drumming monsters may have trouble understanding the importance of Steve Gadd's contributions to the art of drumming without doing extensive research into his vast discography. Gadd helped shape, define, and elevate the role of the drummer in popular music during the

'70s and '80s to a level that is *still* unreachable by other players. This performance from Gadd's 2006 national clinic tour speaks volumes of his humble character and his thoughtful, musical approach, and has very little to do with chops. Gadd does, however, detail his drumming vocabulary and explains how he got extra mileage from his Mozambique pattern and groundbreaking, rudimental-based licks. For drummers who grew up with Gadd, this DVD is a welcome (and much needed) reminder that drumming is still about time, groove, and musical creativity. (Hudson) **Mike Haid**

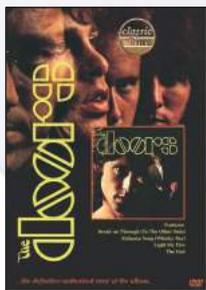


MICHEL PETRUCCIANI NON STOP TRAVELS/ TRIO LIVE IN STUTTGART

★★★★★

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$22.99

The late pianist didn't let a devastating disease keep him from casting a long shadow in the jazz world during his brief time. This package contains two discs, one a pretty personal film about Petruccianni on the road, with appearances by **Charles Lloyd**, **ROY HAYNES**, and others. The second disc is a concert video of his trio performing in Germany. Both show the pianist's remarkable resolve. **Anthony Jackson**, a true bass god, is not known as a jazz soloist, but he does take the absolute right approach to deconstructing "So What." **STEVE GADD's** name might as well *be* god with many people, and he really is inspiring to watch here. I'd forgotten how good he is with brushes, with tons of technique and tricks up his sleeve—such as when he turns the brushes around to the metal to spar with the pianist on "Chloe Meets Gershwin." (Dreyfus Jazz) **Robin Tolleson**

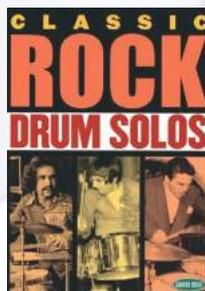


THE DOORS CLASSIC ALBUMS

★★★★★

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$14.98

While rock drummers in the late '60s were expanding their horizons with epic solos, **JOHN DENSMORE** of The Doors took a more subtle approach. He kept time with an unusually light touch for a drummer of that vintage, which allowed him to infuse songs like "Light My Fire" with Latin rhythms. In this DVD chronicling the making of The Doors' self-titled debut, Densmore demonstrates how he arrived at the beats to the album's songs, like copping the traditional Brazilian side-stick and brush feel for the side-stick/kick/ride cymbal figure that introduces "Break On Through." The bonus segment John Tells His Tricks Of The Trade is fantastic, with Densmore breaking down his gear and tuning m.o. (Eagle Vision) **Patrick Berkery**

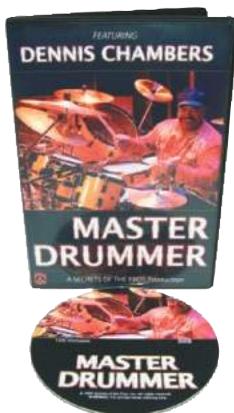


CLASSIC ROCK DRUM SOLOS

★★★★★

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$29.95

Rock drumming legend Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) reminisces and narrates this loosely produced look back at the history of rock drum solos. Beginning with Gene Krupa, the father of all drum soloists, Appice advances quickly through the decades, highlighting session drummer Sandy Nelson's chart-topping "Teen Beat" (which Appice performs), Michael Shrieve's classic "Soul Sacrifice" solo from Santana's Woodstock appearance, and Cozy Powell ripping it up with Whitesnake in the '80s. The video completely skips the '90s (Tommy Lee, anybody?) and closes with a Neil Peart solo from a 2004 Rush concert. Though the major classic rock soloists are featured here, the overall production feels a bit disjointed, and some of the not-so-classic solo footage shortchanges several of these soloing legends. Hit and miss. (Hudson Music) **Mike Haid**



DENNIS CHAMBERS MASTER DRUMMER

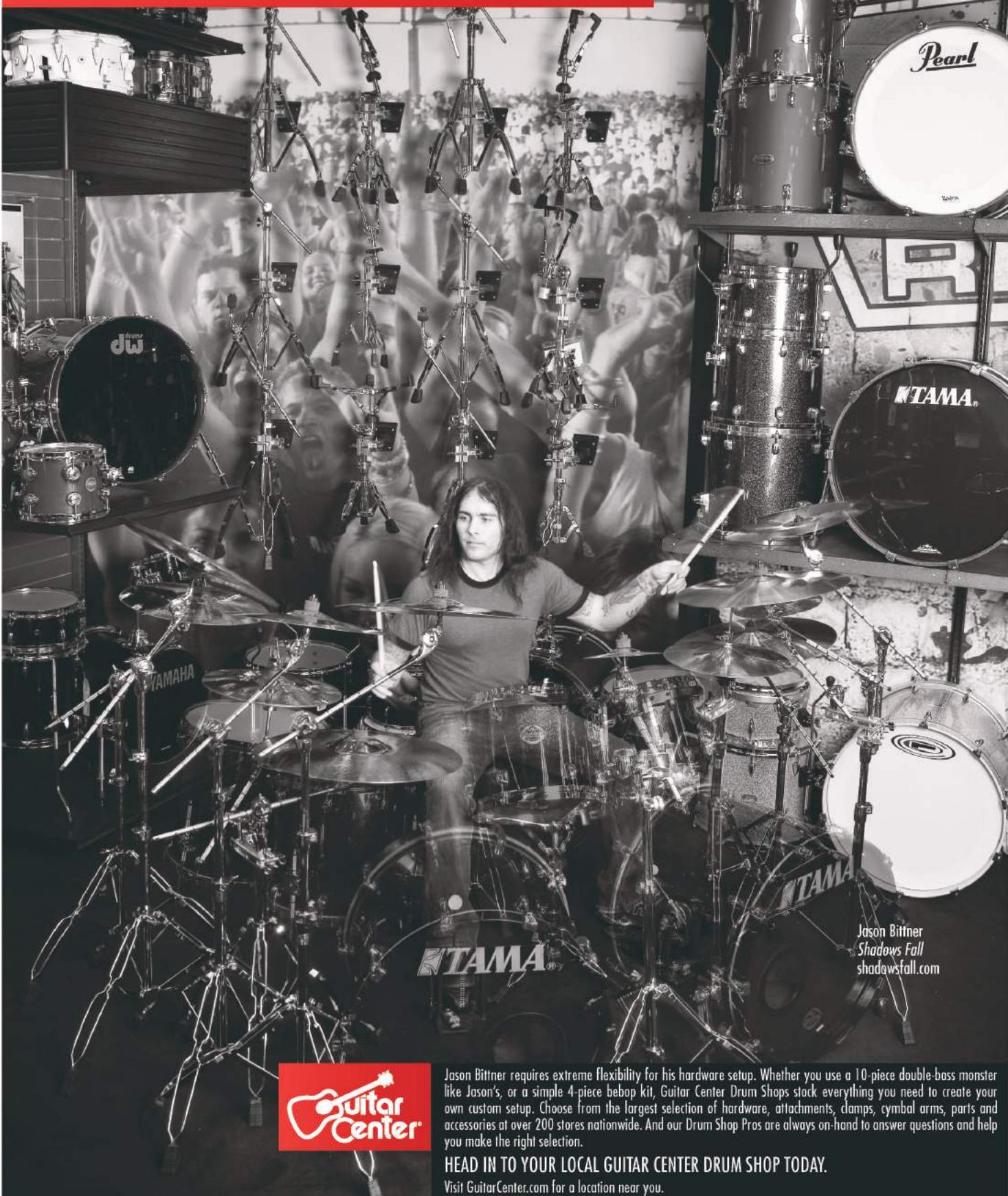
★★★★★

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$24.95

Nobody's hurrying Dennis Chambers on this DVD, and it's interesting just seeing him talk at his pace. The drummer traces an amazing journey from growing up in Baltimore and listening to his mom's band rehearse at the age of two, to today touring with Santana. Within two years of meeting James Brown and getting an offer to join his band at thirteen—an idea nixed by his mother because Brown wouldn't provide a tutor—Dennis was part of the Funkadelic stable. Later, Chambers (who doesn't read music) discusses what it is to be a musician and how to build the necessary vocabulary to create music. He also discusses the joy of working alongside Santana percussionists Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo, and talks about how he uses colors to help compose drum solos. Bassist **Benny Rietveld** jams with Chambers, highlighting the importance of listening to a groove—and being able to step away from it when appropriate. (Secrets Of The Pros) **Robin Tolleson**



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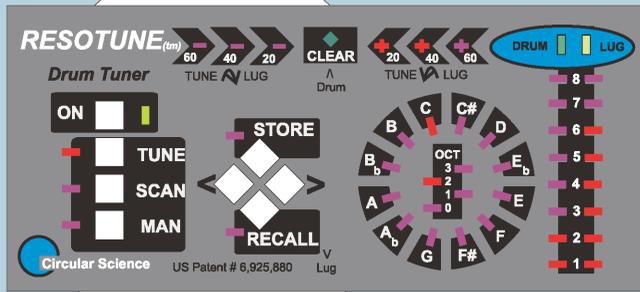
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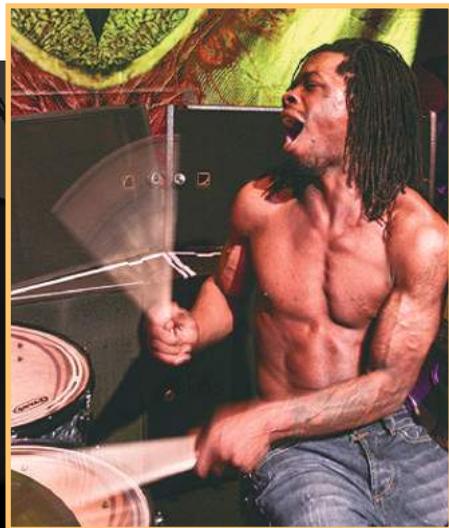
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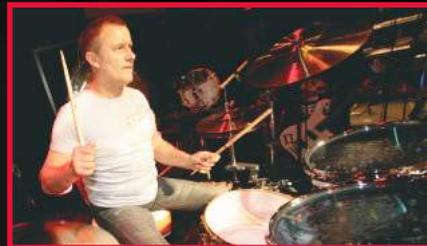
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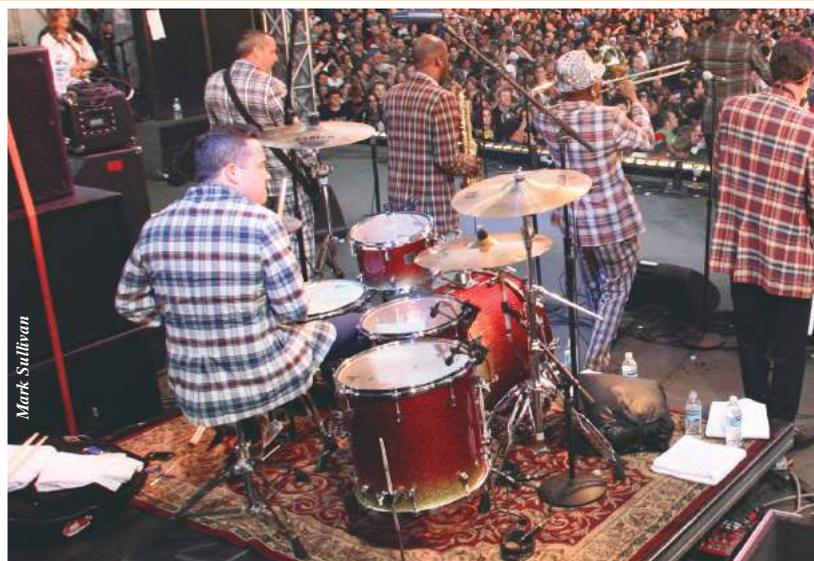
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Bamboozle 2008

The fourth annual Bamboozle rock festival took place this past May 3 and 4 at the Meadowlands Sports Complex in East Rutherford, New Jersey. This two-day event featured some of the hottest bands and hardest-hitting drummers on the alternative music scene. Headlining Saturday's show were Snoop Dogg and Jimmy Eat World, and Sunday's headliners were Panic At The Disco and Coheed And Cambria. Other notable bands scattered throughout the various stages of the event included Say Anything, Story Of The Year, The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, Paramore, Armor For Sleep,

The Starting Line, with drummer Tom Gryskiewicz, performed to a massive crowd on the nowwhat.com stage.



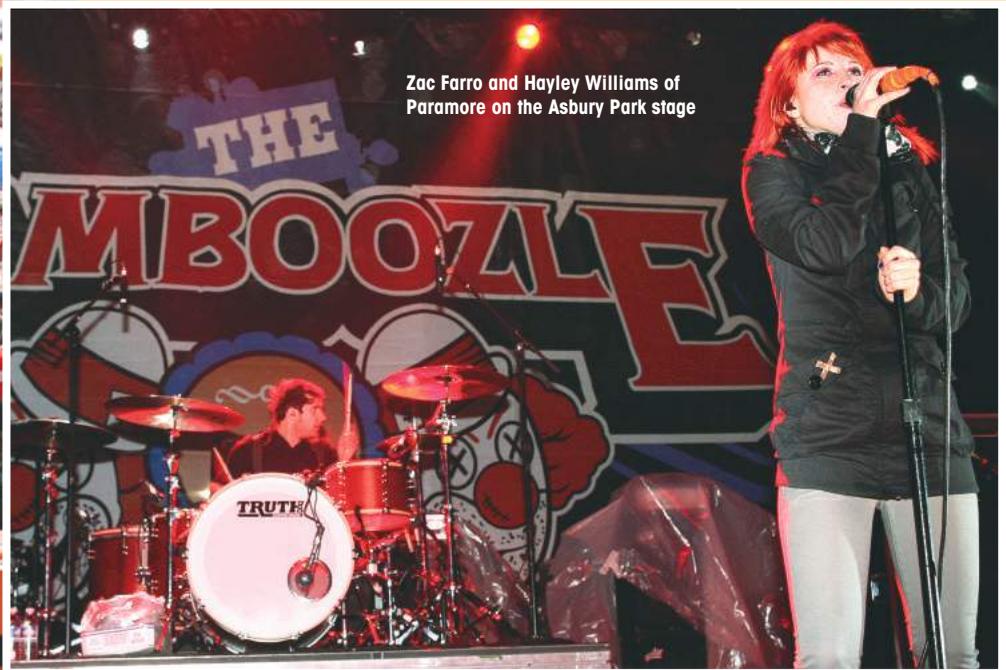
Saves The Day, The Bravery, MxPx, Alien Ant Farm, The Devil Wears Prada, From First To Last, Motion City Soundtrack, Gym Class Heroes, The Academy Is. . ., Thrive, Every Time I Die, Bret Michaels, and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones.

Due to its overwhelming success in previous years, Bamboozle created the Bamboozle Roadshow, which took place March 28 through May 10, and the Bamboozle Left, which was held on April 5 and 6 at the Verizon Wireless amphitheatre in Irvine, California. The roster for the west coast festival included My Chemical Romance, Paramore, The All-American Rejects, Face To Face, Hot Water Music, and The Dillinger Escape Plan. The Roadshow made stops at various small venues across America and featured Saves The Day, Armor For Sleep, and several other acts. For more info on the various faces of Bamboozle, log on to www.bamboozle.com.



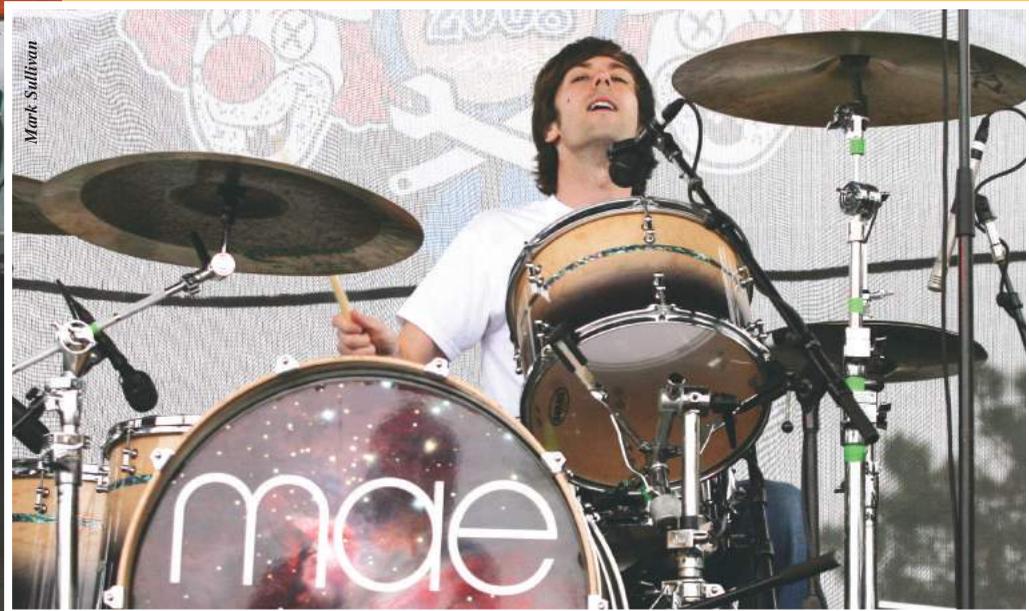
Kitty of industrial rock band Mindless Self Indulgence

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Zac Farro and Hayley Williams of Paramore on the Asbury Park stage

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Jacob Marshall performed with Mae at Bamboozle for the fourth year in a row.

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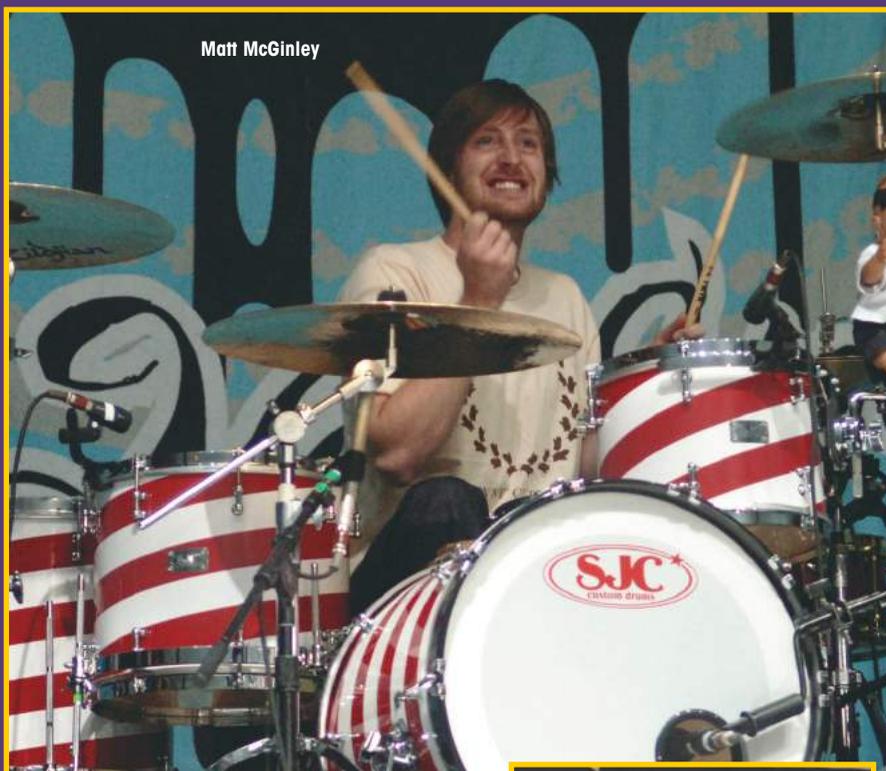
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Who's Playing What?



Matt McGinley

New Vic Firth artists include **Casey Lagos** (Stick To Your Guns), **Justin Muir** (Monty Are I), **Daniel Williams** (Devil Wears Prada), **Ricc Sheridan** (Earl Greyhound), **Mavrico Herrera** (Yerba Buena), **Charlie Zeleny** (Jordan Rudess), **Matt McGinley** (Gym Class Heroes), and **Danny Cooper** (Drop Dead, Gorgeous).

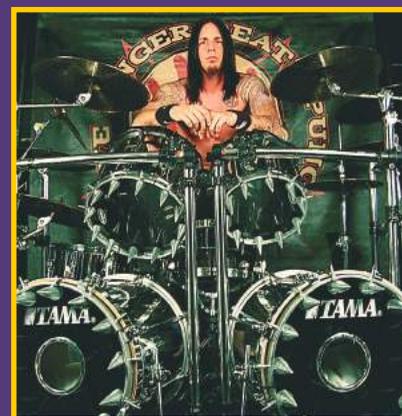
SilverFox drumsticks has added **Trey Gray** (Brooks & Dunn), **Brett Romnes** (I Am The Avalanche), **Chris Depew** (Single File), **Dan Bourke** (This Is Hell), **Derek Smith** (Four Letter Lie), **Jose Jimenez** (Criss Angel) and **Steve Curtiss** (The Color Fred) to their artist roster.

New Tama artists include **Jason Rullo** (Symphony X), **Jason Costa** (All That Remains), **Eron Bucciarelli** (Hawthorne Heights), **Jon Rice** (Job For A Cowboy), **Troy Zeigler** (Serj Tankian), **Marcus Williams** (Tyler Perry), **Shannon Lucas** (Black Dahlia Murder), **Charles Streeter** (Chaka Khan), **Des Kensel** (High On Fire), **Jake Davison** (Aiden), **Jeremy Spencer** (Five Finger Death Punch), **Romain Goulon** (Necrophagist), **Dan Torelli** (Madina Lake), **Ryan Parrish** (Darkest Hour), and **Ryan Loerke** (Secret & Whisper).

Shine Drums recently added **Stefon "Spider" Dubose** (Sly & The Family Stone), **Fred Armisen/Jens Hannemann** (independent/clinician/SNL castmember), **Joe Mauro** (The Lordz), **Rene Escovedo** (independent), and **Glen Graham** (Blind Melon).

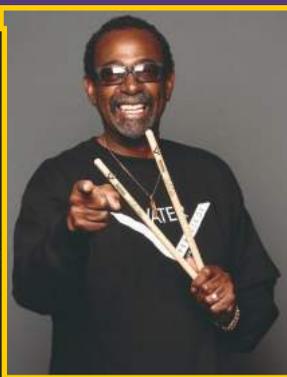


Jason Rullo



Jeremy Spencer

Trevor Lawrence Jr.



Charli Persip

New Vater artists include **Raymond Pounds** (Stevie Wonder/independent), **Chico Hamilton** (jazz great), **Yesod Williams** (Pepper), **Tony Fagenson** (Eve 6), **Christopher Stiles** (Bedlight For Blue Eyes), **Sean O' Shea** (Orgone/Alicia Keys/Connie Price And The Keystones), **Tommy Quinn** (The Rocket Summer), **Trevor Lawrence Jr.** (Everlast/independent), **Derrick Frost** (Chiodos), **Jamie Ethridge** (Scary Kids Scaring Kids), **Pete Beeman** (Burning Brides), **Ryan O' Keefe** (Airbourne), **Derrick Wright** (Toni Braxton), **Steve Sinatra** (Halfway To Hazzard/Vertical Horizon), **Mark Goodwin** (Sick Puppies), **TJ Sego** (Gwen Stacy), **Mika Fineo** (Filter), **Charli Persip** (jazz legend), **Mark Simmons**, **Rob Jensen** (The Redwalls) and **Tony Escapa** (Ricky Martin).



Chico Hamilton

Wayne Proctor



Jason Finn



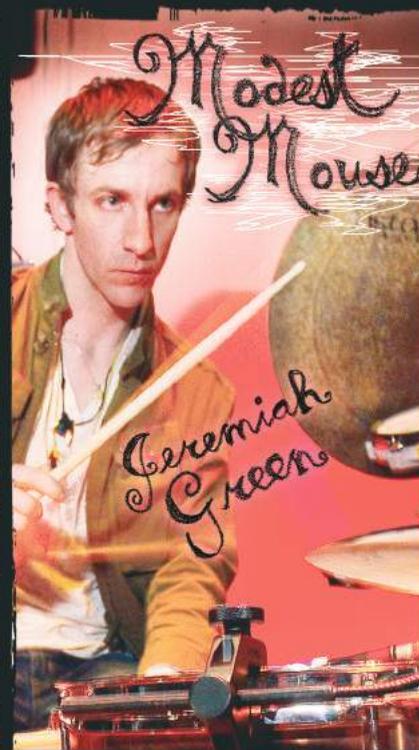
Wayne Proctor (Scott McKeon) and **Jason Finn** (Presidents Of The United States Of America) are playing Slingerland drums.

The Brady Drum Company has added **Jim Elliot** (The Cruel Sea), **Shawn Fichter** (Peter Frampton), **Stuart Johnson** (Matthew Sweet), **Ben Kenney** (Incubus), **Paul Kodish** (sessions), **Sammy Merendino** (Cyndi Lauper), and **Ian Thomas** (Eric Clapton, sessions) to its artist roster.

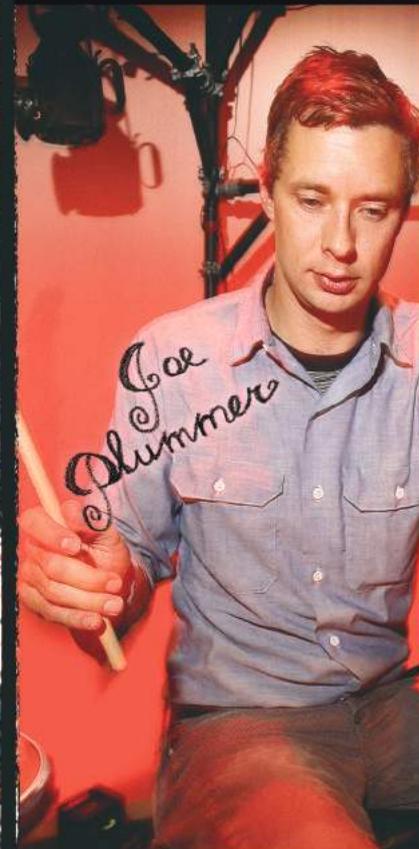
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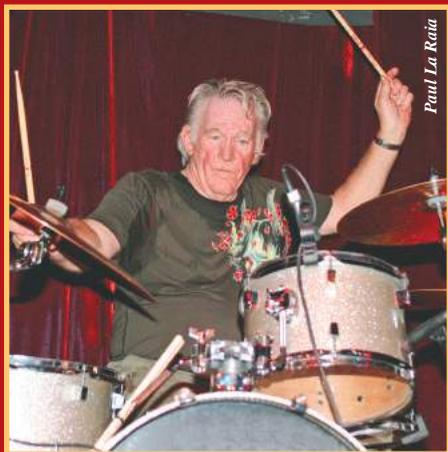
Former Paul McCartney and Wings drummer Denny Seiwell came to the New York City area for a special guest appearance on March 29 at the 34th annual Fest For Beatles Fan, held at the Crowne Plaza Meadowlands Hotel in Secaucus, New Jersey.

Seiwell played along to classic Wings tracks and a selection from the soundtrack to the movie *Waterworld*. Later, the drummer joined former Wings guitarist Laurence Juber for a concert performance with the festival's house band, Liverpool.

A few days later, Denny joined up with legendary jazz guitarist Joe Beck, McCartney guitarist and session great David Spinoza, sax great Lou Marini, and Blues Brothers bassist Eric Udel for a night of music at NYC club The Cutting Room.

Before heading home to Los Angeles, Seiwell taught a masterclass at The Collective music school, where he discussed his performances on classic tracks, including McCartney's hit "Live And Let Die."

For more on Denny please visit his web site, www.dennyseiwell.com.



In Memoriam

John Rutsey

Rush founding drummer John Rutsey passed away on May 11. He was fifty five. Rutsey is best remembered for his playing on Rush's 1974 debut album. John left the band because he suffered from diabetes and was unable to go on extended tours with the group.



Rutsey was replaced in Rush by Neil Peart, which marked a turning point in the band's sound towards progressive rock. Rush formed in 1968 in Toronto and was originally composed of guitarist Alex Lifeson, bassist Jeff Jones (who was replaced by Geddy Lee) and Rutsey.

Shortly after leaving Rush, Rutsey gave up drumming to pursue bodybuilding. Those wishing to pay tribute to the drummer can do so by making a donation to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Ontario. For more info, go to www.jdrf.ca.

Ola Brunkert

Ola Brunkert, the former drummer for '70s Swedish pop band ABBA, died this past March of an accident in his house in Mallorca, Spain. He was 61. According to ABBA's Web site, Brunkert was the only instrumental musician to appear on all of the band's albums.



Brunkert began his career in the late-'50s as a jazz drummer. He later drummed with blues band Slim's Blues Gang, before joining pop group Science Poition in the mid-1960s. Through his collaboration with guitarist Janne Schaffer in the jazz-pop group Opus III later in the decade, Brunkert started getting work as a session musician in the '70s.

Ola's first ABBA-related session was also the group's first single, "People Need Love." Ola toured with ABBA in 1977, 1979, and 1980. He also toured Sweden as part of the Original ABBA Orchestra In Concert, featuring ABBA's original session and touring musicians.

Cliff Davies

Ted Nugent drummer/producer Cliff Davies pass away on April 13. He was 59. Cliff is best known for his work with Nugent in the 1970s and early '80s. Beyond his production and drumming credits, Davis was also the voice on the studio version of the song "Stormtroopin'." After leaving Nugent's band in the early 1980s, Cliff produced various projects, including the final Grand Funk Railroad album, *What's Funk*.



In 2005, after a brief reunion with former bandmates Rob Grange and Derek St. Holmes, Davies began work on the development of the Rock And Roll Remembers Foundation. Rock And Roll Remembers' mission is to assist those within the music community who have fallen on hard times. Cliff's final recorded appearance was with the Unknown Heroes Of Rock. Sales from their EP helped raise money for the foundation. Davies also made his final public appearance at a benefit concert on April 5, 2008 in Fresno, California as part of the Unknown Heroes. More info on the foundation can be found at www.rockandrollremembers.org.

An advertisement for MoonGel RTOM drums. At the top, a piece of light blue corrugated metal has the words "Used for plumbing" written on it in black marker. Below this, the "MOONGEL" logo is displayed in a stylized blue font. Underneath the logo is a close-up image of a drum's rim and head, with a blue diamond-shaped graphic overlaid that says "Designed for Drumming". At the bottom left, the "RTOM" logo is visible, and at the bottom right, the text "Distribution: bigbangdist.com" is printed.



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Queensrÿche's Scott Rockenfield On His New Holographic Setup

Queensrÿche drummer Scott Rockenfield has always had an affinity for unique setups. "My goal since I started the band in 1980 was to step outside the normal drumset look and try to design something different," the drummer recalls. "That's why I started using chains on my cymbal stands." Now Scott has expanded the look of his kit further by incorporating his band's logo into a futuristic holographic covering, which is made by the drummer's company RockenWraps.

Scott's current kit consists of ddrum maple-shelled drums: 8", 10", 12", 13", and 16" toms, two 22" kicks, and two 5¹/₂ x 14 snares. The heads are from Attack, with clear 2-ply models on all drums except the snares, which use 2-ply heavy coated. Scott also uses Pearl hardware, Ahead sticks, and Paiste Signature series cymbals: two 16" crashes, 17" and 18" Power crashes, two 18" Heavy Chinas, a 20" Dry ride, and 13" Heavy hi-hats.

When asked about his "signature" chains, Scott explains, "The chains are a new design based on my originals. They are fully adjustable and fit onto almost any stand."



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Of course it is! Now how about sharing your cool creation with thousands of fellow *Modern Drummer* readers. Simply send us some photos and a brief description of your unique set, and we'll consider it for inclusion in *Kit Of The Month*. And if we do pick your pride & joy for coverage in *MD*, we'll send you a cool new MD Drum Bag/Cooler—for free! Just follow the simple directions below.

Photo Submission: Digital photos on disk as well as print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Hi-res digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to miked@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.



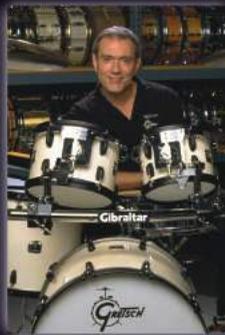
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