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**Adam Deitch**

## LIMITLESS PERFORMERS

TAMA artist **Adam Deitch's** music career is as far-reaching as it is impressive. His musical background is full of notable names and credits, playing with *John Scofield*, *Break Science* and his funk group, *Lettuce*. Adam is always developing and growing as a musician and trying out new ways to make great sounds. Now, Adam's exploring the focused, well balanced tone of his new **Starclassic Walnut/Birch** kit and how it flows seamlessly with his unique blend of Hip Hop and Funk-inspired playing.



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# Every Drummer's a Snowflake

No, not *that* kind of snowflake—you'll have to find me at the bar if you want to talk politics. What I'm talking about here is the age-old concept of every snowflake being utterly unique. After forty-odd years of deep conversation and deeper listening, it's more obvious to me than ever that no two drummers are at all alike.



Jim Esposito

No matter how much the public might try to pigeonhole us as a group (of *course* we're not all like Animal from *The Muppet Show*), no two of us are the same. Not even if we want to be. No matter how much we mimic our heroes in the woodshed, or how many of the same records we listen to, method books we work out of, or snare drums we spend our hard-earned cash on, no two of us will ever be the same. Not exactly.

Don't get me wrong, I think it's important to learn what makes the great drummers tick, and which records represent our art at the highest and most influential levels. Likewise, it will only benefit you to at least have a working knowledge of concepts explored in classic texts like *Master Studies* and *The New Breed*. And it's smart to have experience playing a brass snare drum, a thin jazz ride cymbal, or even a single-headed kit fitted with Pinstripe heads.

But it's even smarter to realize that no matter how much you understand how those books and records and pieces of gear fit into the history and evolution of our instrument, we are all unique individuals by both nature and nurture, and there's only so much we can do to force ourselves to play a certain way, regardless of our reasons for wanting to.

In the drumming world, there's perhaps no more famous example of this idea than the story of Rush drummer Neil Peart's early desire to play like his hero, Keith Moon. The thought seems almost absurd now—could two drum stylists be further apart? But as a young player in the '60s and '70s, Neil was doing exactly what one would expect him to: working to get close to the secret of the most exciting player of his generation. Fortunately, Neil came to the realization that it wasn't in his makeup to play like Moon, searching instead within himself to find his own true voice and—and here's the important part—honing his idiosyncrasies in the practice room and within the music of his band.

Every month in *Modern Drummer* you can find examples of professional drummers who've become successful with this basic formula: figure out what's worked for others, take the things you like, leave the things you don't, and make your own way. This issue, however, seems to illustrate the concept particularly well. Cover artist Danny Carey has developed his own vocabulary built on the explorations of his fusion heroes, fueled by his own polymetric and sonic ideas, and tweaked by the possibilities of modern electronics. Jerry Marotta focused his timekeeping ideas on the toms and helped Peter Gabriel define his own legendary sound. Jerry Roe somehow finds the commonalities of classic prog rock and Americana, and uses it to freshen up Nashville tracks. And Linda Pitmon identified the core elements of alternative rock that literally saved her life, and learned how to bring that energy and efficiency to the work of multiple legendary rock figures.

So, the question is, how are you going to be you?

Adam Budofsky  
Editorial Director

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# What's Your Favorite Danny Carey Track?



I'd say "Ticks and Leeches." He incorporates ghost notes into the main groove, which you don't really hear too often in Tool's music. Also, the intro is a beast, and the song's vibe is highly distinguishable from all of the other songs on *Lateralus*. It's really fun to play and can help you get more comfortable with 7/4 as well as with odd accent patterns.

**Steve French**

"Rosetta Stoned" is truly inspiring for its complexity, yet Carey maintains musicality and perfect interaction with Justin Chancellor's bass and Adam Jones' guitar. It's indeed a masterpiece!

**André Sarmiento Ferreira**

"Rosetta Stoned" from *10,000 Days*. Carey's genius, power, and attention to detail are on full display here. The five-against-three polyrhythmic groove still blows my mind, and I like how it creates tension in the song.

**Anthony Dio**

For me it has to be "Lateralus." That song made me want to play drums every bit as much as John Bonham or Mitch Mitchell did when I was a kid. Carey is on my drumming Mount Rushmore. I'm so thrilled for this new album, which will surely feature historical work from all involved.

**Jim Rita**

During the last half of "Eulogy" [*Ænima*], Carey plays a three-note 16th hi-hat grouping over a standard rock beat, and the first time I heard that I was blown away. Not only is it an interesting drum part on its own, but it grounds the vocals and guitar with a groove that you can follow. That may have been the moment I decided to learn about polyrhythms and how to apply them musically.

**Andrew Bennett**

**B. J. Wilson**

Thank you so much for your feature on B. J. Wilson [September 2019]. As a young player, B. J. was one of the drummers I admired most. His band Procol Harum was one of those groups in the '60s that had a definitive sound that was so unique and enhanced by the drummer himself. And you're right, nobody plays 6/8 like B. J. did on Joe Cocker's version of "With a Little Help from My Friends."

I was sorry to hear about how his life ended, and it reminded me of how my sobriety had saved me. Again, thank you so much for bringing B. J. Wilson to the readers of *MD*. Some will have known him, and I hope many others now do, too.

**Liberty DeVitto**

"Forty Six & 2" from *Ænima*. It's the first time Tool gave the drummer some on record, and Danny took it way out and back to the crushing riff. Each new section's variation built on the previous one.

**Brent Frison**

I'd probably choose "The Grudge" from *Lateralus*. The song starts with a bang and ends with it. Besides, all the odd time signature rhythms are beautifully incorporated with the wonderful chords and vocals. It's godly.

**Rishabh Asthana**

I'd say "The Grudge" because of Carey's use of all sorts of different polyrhythms, dynamics, grooves, and orchestrations. He was also being so conscious of the rest of the band. And the killer solo at the end makes this one of the most

challenging and musically engaging Tool drum parts.

**Dan Caruso**

"Rosetta Stoned" from *10,000 Days* has some of the most amazing yet powerful drum patterns I've ever heard. The coordination in the interlude is out of this world, which is very fitting for the track. It's definitely one of his most inspiring drum parts.

**Jake Klossing**

On "Parabola" from *Lateralus*, Carey's groove, sound, and energy are incredible. There's no single hit or sound that's made without purpose. Everything he plays suits the song perfectly.

**Bartosz Dudek**



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## Brian Chippendale on Lightning Bolt's *Sonic Citadel*

The noise-rock mainstays celebrate twenty-five years together with their raucous new effort.



Nick Sayers

On October 11, Lightning Bolt, the long-running noise-punk duo formed by bassist Brian Gibson and drummer Brian Chippendale, released *Sonic Citadel*. The record marks the seventh full-length for the group since forming in 1994. Throughout the album Gibson's signature buzz-saw tone, Chippendale's familiar crackling vocals, and the drummer's slashing snare shred.

Check out the album's opener, "Blow to the Head," where the duo tears through an absolute sonic barrage of distorted bass, oscillating synths, and Chippendale's fat, rolling single-stroke blasts. On "Air Conditioning," Chippendale drives through Gibson's head-jerking bass jabs almost recklessly. And the drummer packs rapid tom and bass drum combinations between relentless crashes on "Tom Thump."

We recently caught up with Chippendale to dig into the record.

**MD:** What was the writing process like on *Sonic Citadel*?

**Brian:** Generally, going back to Lightning Bolt's beginning, we've jammed out songs. We'll hit ideas and then maybe stop to review. I record everything and have four-track cassettes of basically every practice we've done since 1994. Through this free-form process we might stumble on stuff, go back, and orchestrate it. That's generally been the process.

This time we changed it up a little bit, and a lot of it had to do with me. This is the first record we've done since I had a kid. So time is a little different now. Probably a third of the songs came from jamming. A third of the songs came from us digging back through time and remembering things. I also brought in a couple of mostly finished songs that I'd written. That was fun, because I landed a couple riffs on the record, which is pretty rare.

**MD:** Was there a specific goal for this record?

**Brian:** Honestly, the goal was that it's our twenty-fifth year, so let's get a goddamn record out by any means necessary.

We've tried to attach concepts to records in the past, and I think we even did this time, too. We said, "There's one song; let's form an album around its idea." And then it always just falls apart. [laughs] Every time we set out with some sort of concept, we end up just writing riffs and solving problems and kind of coming out with what we come out with.

Also, we didn't tour before recording this, which was different. The past albums have tended to kind of have a tour energy to them. I don't want to call this one laid-back by any means. But it doesn't fully go off the rails, for

better or worse. A lot of times we'll come off of a tour, and I'll be playing so fast that I can't even play the groove. If there ever was a groove, it's just gone. This time with certain songs, it was helpful that I hadn't gone into a crazy machine mode. I was just playing.

**MD:** How do you maintain that physicality of it, in terms of technique?

**Brian:** I try to play daily and stay in shape generally. But I think it comes down to just playing as much as I can. Maybe I'll play an hour a day. Or maybe these days with my kid, I'll play thirty minutes just to get to some level of fluidity for the day.

**MD:** Did you guys work with any outside producers?

**Brian:** For this one and the last one we worked with Seth Manchester at Machines with Magnets, which is just a solid Pro Tools-based studio here in town [Pawtucket, Rhode Island]. Seth is fantastic. He always offers ideas if we're stuck. Sometimes he'll do an edit before we can get the edit out of our mouths.

**MD:** You've maintained such a unique and consistent drum tone throughout your career, especially with your snare.

**Brian:** We were bouncing a little bit of the drums through a Tascam 424, which is this old cassette four-track for home recordings. And there's always been something really magical about those recordings. I think Brian and I have always wrestled with the thought that there's a certain dryness to studio recordings. We lose that magic of a home recording, where you can almost do anything and it sounds fantastic and fantastically garbled. So we were actually running the snare and the vocals through the four-track as a preamp to distort it to get a little crispness in there, or like the frizzled thing that I think my snare has. My snare has this high ping and distortion to it. It's a '70s Ludwig Supraphonic that I tighten as much as I possibly can.

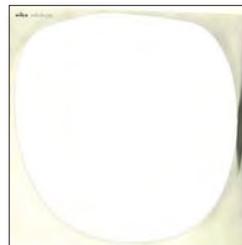
**MD:** Twenty-five years is significant in terms of being in the same band.

**Brian:** Being a two-piece helps. Although sometimes it can feel like one guy wants to go left and one wants to go right, so you just don't go anywhere. [laughs] But the bright side is that you can be pretty telepathic about what you're doing.

And we're lucky. We're still friends after all these years. Also, we're both good at milking some new territory out of some pretty limited, specific stuff, in terms of instrumentation and sound. And we're psyched about that. We're into limitations and trying to find new things. It still feels like there's some territory left.

**Willie Rose**

## More New Releases



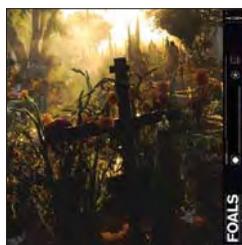
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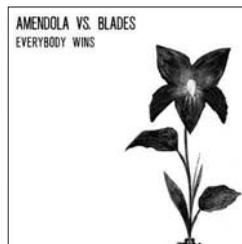
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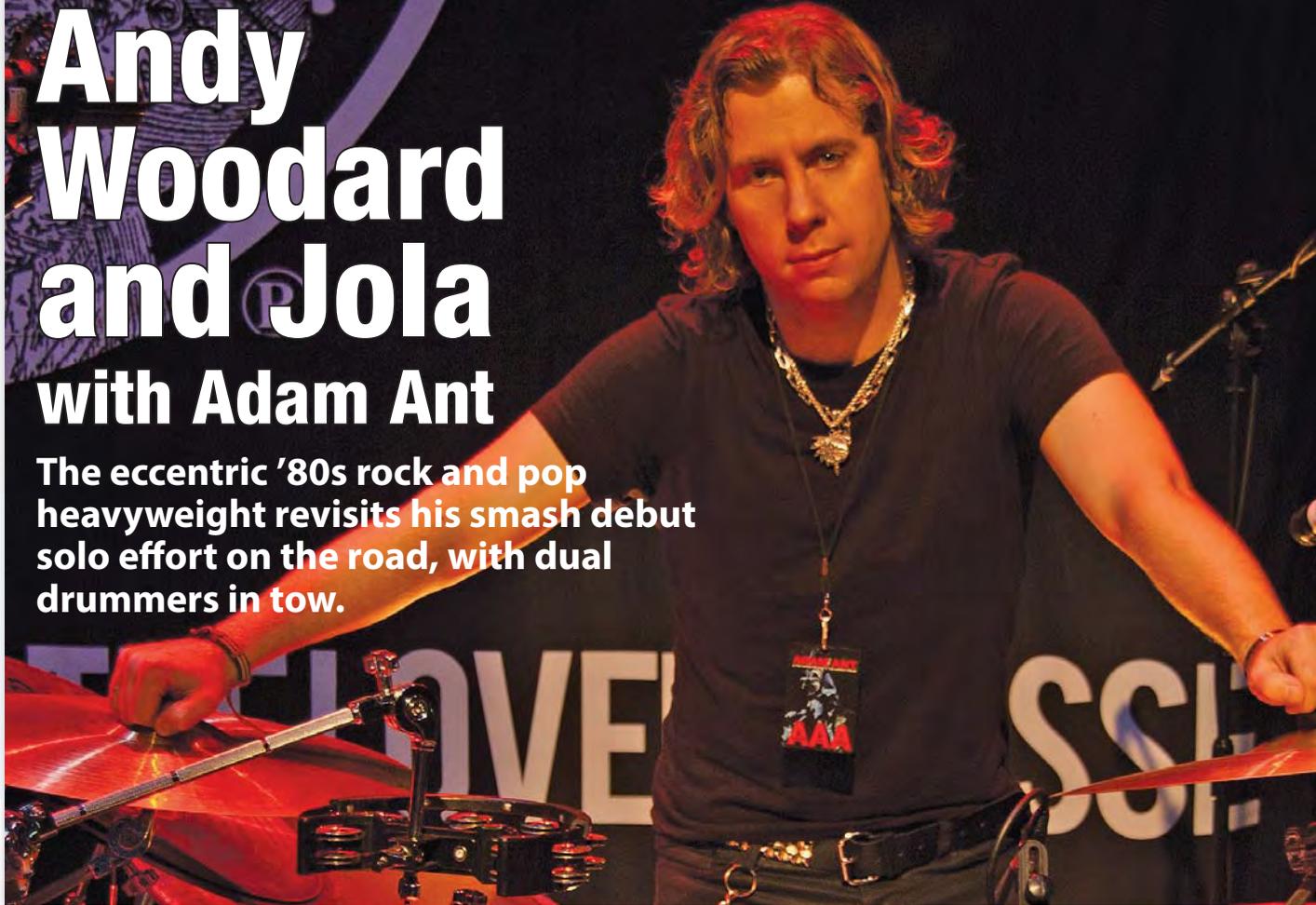
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**Amendola Vs. Blades**  
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## Andy Woodard and Jola with Adam Ant

The eccentric '80s rock and pop heavyweight revisits his smash debut solo effort on the road, with dual drummers in tow.



Originally released in 1982, *Friend or Foe* marked the first solo record for Adam Ant, who had previously led the new-wave group Adam and the Ants during the late '70s and early '80s. *Friend or Foe* peaked at number 5 on the U.K. charts, thanks in part to the dance-infused rockabilly single "Goody Two Shoes," which hit number 1 in the U.K. and Australia and number 12 in the U.S.

Now, more than three and a half decades later, Ant is hitting the road for an international *Friend or Foe* live run that lasts through late November. Backing the singer/songwriter on the road with a two-drummer approach are Jola, who joined Ant in 2010, and Andy Woodard, who joined in 2011. Let's check in.

**MD:** What's the band's rehearsal process like leading up to a tour?

**Jola:** We don't over-rehearse. This lends a spontaneity and rawness to the live shows as well as a thrill that something unscripted will happen. For the *Friend or Foe* tour, we're rehearsing songs we've never played together before, so there's the added excitement of hearing how all the parts we've worked on individually will sound as a whole.

**Andy:** It all starts very relaxed while we knock through the songs. Then we work them into a set and go over it to learn the flow. We openly discuss certain parts or issues, which is helpful. It's nice that each person is listening so intently to what each other is playing. The last few run-throughs are where we get the timings and transitions right.

**MD:** How do you prepare for a tour?

**Andy:** I'm very lucky to earn my living playing drums and bass, so I'm always kept warm, so to speak. Most weeks I perform three or four times for around two hours, and then I practice in between teaching.

**Jola:** Physically, you certainly have to maintain a reasonable level of fitness and strength for the rigors of touring. Even when not touring, I like to keep playing whenever I can. There's been quite a long gap between the last tour and the *Friend or Foe* run, but luckily I've had some projects to focus on.

**MD:** How do you decide to split the parts live?

**Andy:** There's some doubling to add power, particularly on songs with only one drum part on the record. But usually I take the meat-and-potato parts—the main kick and snare patterns—and Jola does all the interesting work on the toms and percussion. Sometimes we double the tom parts, as that's the trademark Ant sound.

**Jola:** "Vive Le Rock" is perhaps the closest to being doubled, as there are sections where we keep time together. But by and large, there are two distinct drum parts in almost all the songs. Playing the same parts together wouldn't be what Adam's music is about.

When working out my drum parts for *Friend or Foe*, I heard the snare keeping time and the bass drum patterns, but I focused on the percussive elements—the fills and different voicings that are built around the basic rhythm. We work on our parts remotely, but it's crucial that our individual parts complement each other and that any added percussion will reinforce the arrangement. This only



Ollie Dolling



Susan Phelps

becomes clear once we get to the rehearsal stage and hear both drum parts together for the first time.

**MD:** How did you each approach taking the parts on *Friend or Foe* to a live stage?

**Jola:** It's important to stay faithful to the original arrangements and the feel of the songs. Adam's songs have very distinctive phrasing, fills, and unexpected twists—the song "Friend or Foe" being a textbook example. Because of this unpredictability, there's always [room] for some touches of self-expression. When I first began working on the drum parts to "Stand and Deliver"—because there's so much going on rhythmically—there were countless variations on interpretation and discreet permutations to work with.

**Andy:** We do strive to honor the parts on the records, but it's inevitable that a bit of personality comes through, particularly on fills or with dynamics. If there are loads of overdubs on the record, we do our best to play the most important parts.

**MD:** Are the two of you able to feed off each other in terms of energy?

**Jola:** Even in the rehearsal room there's energy. By show time, energy levels have hit the danger zone. The moment that creates

the most impact for me is when the whole band is playing drums on "Stand and Deliver." That excites me every time. It's very primal and stirring.

**MD:** What type of feedback does Adam have on your parts?

**Jola:** Because I play a more percussive role on many of the songs, this allows me to add to the original arrangements. If I feel I can embellish a song with my own input, I will. Sometimes I'm subtle, other times less so. But Adam is an adventurous and experimental artist who can absorb different interpretations of his songs with ease.

**Andy:** Adam might mention particular things softly in the downtime of rehearsals, but generally he lets us make the decisions. I guess by omission we must be paying enough respect to the original parts.

**Willie Rose**

**Andy Woodard plays Natal drums and Paiste cymbals and uses Remo drumheads, Roland electronics, and Audix microphones. Jola plays Gretsch drums and uses Vic Firth sticks.**

## Also on the Road

**Jeff Plate** and **Blas Elias** with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra /// **Pete Parada** with the Offspring /// **Edward Larsen** with Reel Big Fish /// **Mona Tavakoli** with Jason Mraz /// **Mark O'Connell** with Taking Back Sunday /// **Alex Shelnett** with A Day to Remember





## Drummer Joey Kramer and percussionist Colin Douglas tackle the band's fifty-year history in high style and even higher fidelity.

Aerosmith's *Deuces Are Wild* residency at the MGM Resorts Park Theater in Las Vegas, which opened this past April and runs into the new year, boasts a number of cutting-edge audio, video, and experiential enhancements. Among them is the THX Sound System, which gives fans the option to watch

the show from onstage, with headphone access to studio-quality audio direct from the Aerosmith mixing board. We asked founding drummer Joey Kramer and recently added percussionist Colin Douglas to share their thoughts on this latest chapter of the band's storied career.



**Joey Kramer**

**I have to say, I'm a fan of playing in one location for an extended period.** It's nice to not have to jump on a plane and keep switching up hotels every few days. I also like having my drums in one place because they get acclimated to the temperature they're sitting in for three weeks. So they don't go from AC to a road case and in the back of a hot truck. As we all know, temperature changes affect wood and the sound of the drums.

**I endorsed Pearl drums, and I helped them design the Vegas kit with my drum tech, John Douglas.** It represents what Vegas is all about, with lots of bling and flash that look amazing under the lights. The last few years I used an acrylic kit, but this time around I went with a maple Masterworks set, which has a 9x13 tom, 16x16 and 18x18 floor toms, and an 18x24 bass drum. For my snare, I'm using a 6.5x14 aluminum UltraCast model. I use Remo

# Colin Douglas

**So far it's been an amazing experience playing with Aerosmith for this Vegas residency.** I have to say, when I first got the call I was a little surprised that the band wanted to add a percussionist. Though I'd worked a bit with Joe Perry on his latest solo release, and I knew that he loved experimenting with percussion and exploring the African roots of early rock 'n' roll. Of course when I dug into the Aerosmith catalog, I soon realized that their music has tons of percussion. It made a lot of sense when we started rehearsing, and I realized that in addition to Joey being an amazing drummer/percussionist, Steven Tyler is great as well. He would often stand behind my setup and make up really cool patterns.

**My whole world [depends on] what I get in my in-ear monitors.** My job basically is to stick to Joey like glue with my percussion parts and make sure we're sounding tight as a unit out in the house.

**From the feedback I hear, the THX system is amazing.** I know the fans in the side-stage area have in-ears and can choose from several different mixes including Stevens' in-ear mix. That idea is really cool, especially for someone who's been to a lot of Aerosmith shows and wants a new, more immersive way to experience the band. I think the main challenge for the band and the producers is to find a middle ground between the precision/repetition of a typical Vegas show and the incredible spontaneous energy of an Aerosmith live show. I think they've done a great job.



Katarina Benzova

## Tools of the Trade

Joey Kramer plays Pearl drums, Zildjian cymbals and sticks, and Remo heads. Colin Douglas plays Pearl percussion, including Bobby Allende signature congas and bongos, Marc Quinones signature timbales, and various tambourines, cowbells, and shakers.

drumheads and a mix of Zildjian A crashes, Rezo hi-hats, and my trusty Z 21" Mega Bell ride.

**The THX mix is something we wanted to do for the audience to have an experience like never before.** I'm a creature of habit; I've had the ear mix that I like for many years, and I don't mess with it. But I hear from everyone who's seen the show that the sound is amazing. Ironically, I'll never get to hear what we sound like live!

**I work out a lot when I'm home, but when we're on the road, playing almost two hours a night, three or four shows a week, is my workout.** If we have more than a few days off in between shows, I'll hit the hotel gym. I like doing workouts with TRX straps and riding the bike.

**You have to entertain yourself onstage and feed off the audience as well.** We switch up the set list with a few songs but keep the core list. There's a certain momentum that happens when you play the same set nightly. A couple of the songs I like to play every night are "Love in an Elevator" and "Lord of the Thighs." Both of those allow me to stretch out a bit more than normal.

## The THX Experience

Concertgoers who purchase tickets for the onstage VIP section on Aerosmith's Vegas residency receive their own pair of THX-certified 1MORE Triple Driver in-ear headphones to use during the show and take home afterwards. The VIP "bar area" is designed to offer an unparalleled onstage vantage point in the middle of the action. Via the headphones, fans gain access to studio-quality audio direct from the Aerosmith mixing board, via Mixhalo audio technology.

THX Ltd. was founded in 1983 by filmmaker George Lucas (*Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*) and partners to provide premium entertainment experiences in the cinema, in the home, and on the go. Every vantage point in the Park Theater, the first THX-certified live performance venue featuring L-Acoustics L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound, brings fans "face to face" with the band. Included in the production design is a walkway that stretches from the stage to the balcony seats.

To win an opportunity to see Aerosmith and experience this immersive new technology, turn to page 75 of this issue, and take part in our Give the Drummer Some VIP contest.

Interviews by Billy Amendola



# Tama

## Starclassic Walnut/Birch Drumset

The latest evolution in mixed-timber shells, designed for low-mid warmth and high-end clarity.

For years, Tama's Starclassic Birch/Bubinga drumkit seemed to be the zenith of the series' evolution. However, part of evolution is adapting to environmental shifts. When restrictions were put on harvesting bubinga, the Starclassic line had to change. After extensive research and development, Tama announced the next phase for the Starclassic line: the Walnut/Birch drumkit. This resultant adaptation proved to be a significant sonic evolution for the series as well.



## The Specs

We received a three-piece Starclassic Walnut/Birch shell pack to review. The kit came in an eye-catching Arctic Blue Oyster lacquer finish and was composed of a 14x22 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom. List price is \$2,153.83.

The 6 mm tom shells are 6-ply (4-ply birch with two inner plies of American black walnut), while the 8 mm bass drum has a 7-ply shell (5-ply birch with two inner plies of American black walnut). The drums are equipped with Tama's patented Quick-Lock tom brackets, Star-Cast mounting system, cushioned Air Pocket feet on the floor tom legs, rubber-insulated bass drum claw hooks, die-cast tom hoops, and MSB30 die-cast bass drum spur brackets. The toms are outfitted with Evans G2 Clear two-ply batter heads and Tama Power Craft II single-ply resonants. The bass drum batter head is a single-ply Evans EQ4 Clear with an internal muffling ring, and the resonant is a black non-ported EQ4-style model with a Tama logo.

## The Hardware

The Quick-Lock tom mounts are one of those things you see for the first time and immediately think: *How is this just now a thing?* The design is simple and elegant, and the quick-lock function serves a valuable purpose for gigging drummers. After mounting the legs through the brackets and adjusting the memory locks to the desired height, you can lock the legs into place by simply sliding the switch into the locked position. When you unlock the switch, the memory locks are released from the bracket, allowing the legs to be removed quickly and easily.

The air-cushioned feet on the floor tom legs could take some getting used to, since they allow the drum to float and bounce a bit. This minor movement might make you believe the drum is unstable, but rest

assured, it's on solid ground. Tama's hardware is always sturdy, streamlined, and designed for convenience.

## The Sound

Although this new Starclassic Walnut/Birch kit is in a league of its own, let's begin with a quick comparison to the focused attack and succinct projection of the Birch/Bubinga line. The Walnut/Birch shell has a little more liveliness and warmth in the low-mid range, and the crisp top-end attack is followed by a more tuneful decay than its Birch/Bubinga brethren. The Walnut/Birch kit is similarly focused, but it has more tone and spread in its projection.

Tuning each drum to finger-tight tension was about as "set-it-and-forget-it" as you could desire. This super-low tension produced a punchy yet surprisingly melodic sound with a short decay and full tonality. The bass drum benefited from some added internal muffling, especially when the non-ported front head was played. But even without muffling, it sounded punchy and powerful. With a pillow placed inside the shell, the bass drum was perfect for stage or studio miking, regardless of how it was tuned. Quite simply, I was unable to make this bass drum sound displeasing.

I gradually increased head tension on each drum evenly through low, medium, and high tunings. These drums really shined at lower and medium tensions. They didn't choke when tuned high, but they didn't sing as organically. However, clear two-ply heads are less than ideal for that tuning range; swapping over to single-ply heads would likely solve that idiosyncrasy. That said, these drums did not underperform at all. This kit was a joy to play, as the drums sounded consistently balanced and

cohesive from the rack tom down to the kick.

To circle back to the comparison with the discontinued Birch/Bubinga drumkits, the new Starclassic Walnut/Birch configuration sounded more mature and pre-EQ'ed, allowing the best frequencies to punch through while also eliminating some of the boxiness that tends to coincide with hyper-focused drum tones. Be sure to check out our video demo at [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com) to hear this kit in action.

**David Ciauro**



# Dynamicx

## Medallion Brass Snares

Need a centerpiece for your collection that can excel in any situation? Here you go!



**Dynamicx Drums was founded in 2010** to provide drumset players with snares of the same meticulous quality and craftsmanship that have made parent company Black Swamp revered in the orchestral percussion world for the past twenty-one years. All Dynamicx drums are designed and manufactured in the U.S. We received two gorgeous Medallion Brass snares for review: a 5x14 in Torch Patina (\$780) and a 6.5x14 featuring a black-nickel finish with a hand-engraved six-leaf pattern (\$1,099).

### The Specs

Medallion Brass snares feature a 1 mm rolled/welded shell with a center bead and rolled edges. The snare beds are deeper than those on most drums of this type, allowing the twenty-strand Dynamicx-branded curly wires to marry perfectly across the entire drumhead regardless of the tension of the head or the wires. This helps heighten sensitivity while minimizing sympathetic buzz.

The triple-flange hoops are made from 2.3 mm steel. Both drums

feature ten of the company's sleek Arch tube lugs, which make minimal contact with the shell while providing maximum tuning and tension stability. The RCK throw-off is a simple, sturdy design that employs a smooth side-action arm and an easy-to-use knurled thumbscrew. Drumheads include a single-ply Remo Ambassador Coated batter and Ambassador Snare bottom. The shells are available in a classic black-nickel finish or a torched patina, and either version can be upgraded with one of several hand-engraved patterns.





### The Sounds

When forced to make a choice, most professional session drummers would likely go with a brass snare to cover all gigs because of that alloy's long-standing reputation for versatility, musicality, and reliability, whether being smashed for fat backbeats or feathered lightly for intricate articulations. If you've yet to add a brass snare to your arsenal, or if you're looking to upgrade to a professional-grade version, check out these Dynamicx Medallion Brass options.

Frankly you can't go wrong with either one of these drums. Both possess a full, rich, and sonorous tone, perfectly balanced overtones, a clear and punchy fundamental note, exceptional sensitivity, and an extended tuning range containing multiple sweet spots, from super-tight "pop" to midrange "honk" to ultra-fat "splat." When tensioned tightly, the snare wires were a bit more "grippy" than most, allowing for crystal-clear interplay between ghost notes and hi-hats at lower dynamics. And when tensioned loosely, the wires opened up to a nice spread that added a broad reverb-like

texture without rattling excessively. Both of those qualities are a testament to Dynamicx's overall craftsmanship and attention to detail, especially in terms of the bearing edges and snare beds.

Now to answer the most difficult question: which of these drums should you get? The easy answer: both. If I had this pair of Medallion Brass drums at my disposal, I wouldn't feel a need to add anything more to my collection. I would keep the 5x14 either tuned tightly for a crisp, articulate sound that's perfect for funk, jazz, symphonic, or uptempo rock, or I would detune it super low for a classic '70s thud (no muffling required). Then I would tune the 6.5x14 somewhere in the middle so I could take full advantage of the shell's lush, fat tone in midtempo and slower songs requiring a wide, broad backbeat with tons of character.

But that's just me. Check out our video demos on [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com) to hear the full sonic range of each of these fantastic instruments, and decide for yourself.

**Michael Dawson**

# NickyMoon

## "1" Series Cymbals

Lush, rich, expressive tones carefully coaxed from rough B20 bronze blanks, made entirely with one American man's hands.





**NickyMoon is a boutique cymbal manufacturer** that specializes in custom builds and modifications while also curating a unique collection of catalog models. Sounds range from dark and dry (Relic) to bright and fast (Modern Angel), and include more innovative Hybrid Alloy hi-hats (combining B20 and B8 bronze) and stainless-steel options. We reviewed a selection of the company's Relic, Modern Angel, and limited-edition offerings in the April 2019 issue. Here we take a look at the brand-new "1" series, which craftsman Nicholas Margarite describes as "the ultimate in high-end, boutique cymbal craftsmanship."

Meticulously hammered and lathed by hand in Margarite's New Jersey shop, these "1" series cymbals represent the best of what the company offers. They've been researched, designed, tested, and refined over many months in an effort to end the hunt for the ever-elusive "holy grail" cymbal sound once and for all. With the bar being set so high for these new cymbals, we couldn't wait to get our hands on them. We received 12" and 14" hi-hats, an 18" crash, and 20" and 22" rides. (Also available in the "1" series are 13" and 15" hi-hats, 18" and 20" crash-rides, a 20" crash, and 21" and 24" rides, as well as custom orders.)

### Jacks of All Trades

In thirty-plus years of drumming and gear hunting, I've come to the conclusion that there's never going to be a single piece of gear that can handle literally every situation. Some have come shockingly close, however. I mean, there's a reason why the Ludwig Supraphonic and Black Beauty have likely appeared on more recordings—across all genres—than every other snare drum model combined. But can the same be said for a singular set of cymbals? That's a tall order.

Can one ride cymbal exist that has the sublime, nuanced, and expressive tones required to satisfy the critical ears of the most dynamic jazz drummers of today while also possessing a universally appealing warm, full, and open tone that's equally at home in indie-rock, Americana, R&B, soul, and funk, both live and in the studio? The "1" series 22" ride (2,497 grams) we got for review came about as close as anything we've ever heard. It had that super-soft feel and bittersweet tone with a clear, woody attack and a rich, balanced sustain. This is only one of a few new rides we've played that echoed '60s-era Tony Williams without being overly dry, complex, or trashy, while having a touch of that dark, throaty growl that usually only exists in cymbals that have matured over decades of making music. If you're a traditional jazzer or a jazz-inspired drummer looking for a new vintage-style ride cymbal to become "the one," check out this 22" "1" series. It'll have you digging into the subtleties of touch deeper than ever before.

To contrast the dry, dark vibe of the 22", the 20" "1" series ride (1,886 grams) was washier and had a more sparkling sustain. It's the ideal blend of a big, luscious crash and a highly expressive light ride. Like the 22", the 20" was expertly shaped to remove any overtone imbalances or harshness, making for an incredibly satisfying tone that translated beautifully acoustically or under the scrutiny of

studio microphones.

The 18" "1" series crash (1,309 grams) was textbook. It wasn't overly dark or trashy, or exceedingly bright or pitchy. Yet it could be utilized for explosive, strong accents when smacked with a quick, firm stroke. Or you could evoke a rippling wave of color with a light, delicate flick. As far as upholding the moniker of the series in which it lives, the 18" crash was the most universally appealing and applicable across all playing styles and genres.

The 14" "1" series hi-hats (992 grams/1,194 grams) were also all-around winners. They comprise a thin top and a medium-weight bottom, which helped give them a stronger foot chick than that of paper-thin vintage pairs, but they weren't as chunky under the stick as most modern-made "general purpose" hi-hats are. They just sound great, whether played light and delicately or hard and aggressively. I would feel completely confident using these hi-hats for all of my gigs, which range from loud modern rock to loop-based electronic pop to super-quiet acoustic jazz. On the other hand, the 12" "1" series hi-hats (644 grams/854 grams) offer a more niche voice with a slightly breathier tone and wisper attack that's a touch closer to the thin, fast timbre of 1920s jazz and swing. They also were a bit more expressive and controllable at super-low volumes, while still robust enough to speak clearly at medium and medium-loud dynamics.

These "1" series cymbals are the most laborious in NickyMoon's catalog, requiring multiple runs of extensive hand hammering across the entire top and bottom surfaces, from bell to edge. And while his chiropractor might argue otherwise, we feel the rich and balanced tones Margarite has achieved with these beautifully crafted instruments is well worth the effort. Be sure to check out the full demo video on [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com).

**Michael Dawson**

# Blue Microphones

## Dragonfly and Mouse Condensers

Large-diaphragm studio options with rotating capsules and full-frequency clarity and depth.

**Blue Microphones was founded in 1995** by American musician Skipper Wise and Latvian engineer Mārtiņš Saulespurēns. The company first rose to notoriety with the affordable Snowball USB condenser, which was tailor-made for aspiring artists to use for laptop-based home recording. Blue is now owned by computer-peripherals giant Logitech, and its catalog has expanded into the professional market with a variety of innovative condenser, ribbon, and dynamic microphones. We received a pair of Dragonfly large-diaphragm condensers (\$999.99 each) for overheads and a stout Mouse LDC (\$1,249.99) that's designed for bass drum and other low-frequency applications.

### Dragonfly

This retro-futuristic mic has a classic broadcast vibe while integrating cutting-edge features and performance. The head of the mic is mounted on a rotating swivel, so you can make quick, pinpoint angle adjustments without having to adjust the entire mic or mic stand. When using the Dragonfly for overheads, this feature is a godsend for making final tiny tweaks to bring the full kit into balance once the basic mic height and configuration are established. For instance, when using coincident X-Y or near-coincident ORTF setups, I was able to adjust the aim of the right-side mic capsule slightly to accentuate the floor tom without adversely affecting the phase coherence and stereo balance between the two mics. And such fine-tuning didn't require me to mess with the angle of the mic clips or mic stand boom arms, which made the process much faster and simpler.

The large diaphragm inside the Dragonfly is precisely designed using a finely tuned pressure-gradient membrane, and the circuitry is super discreet, which translates into a clean, detailed, and natural recorded sound. The polar pattern is cardioid, which means the bulk of the signal that the mic picks up comes from directly in front. The dynamic range extends up to 138 dB, providing plenty of headroom for miking drums.

The frequency response of the Dragonfly features a gradual drop-off of around 8 dB that begins at 50 Hz, as well as two separate high-end bumps of 3–5 dB around 6 kHz and 12 kHz. The ultra high end



Dragonfly

tapers off by 8 dB around 15 kHz. The result is a clean, focused tone that sounds full and natural across the typical range of drums and cymbals, with controlled sub-lows and super-highs that often get filtered out in the final mix to minimize rumble and excessive sibilance.

The EQ boosts in the top end added very nice clarity to the cymbals and the attack of the drums without sounding overly hyped or harsh. With just a few minor EQ adjustments and light compression, I was able to get a silky, deep, detailed, punchy, and

balanced mix of my kit that was an accurate representation of how the drums sounded in the room. If you're looking to capture the full detail of your drumset with as few mics as possible, you should consider the Dragonfly. Each Dragonfly comes with a high-quality wooden case and an easy-to-use S2 shock mount.

### Mouse

The Mouse is a large-diaphragm condenser with a shorter and wider body, and it also features a rotating head. This mic is designed for capturing low-end-heavy sounds, like the bass drum, as well as smooth midrange and crystal-clear highs. The diaphragm is hand-built from gold and aluminum, and the discreet circuitry and onboard transformer allow for a transparent signal path and distinctively warm sonic character.

The Mouse's frequency response extends across the entire hearing range (20 Hz–20 kHz) and features a similar EQ curve to the Dragonfly's, with minor roll-offs in the super-highs and ultra-low subs and two wide bumps in the high end. The dynamic range extends to 138 dB, which provides plenty of headroom for most drum applications. The mic is also designed to have a less-pronounced low-end bump caused by proximity, so even if you place the Mouse very close to the bass drum, it will still capture a fairly natural, balanced tone.

Our favorite application for the Mouse was to place it 4.5" from the front of the bass drum, slightly off-center, and aimed directly at the head. This gave us an accurate representation of what the drum sounded like in the room while minimizing bleed from cymbals and other drums. There was plenty of beater attack, midrange body, and low-end bump that could then be sculpted with subtle EQ and compression to best suit the overall mix. The rotating head of the Mouse also allowed me to experiment with different angles quickly and easily for times when I wanted to de-emphasize the attack by aiming the capsule more toward the bottom of the drumhead. When combined with the Dragonfly overheads, the Mouse filled out the low end very nicely, creating a complete sonic picture that sounded exactly as you hear the kit when seated at the drum throne. This would make for a great starting point if you were to expand into a more extensive multi-mic setup, or these three mics could be all you need for a minimal yet fully balanced recording.

**Michael Dawson**



**Mouse**



# Origin's John Longstreth

**John Longstreth's drumming** with death metal veterans Origin relies on speed and ergonomics, and his rig exhibits that in a number of ways. "Origin grew up doing metal festivals, which is a world of fifteen-minute changeovers," he says. "I put my kit on a rack, so it takes my vocalist and me five trips up or down. The rack also keeps every part of the kit really close together, which is key because I have short arms and I'm trying to get from here to there in nanoseconds. As a result I've learned to keep my elbows close to my sides. For that same reason, I like the 20" kick. It makes everything else, like toms and cymbals, a little bit more manageable. Also, [the smaller kick] has a punch that you don't find in other sizes."

Longstreth relies on a pair of small ride cymbals to articulate the time. "My ride cymbals are 18" Mega Bells," he says. "These compete well with the guitar amps, and fit snugly amongst the rest of my setup. They also make bow and bell work easier. For this music, they just need to go 'ding' really loudly."

When asked why he chose duplicate cymbals for the right and left sides of his kit, Longstreth explains, "The mirrored cymbal thing is something that I've been doing for a long time. It helps keep me centered, and I think it's sensible to learn how to use your other limbs. I lead with my left hand to relieve my right hand from doing everything, plus it's just cool doing things leading with the left."

"For this music I'm a rock drummer in fast-forward," John continues. "All of the colors, roundness, and floating in the music happens in the cymbals. The drums are more on the grid and utilitarian for the timekeeping, but the cymbals can make the whole thing swing harder or have more feeling."

As with most touring bands, Origin's soundman is as valuable as any band member. John trusts his engineer implicitly and heeds his front-of-house advice. "I used to have a different idea of what my sound should be," he says. "But I'm the only one behind the kit, and the drums sound different to everyone else in the room, especially with the music being as fast as it is. He tells me things like, 'Don't swing at the Chinas like a madman,' or, 'Lay off the rim shots.' The idea is that you're only going to be as audible as your fastest blast beat."

## Drums: Pearl Reference in Piano Black

- A. 5x14 snare
- B. 14x14 floor tom
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 8x12 tom
- E. 16x16 floor tom
- F. 16x20 bass drum

## Cymbals: Meinl Classics Custom Dark

- 1. 14" Medium hi-hats
- 2. 18" Prototype Mega Bell ride
- 3. 18" Heavy China
- 4. 18" Medium crash
- 5. 10" splash
- 6. 8" splash
- 7. 12"/14" Benny Greb Generation X Trash Hats
- 8. 20" Medium crash

**Heads:** Evans Heavyweight snare batter, G2 Clear tom batters and G1 Clear resonants; EMAD2 bass drum batter and DrumART logo front

**Hardware:** Pearl, including an Icon rack; Eliminator cable hi-hat, and Roadster drum throne; ACD Darwin long-board direct-drive double pedal

**Sticks:** Scorpion Percussion John Longstreth "Wee Heavy" signature model

**Electronics:** Roland TM-2 trigger modules, Lenovo Android tablet for click tracks and ambient samples, Behringer four-channel mixer, Roland TM-7 pad for 808 bass drops, and 64 Audio in-ear monitors

Interview by Dave Previ Photos by Rodrigo Fedes





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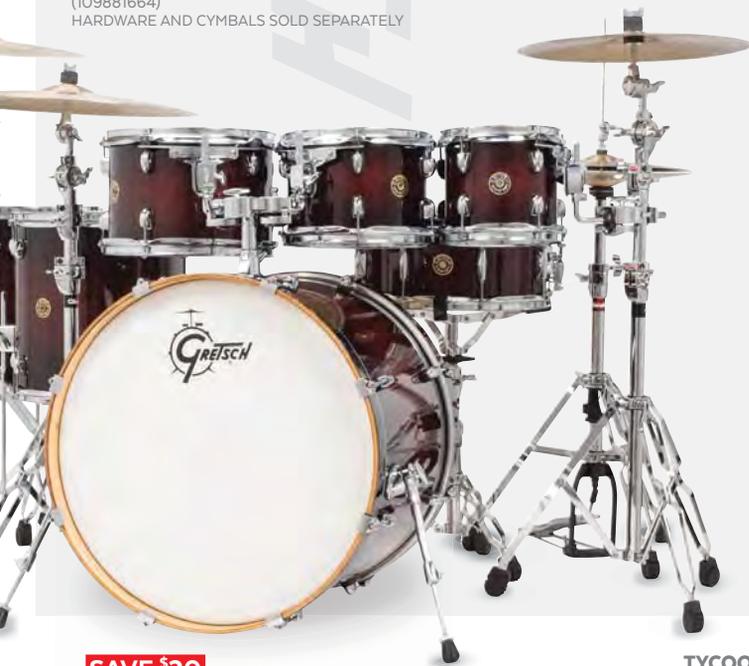
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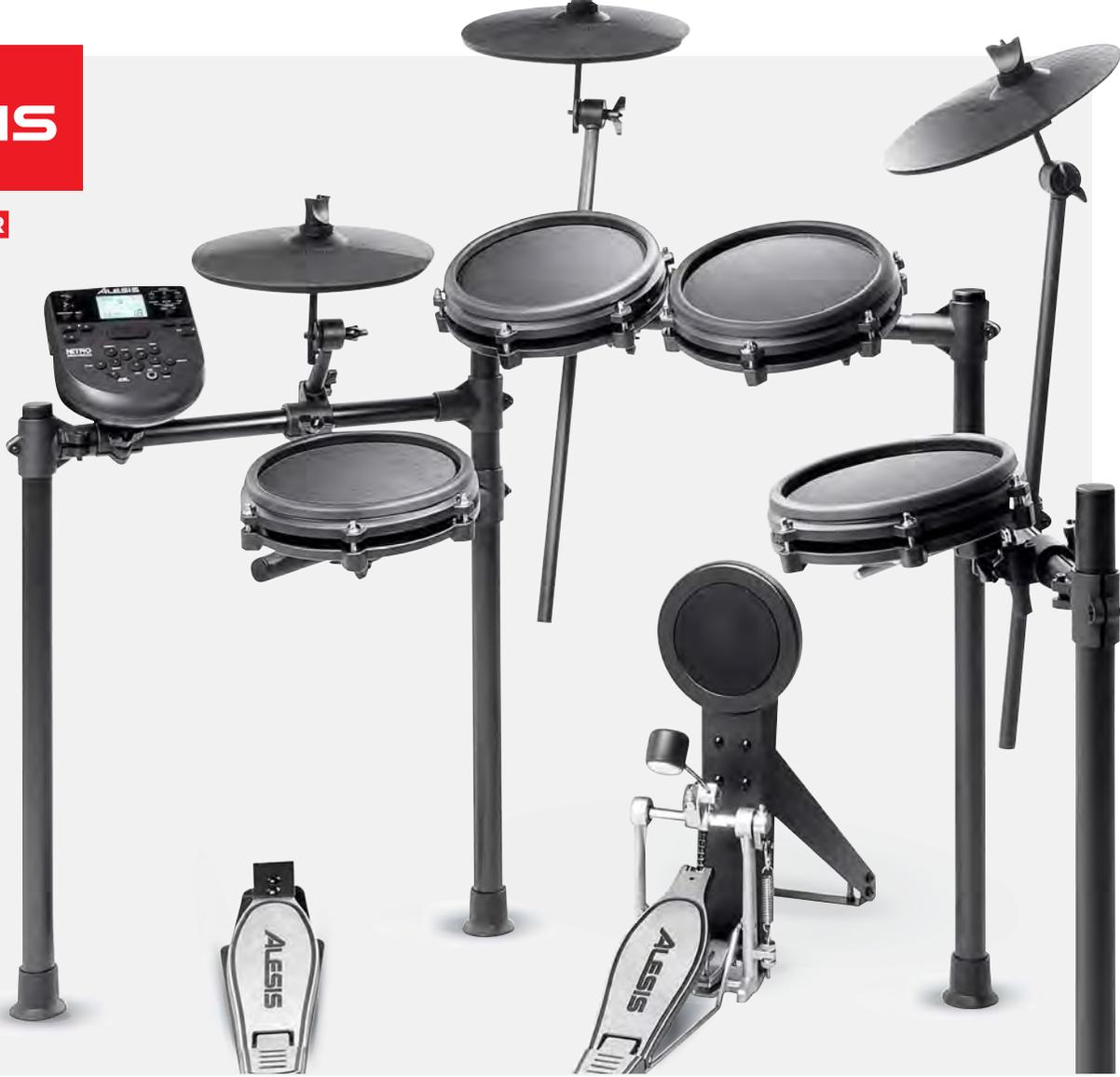


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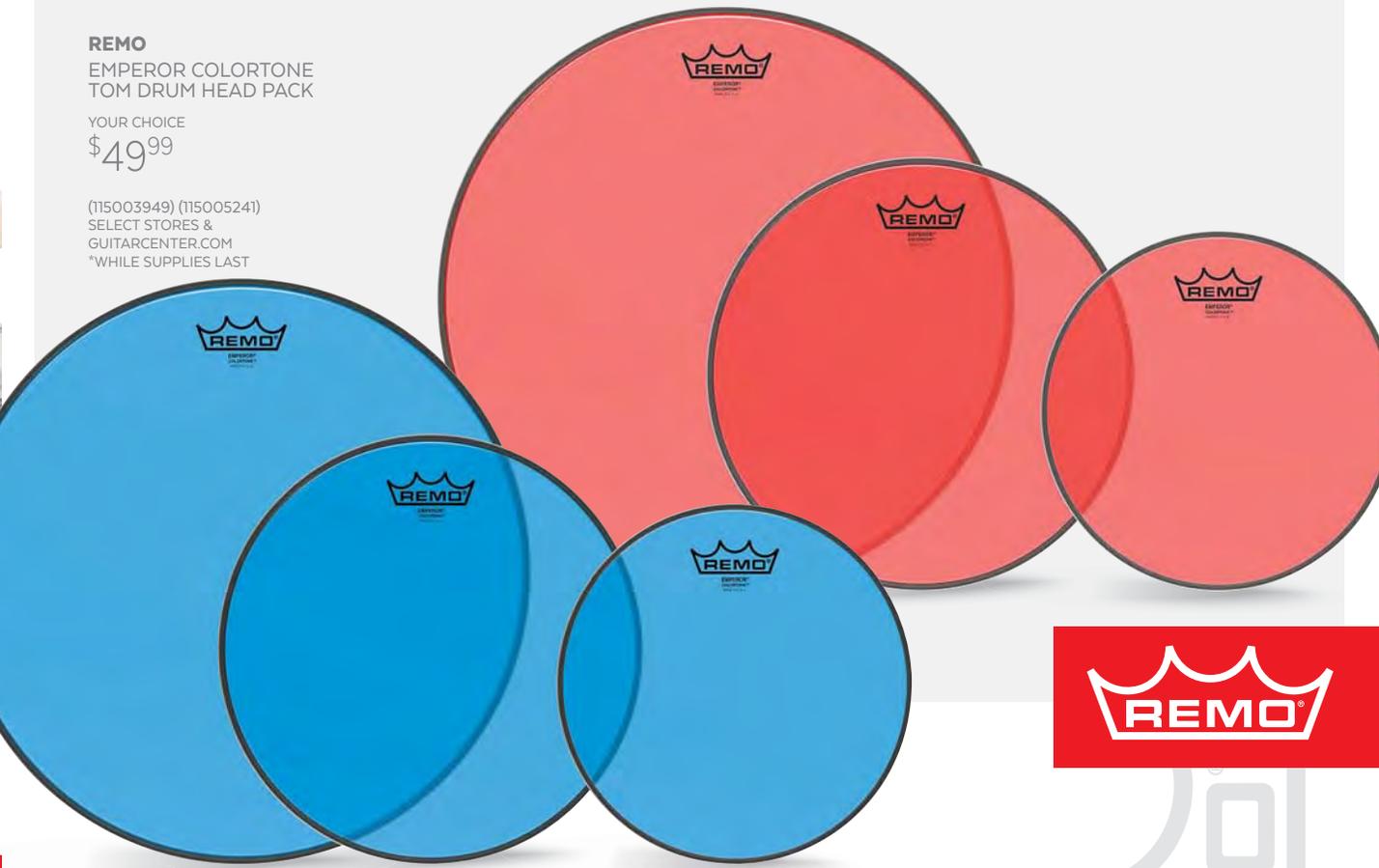


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# In the Studio with the Offspring's Pete Parada



Story and photos by Sayre Berman

Offspring drummer Pete Parada relocated with his family to Nashville in 2011 from Chico, a small college town in northern California. During his house hunt, Pete needed a room that could become a home studio. "I was adamant about that," he says. "Nobody has basements in California, plus the houses are so close together in my old neighborhood that I wasn't able to play drums without disturbing the neighbors. I had a shed with some electronic drums, but I couldn't open up and hit a real kit or record. So that was a must for me in Nashville.

"I was specifically looking for a space that could accommodate a drum studio for recording, teaching lessons, and making videos," Parada continues. "The house we found is perfect because the basement has a living room area and a section that we converted into the studio. It's completely underground, and that made it much easier to soundproof."

Pete wasn't trying to accommodate a whole band. He was more interested in doing personal projects, such as recording his young daughters, who are both aspiring musicians, filming lesson videos for his YouTube channel, and tracking drums for clients. "The space that we carved out was just an empty cement bunker," he says. "It's 700 square feet of foundation under the front of the house that curves around in an L-shape, which worked out perfectly for a control room and drum room. We put a window in and a

soundproof door so we have a separate room where we can hear what the mics are picking up without being in the same space as the drums. I worked with Joseph 'Zap' Danner. He'd built Ray Luzier's studio in Los Angeles. That was a small space, but when Zap was finished, it sounded like a gymnasium."

Being that the studio is in the basement, the low ceiling height was a primary concern. "I don't have tall ceilings," says Parada. "So Zap incorporated a lot of angles so that everything sounds warm without being fluttery—no reflections or echoes. The room is longer than it is wide, so if I put the room mics back far enough it gets a big sound. I picked up a great tip from John DiBiase, an engineer that works with the Offspring. He had me put the room mic on a low stand and angle it at the floor. That way I maximized the low end while cutting down on the cymbals a bit. That was a game-changer. It gave me a much larger sound because not only was I getting the static sound of the room but also the reflections off of the floor."

The floors in the basement are concrete. "I was fine with that," says Pete. "I thought it would be cool to just stain them, but Zap cautioned me not to. He said that if I didn't lift the studio floors, my family would kill me because the sound would travel up the walls and through the entire house. Now the room floats on about two inches of industrial-grade rubber. I can come down here and play at three in the morning and nobody hears a thing."

## Gear List

- Tama Starclassic Bubinga drumset in a black lacquer with blue sparkle stripe finish (22" bass drum and 12", 13", and 16" toms)
- Tama Iron Cobra Power Glide pedal
- Vater Session model drumsticks
- Remo Emperor Coated heads on the toms and snare and a Powerstroke P3 Clear on the bass drum
- An arsenal of Tama snares (including a Starphonic brass and Stewart Copeland and Kenny Aronoff signature models), two vintage Slingerlands, a DW Edge, a Ludwig Black Beauty, and a dozen custom models
- Microphones: Sontronics Orpheus overheads, DM-1B on bass drum, DM-15 on snare, DM-1T on toms, and STC-1 on hi-hats and ride; Studio Projects B3 for the room; Turner S-98 on snare shell
- Yamaha 01V96i mixer
- Logic Pro X software



The basement walls were treated similarly. "To treat the concrete walls, we first left a two-inch air space," he explains. "Then we built a room inside the room with dense blue-denim-type insulation, called UltraTouch, placed inside the 2x4 wall construction, followed by soundboard, and then two layers of drywall. As hard as I might be playing down here, all anyone hears upstairs is a little tapping."

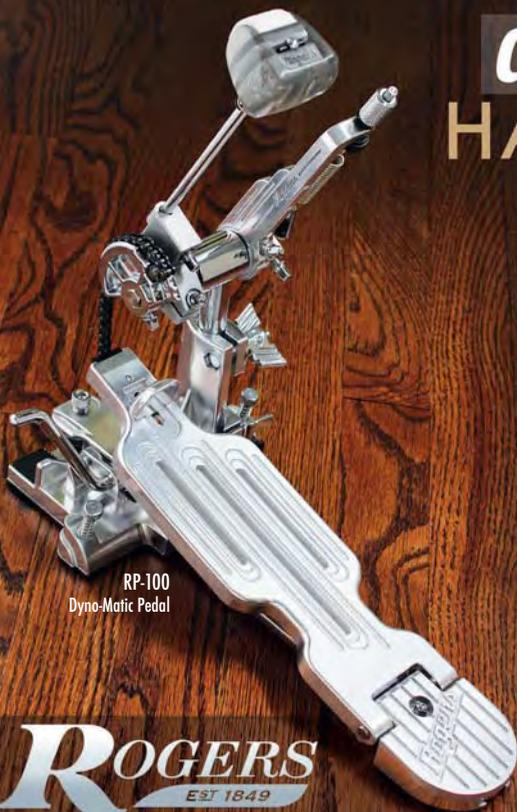
To keep the studio sound live, Parada utilized a wooden ceiling. "I was worried about the room being too dead," he says. "So we did a plywood ceiling that we sanded down to get it super smooth,

and then we covered it with three coats of lacquer. That helped to brighten the room a bit."

To control sound reflections, the walls are covered with a combination of carpet near the bottom and crushed velvet that's been stretched over quilted batting placed in wooden frames. "We have a radon-release pipe going up one wall, so we built out the wall into a V-shape and covered it with stone tile," says Pete. "That also helped to brighten the room, and if I put a mic right next to it, I can get some interesting sounds if I'm going for something a little weird."

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## In the Studio

One of the big challenges Pete faced when building the studio was quieting down the sounds coming from the HVAC system. "We had to box that all in," says Pete. "We had to cram all the air ducts into the ceiling and soundproof the two units in much the same way that we soundproofed the room. Fortunately Zap was able to develop a cross-beam system that's able to support everything in the ceiling."

Parada spent a lot of time researching microphones while at the Winter NAMM Show. "I met with a company based in the U.K. called Sontronics. They have a line of



mics that are specifically EQ'ed for each drum. They shipped out some samples for me to try, and I loved them. I don't have to add a lot of EQ, so it's essentially a plug-and-play system. There are more expensive mics I could have gone with, but if you have a good-sounding room and good mics, you're going to get solid sounds."

If Parada had to pick a favorite model in the Sontronics line, he'd go with the overhead mics. "I use the Orpheus," he says. "It picks up the entire kit but is especially nice on the cymbals. Often I don't even need a pencil condenser on the hi-hats or ride because I'm getting enough sound from the overheads."

Parada has a preference for miking the outside of the resonant bass drum head as well as the inside. "The inside mic is picking up a lot of the attack and punch, while the outer mic is picking up more of the body and low end," he says. "I also use a vintage 1960s Turner cardioid mic that my dad had given me. I put it near the side of the snare in addition to the top and bottom mics. That enables me to pick up some of the character of the shell of the drum. That's something I picked up from working with producer Bob Rock."

All fourteen of Pete's mics run through a snake box that connects to a Yamaha digital mixing board in the control room. "I have different scenes programmed into it. Some are for recording, and some are for making videos. I don't have a lot of outboard gear; I try to keep it simple."

Having his own studio affords Parada the opportunity to experiment with sounds. He recently completed a project for Leonie Kingdom, an up-and-coming indie folk artist from Australia. "It was a beautiful, lush ballad," he recalls. "I tried four or five snares before deciding on a vintage Slingerland drum from the '50s that my father had given me when I graduated high school. It produces a slightly more muted sound, but is very warm and fat, which is ideal for a slow 6/8 ballad. I tuned it to the point where it filled the spaces perfectly between the kicks."

Parada also recently finished up a project for Michael Ciravolo, president of Schecter Guitars. An accomplished musician in his own right, Ciravolo made a record by bringing in different people he's worked with over the years, including Robin Zander from Cheap Trick, Al Jourgensen from Ministry, Doug Pinnick from King's X, and Ice-T. "We just did a remix of [a track]," Pete recalls. "I did the drums, and Zakk Wyld came in to add a guitar solo. That's certainly one of the coolest things that I've done here in the last year."

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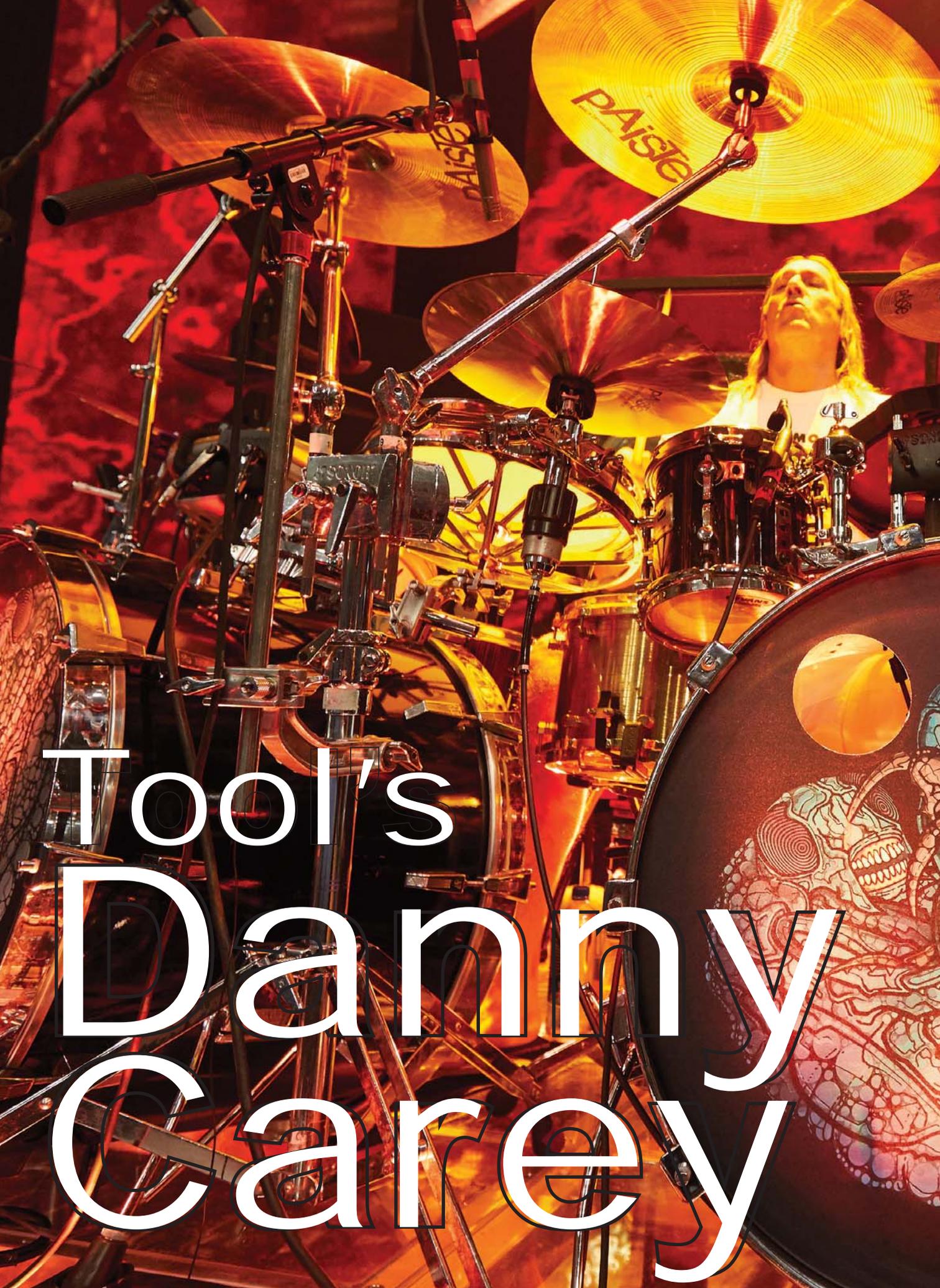
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# Tool's Danny Carey



**It's** been thirteen years since Tool's last album, 2006's *10,000 Days*, but the faithful need wait no more, because Tool, and a never-better Danny Carey, are back.

With their new album, *Fear Inoculum*, the band continues down the road they've traveled since their early days. The super-aggressive metal riffage and angsty screaming of the band's first offerings might have become somewhat subdued as the years have gone by, but that doesn't mean the new record's sound is any less dynamic or powerful. In fact, Carey's thunderous tribal tom grooves and mind-bending odd-meter patterns have never before been played with as much conviction or sounded more complete.

Tracks like "Pneuma," "Descending," and "7empest" are filled with twist after turn, conventional song structure be damned, with Carey at the center of the storm, providing the heaviest, most massive bottom possible. Sure, there are lots of fast rolls and double bass that are common to metal-related music, but Carey and Tool have always been just a little bit different. Carey even gets his own solo percussion track, "Chocolate Chip Trip," on which he incorporates gongs and bells, among other sounds. Check out the way he rips over the track's ending seven section with fluidity and authority like only he can.

And for those who feared that the band would succumb to modern pressures and update their sound to be more palatable, rest easy. Tool has never been interested in brevity, with most of the new album's proper songs coming in at over ten minutes in length. For fans who've waited years for new material, this is a welcome detail, and it allows drummers that much more opportunity to hear Carey do his idiosyncratic thing, including the unique approach he has used in the past where he plays rock-pattern backbeats with the snares off.

But while Tool has been in no rush to release albums, they have kept relatively active with live performances. And Carey himself has stayed busy recording with assorted groups and showing up to play with friends around L.A.

There's Carey on the rock/fusion group Volto! record *Incitare* from 2013, and on 2018's *Legend of the Seagullmen* with Brent Hinds from Mastodon. And if you want to hear Carey tackle some swing and jazz fusion standards, check out the upcoming album by the Webb All Stars.

But it's with Tool where Carey's bread is buttered, and as the band prepares to tour in support of *Fear Inoculum*, the drummer is focused on expanding his tonal palette, and, as he mentions below, his vocabulary. With new synth toys and his Mandala triggering system used to conjure up tabla sounds and any other color he likes, Carey has a world of rhythm, melody, and harmony at his disposal. He'll need it, as Tool's involved music and intense live show are brought to the welcoming masses.

Story by Ilya Stemkovsky

Photos by Travis Shinn

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**MD:** Is the band dynamic different now as opposed to when you guys started?

**Danny:** The roles in the band really haven't changed much at all since we first met. It's been pretty consistent. We all have our job to do, and we have enough respect for each other to let one another do it. So no one's going to come to me and tell me what to play on the drums, and I'm not going to go to Adam or Maynard or Justin and tell them what to play. There's a lot of mutual respect going on, and we're able to meet where we meet and not question it that much and trust that the result is going to sound like Tool. That's the beauty of the band. It gives it the power of everybody believing in all

their parts, and that way it has the biggest emotional impact that we can achieve.

**MD:** In previous interviews you've mentioned that you would jam together and let the tape roll and go back to revisit the magic parts. Is that still the same?

**Danny:** Yeah, it's a very organic process like that. It starts with jams, and the jam can start with my drum beat, or with one of Adam's or Justin's riffs, and then we build upon that. You get inspiration along the way, and sometimes when it doesn't come immediately, we always keep tape rolling, and we go back and find those jewels. We listen a lot when we're not in the room together, so it's an ongoing process. We

rehearse three to four hours a day, Monday through Thursday, and we spend a lot of time listening outside the rehearsal space to keep things building and moving along.

**MD:** When listening outside the space, what kind of feedback are you giving and getting?

**Danny:** We don't really discuss it much outside of the room. We wait until the next day, and we go back in and talk about parts. We're pretty much on our own until we're in the room together, and that's where the melting pot occurs. We all need our space to kind of let things sink in on their own, and then when we're together, we share.

**MD:** When you're changing parts, if you



want to extend a section or change a rhythmic feel, is it “best idea wins,” or is Adam’s tune his own and you have to walk gingerly about what you want to contribute to it?

**Danny:** Well, good riffs are good riffs, and good beats or whatever. Usually those are the building blocks. The parts that we come up with on top of them are all our own. Very seldom are we playing in unison. The resulting sound, as you hear on the new record, there’s not much of us playing the same thing at the same time. We find parts that are complementary. There’s more of a counterpoint situation, so it leaves it open for us to express ourselves with each other.



**MD:** Now that it’s been such a long time since your last album, and technology advances so quickly, was the process of recording *Fear Inoculum* any different?

**Danny:** Not really for us. I mean, Pro Tools has gotten better and this and that, but I [still] record all my drum tracks to 2" tape. It’s an old-school way of doing it, and I don’t think any computer can beat that at this point. I get in the best room I can find, and this time we did it in the D room at A&M, which is now called Henson Recording Studios. The magic is to take care of the room and treat it so you can take advantage of it and use the best microphones and get the best performance possible. And I get that when I record to 2" tape with great pre-amps. We’ll dump it all to Pro Tools, but to capture drums at their best, analog is still the way to go at this point.

**MD:** On “Pneuma,” there’s so much going on, with odd times, some four-on-the-floor action that’s almost dancy, and then something that sounds like tabla, and then a tribal tom part followed by some pummeling double bass. Do you remember composing that or tracking it?

**Danny:** That one started with Justin’s bass riff, and I’m always trying to find the heaviest groove possible to make it have an illusion of, like you said, being dancy. Or being in 4/4—whatever it takes to find the heaviest pulse I can out of it. So I always try to accentuate that. When it opened up into that part you’re talking about, the tabla, that’s actually an old Wavedrum, the one that looks like a toilet seat. [laughs] And that’s the tabla sound that’s in that thing. And I thought it would open up the song more if I used that as the ride cymbal, so I moved my right hand off my ride and onto that thing.

**MD:** On “Invincible,” there’s an intro in seven with a percussive quarter-note overdub, and then the introduction of some high-pitched toms continuing through the groove.

**Danny:** The whole groove of that is in seven, but I used that Wavedrum again. I’m not sure what the starting point was on the Wavedrum, I just manipulated that sound quite a bit. So I put that on, where it’s hitting every third 16th over the top of it, so it’s like three over seven the whole time. The whole tune was based on a three-against-seven idea. That way it meets up every third time, but not really on the 8s of sevens that the tune is based in. But it has a nice flow over the top of it, and it keeps the energy moving forward. It makes it kinetic, I think, and keeps people interested. When we played it live on this last tour, when I came in with the little kalimba thing at the very beginning

of it in that three, people started clapping to that, and I thought, *Wow, that’s kind of neat; I just got people to clap three over seven.* [laughs] It’s a good feeling.

**MD:** Why can’t you just write some AC/DC–style drum parts for yourself so you could relax once in a while?

**Danny:** [laughs] That’d be nice. I wish I could. We tried to make these songs shorter, but they all ended up being like ten minutes long on average.

**MD:** “Chocolate Chip Trip” is your solo interlude. There are gongs and bells, an electronic groove in seven, and then a big solo over the seven. How’d you piece that together?

**Danny:** We were tracking another song, and we had a break in between, and some of the guys were eating. I’d been doing something similar to that live, and I got a good sequence dialed up. It took me an hour or so

“Increasing my vocabulary is what I’m all about. I just want to be able to hold more conversations on a higher level on my instrument.”

to fine-tune it, and I thought, *This is cool.* The other guys were still gone, but I was ready to play, so I just turned it on, and it was one take, live. The bell-y things at the beginning, I dialed those in with four different faders on my synthesizer, and once I got that groove established, I sat down and played to the seven groove over the top of it. And that was it. It was a spur-of-the-moment improv.

It was kind of my ode to Billy Cobham.

I really love the *Spectrum* record from back in the old days, and he did an intro like that on maybe the ARP 2600—I'm not sure. But I've always loved Billy's playing, it really inspired me. So I put my little twist on it and went that way with it. And I think it came out pretty good. It was nice because when you're mixing a record, everybody gets their space. You have to carve out frequencies for each other to make it work. And I got the best drum sound on the whole record on that track, because I didn't have to make room for anybody else. I could just make my shit sound huge, and our engineer Joe Barresi did a great job on it. I'm really happy with the drum mix on that.

**MD:** What's the state of your electronics these days? In 2001, after *Lateralus*, you expressed frustration with the limitations of the current electronics for drums. It's twenty years later. Has stuff come a long way?

**Danny:** They've come a long way, but they still have their shortcomings. You

“Very seldom are we playing in unison. There's more of a counterpoint situation, so it leaves it open for us to express ourselves with each other.”

have to accept them for the instrument they are. They're not going to be a real drum, and I don't need [them to be] real drums. My Sonor kit sounds amazing. I believe there are no samples that will sound better than my kit.

I use [electronics] to sample all kinds of other experimental sources and also traditional sources, like African djembes and congas and weird percussion instruments, so I don't have to carry all this stuff around. I can sample those as best I can on my Pro Tools rig, and then I throw them into Native Instruments Battery, and then the Mandala pads I use are the best triggering interface that I could possibly get.

[Developer] Vince De Franco has improved incredibly upon the pads since the first Mandalas. Mine have come a long way, and they feel much more responsive, like a real drum, but they still have all the zone intelligence that I can apply in high-tech ways, such as panning and filters if need be. A lot of times I pretty much vary the pitch from the center to the edge, like a real drum,

## Carey's Setup

### Drums: Sonor (except where noted)

- 8x14 snare\*
- 8x8 tom
- 14" Remo Rototom
- 14x14 floor tom
- 16x16 floor tom
- 18x24 bass drum
- 18x22 bass drum
- Mandala custom zone dynamic trigger pads
- Korg Wavedrum (original 1994 version)
- Roland HandSonic

\*Alternate snares: 8x14 Paiste Spirit of 2002 bronze, 8x14 VK bronze, 8x14 Dunnett titanium eight-lug in purple

**Hardware:** Sonor heavy-duty cymbal, tom, gong, and snare stands; Roc-N-Soc throne; Pearl Redline Eliminator remote hi-hat and bass drum pedals

**Sticks:** Vic Firth Danny Carey signature model (wood tip), T1 General timpani mallets

**Heads:** Evans Coated Power Center reverse snare batter and Hazy 300 snare side, G2 Clear tom batters and G1 Clear resonants, EQ3 Clear bass drum batter side and EQ3 "Inked by Evans" with custom art and 3" air vent front, G1 Coated on Rototom

### Cymbals: Paiste (except where noted)

- 14" Sound Edge hi-hats
- 7.5" 2002 cup chime #2
- 8" Signature bell
- 6" 2002 Accent
- 8" 3000 bell
- 8" Signature Dark Energy splash (inverted) top/10" Signature Dark Energy splash bottom
- 22" 2002 Novo China
- 18" Signature Full crash
- 18" Signature Power crash
- 20" Signature Power crash
- 22" Danny Carey Signature "Monad" Purple Dry Heavy ride
- 22" Signature Thin China
- 18" Noiseworks Dark Buzz China bottom/15" trash top
- 38" and 60" Symphonic gongs
- 8" Hammerax square accent
- 6" Hammerax bell

**Electronics:** Custom Mandala brain, Native Instruments Battery software running sampling and triggering on Apple computer, Electro-Acoustic Research (E.A.R.) custom Eurorack modular synth, Drum Tech F.A.T. KAT trigger pedals

**Accessories:** Heil mics, PureSound by D'Addario snare wires





like a real conga. But there's always room for improvement, and I'm working with Vince all the time, so it's an ongoing process.

**MD:** Besides the Mandala pads, what's changed regarding your live shows and gear? Has anything evolved in a way you didn't expect? Or by this point in your career, is it, "If it ain't broke, don't try to fix it."

**Danny:** It's kind of like an "If it ain't broke" scenario. I just try to increase my vocabulary more than increasing what I'm playing on. The textures that I can use on my electronic pads are limitless, so that's an ever-evolving thing. In every song, I try to come up with new textures to complement that in the best way possible. But my basic drumkit still has a couple of rack toms. Right now it's an 8" Ebony tom, and then I have a 14" Rototom for the other rack. And then 14" and 16" floor toms, and 22" and 24" kick drums. And that main core of my kit hasn't changed for a long time, other than maybe some sizes or depths of toms. And I'm comfortable with that. All the little accentual things around the kit are also





an ever-evolving thing, but they don't change too drastically. My cymbal setup is pretty consistent, other than changing some thicknesses here and there, or changing a ride out or using thinner crashes if it's a lighter tune. Whatever the tune desires. It's more about playing for the song

now than drum solos or something like that.

**MD:** And you have a new kit you're excited about?

**Danny:** I'm excited about this new kit Sonor is making. And [longtime Tool artist collaborator] Alex Grey is painting the drums for me, which is really cool.

I designed all the shells and spoke with all my drum hero guys and picked their brains to come up with how to do them. And I came up with the best thing that could happen. I love the sound of the original Sonor Signature drums so much, but I did use a different hardwood on the inside of

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## Danny Carey

it. And these have ebony, which is really hard to come by. But I sandwiched it with different layers of beechwood because I always liked the low end I got out of my old Sonor Phonic Plus kit. It had that resonant, low-end power, and that's what I like to get out of my toms. The higher toms I made thicker, so they have an intense attack, and an intense fundamental frequency that'll cut through Marshall stacks. As the drums get bigger, the shells get thinner. For the lower floor toms, I used reinforcement hoops to add even more low end and made the shells more resonant so they still have the punch and the power—like old Ludwig drums and other drums from the 1960s were made with the reinforcement hoops. And I did that with the kick drums, too. And man, it works. These drums sound amazing. I can't wait to get out there and beat the hell out of them.

And Alex is in touch with some of the greatest shamans in the world, so he contacted one of his friends in Borneo, a medicine man for a head-hunting tribe. And we're going to do a ritual, as heavy as possible, to christen the drums and give them life. That way we'll be guaranteed to tear everyone's head off.

**MD:** And you're still using those tapered sticks that are easier to grip?

**Danny:** I swear by those. Besides being easier to hang on to, it transfers the weight a little bit further out in front on the stick. So ergonomically, it feels really good. If you're playing heavier music, it's the way to go.

**MD:** Have you experienced any drumming-related health issues from playing heavy music for so long?

**Danny:** Knock on wood, I've been so lucky. But I'm really meticulous about my warm-up before I play, when I know I'm going into a somewhat athletic experience. I hit hard. And I usually go through three snare drum heads a night. But I warm up for at least a half hour every time before I go on, doing old rudimental exercises that I've done for years, so I'm good to go on the first tune. And I've never had any carpal tunnel problems or tendinitis or anything. Any time I haven't warmed up and I just sit down and go in and try to rip, man, I feel it.

**MD:** What's your warm-up routine?

**Danny:** I have a little practice snare pad, and I just go through old rudimental solos and sticking patterns. And I'll put on music I like and jam over it. And right before I go onstage, I jump rope for a minute or so, and that works my feet up enough.

**MD:** Talk about playing backbeats without the snares on. You've been doing this for a

while, and it has a distinctive effect. What's your reasoning behind it? You just like the sound of it?

**Danny:** I think it's more complementary that way. Some of the Tool stuff gets pretty intricate, and you don't need to be bombastic about it. It also gives you space. If the verses are chugging along, you don't need to be so out in front and on top of everything. You can maybe carry more of a conversation. And then when it hits the chorus, I can switch them on, and the snares pop in and cut through. It leaves you somewhere to go compositionally, and I try to go with that idea more than anything else. But I do like the sound of it. And the snares I use are pretty heavy-duty bronze drums that are 8" deep. And the way I hit it, it still has a nice cut to it. I don't feel like I need to get the sizzle of snares on top of that unless the song calls for it.

**MD:** When you throw those snares on in "7empest," it has a big effect. It definitely goes somewhere.

**Danny:** Yeah, it's a powerful tune. It's actually in twenty-one, but it's three sevens, so I can play in three, or I can play in seven, or I can mix it up with different time signatures over the top of it. It's interesting to experiment with. I love playing that song. And it evolves live all the time.

**MD:** It has a King Crimson-esque quality to it.

**Danny:** The intro is King Crimson-sounding for sure, the counterpoint. Adam came up with that little riff, and to make the counterpoint I played the same thing but just half time. So it meets up every other time. Then he goes half time and I go to double time. And then we join together, and that's kind of the way the intro worked out. It has a nice flow to it, and depending on the stereo you're listening to it on, it kind of jerks your head in different directions. [laughs]

**MD:** You've been involved with some side projects over the years, including the Danny Carey Trio.

**Danny:** I love playing with [guitarist] Jamie Kime. We play together in the Doug Webb band and several other projects.

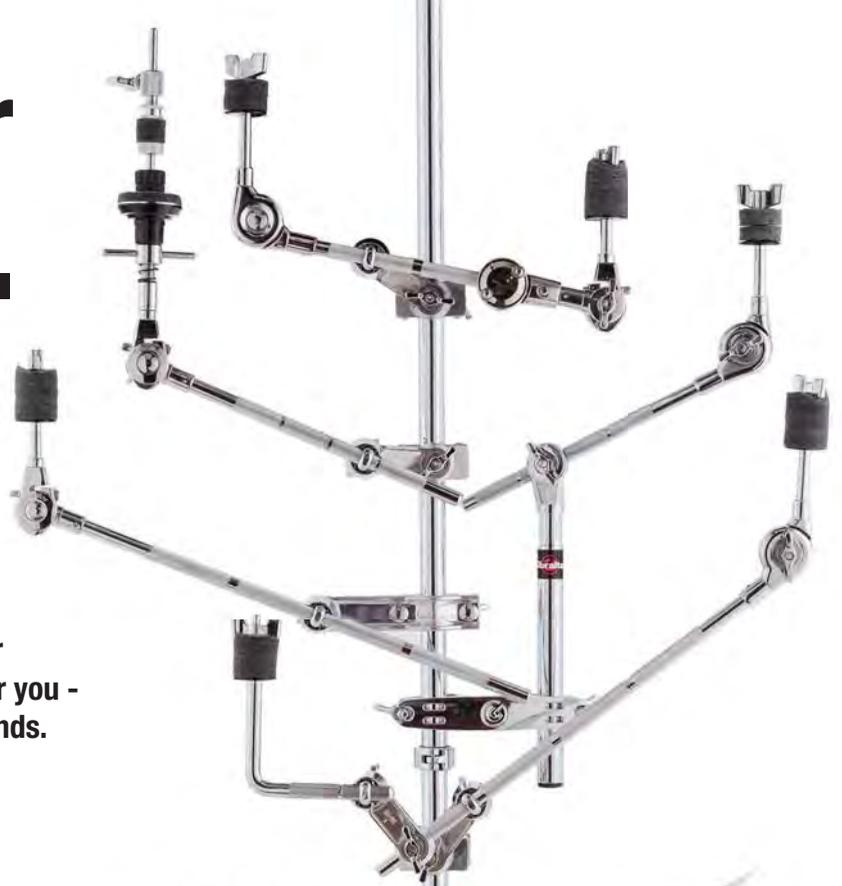
**MD:** The Doug Webb band is a swinging thing?

**Danny:** Doug and [keyboardist] Mitch Forman have played straight-ahead stuff and fusion forever. When I go to that gig, I never know what's going to happen. Doug calls tunes out of his ass. A lot of times he'll say, "Don't worry about it, it's swinging. Here's the tempo—one, two, three, four...." [laughs] But there are a lot of standards I know, like Herbie Hancock tunes or Tony Williams

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## Danny Carey

tunes. Freddie Hubbard. Some of it swings, some of it doesn't. The reason I do it is to try to grow and increase my vocabulary. I dig playing with those cats. A couple of the heaviest I know.

**MD:** Is *Volto!* done? There was an album released in 2013.

**Danny:** Well, [guitarist] John Ziegler had some health issues. But he's battling back and taking on students, and his fingers are getting back in shape. We'll be resurrecting *Volto!* as soon as possible. In the meantime, we may do a few gigs because he and Jamie were really tight. So maybe a few *Volto!* gigs with Jamie playing guitar instead of John. But I can't wait till John can do it again because he was the main composer in that band.

**MD:** And you were recently on the *Legend of the Seagullmen* release. Was that a one-off?

**Danny:** I don't know. I just knocked out two drum tracks for new tunes before I left to go on a Tool tour, and I think [guitarist] Jimmy Hayward is composing more. We're planning on doing some more stuff. It's a lot of fun, and it's great to be able to play with Brent Hinds and all the crazy characters involved. We always have good people to jam with, and it's a good outlet for all of us.

**MD:** And with the Danny Carey Trio, on YouTube videos it looked like you were having fun jamming on Sabbath's "Hand of Doom" and Crimson's "One More Red Nightmare." It's more grooving than we're used to from you.

**Danny:** That's the music I grew up on, so you can't go wrong there. It's always fun to play those tunes. Pete Griffin is a great bass player, too, so I'll play anything with that guy at any time. He and Jamie played with

Zappa Plays Zappa all those years together. So they're like peas in a pod. They can play pretty much anything technically that they want to. They're a pleasure to play with. They help increase my vocabulary, and like I said, that's what I'm all about. I just want to be able to hold more conversations on a higher level on my instrument, and they help me a lot in that way.

**MD:** You mentioned long ago that you were working out of Gary Chester's book *The New Breed*. You've been at this a while. Are there any methodologies that you've recently used to increase your vocabulary?

**Danny:** The tabla thing has helped me quite a bit, and I still try to hang out with [tabla teacher] Alope Dutta as much as I can. I've been working on playing odd times or just different times over other time signatures and having the balls to go with it and let them meet up where they'll meet up and keep track of that in my head...it's more of a metric discipline, I suppose. I've been working on that a lot. It's helped give me more things to say. At certain times, vocalists, without even knowing it, start singing in three or four or whatever. So if I can do that with one of my limbs while keeping the groove going, it helps the song take off. And that might help transition into the chorus. That's the drummer's job, to set up the next part that's coming, in a creative way. That's what I try to do all the time when I'm working on songs with my bandmates.

**MD:** You did something like that on "Eulogy" from 1996's *Ænima*, where the hi-hats are mimicking the vocal rhythm.

**Danny:** Totally. That was one of the first times I ever really kind of got that together. That was a lucky thing in a way. It made

sense in the song at the time. And I thought it worked really well, so I've been trying to develop that aspect of my playing at a higher level. I don't know if it's working or not. We'll see. [laughs]

**MD:** Besides art and books and basketball, what else inspires your creativity? Dance? Film? Some music that would surprise fans?

**Danny:** I'm still trying to listen to a lot of stuff. There's a lot of music to discover. I've been listening to more electronic experimental stuff lately because I've really been into the synthesizer world over the last couple of years. [Go to [dannycarey.com](http://dannycarey.com) /shop and check out his self-published book on synths, *Remember the Future*.] That's one thing that has changed in my setup onstage: I have two synths, and I can noodle around and make some textural things happen that way. It's really inspiring to me to hear where creative people can go electronically. And I'm not really talking about dance music. It's more on the academic side of creative synthesizer music, more compositional and classical, experimental-based.

**MD:** Besides touring behind the new Tool album, what's in your near future?

**Danny:** I'm going to try to do an album with Jamie and Pete Griffin, because I really enjoy doing that. And I'll start working on an album that's based on the idea of "Chocolate Chip Trip," with a synthesizer, maybe have it more melodic and have actual tunes. I had a lot of fun doing that. I've been increasing my synthesizer arsenal to a crazy level, so I've got lots of directions I can go with it. I'm looking forward to experimenting and traveling off into that world.



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\* Pictured from Left to Right: DS MP 320 EGS, DS MP 522 SB, DS MP 324 RCS

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# Security Project's Jerry Marotta

## The Rhythm and the Heat

Few musicians get to play on albums that define an artist, an era, an entire aesthetic. But that's exactly what this drummer did on Peter Gabriel's groundbreaking post-Genesis recordings. And in an unusual turn, today he gets to recreate the sounds and grooves he conceived in the early '80s, reminding us just how shockingly satisfying they were—and still are.

---

Story by Ken Micallef

Photos by Paul La Raia

**J**erry Marotta's drums have forged the groove to dozens of landmark recordings, from Peter Gabriel and Daryl Hall & John Oates to Stevie Nicks and the Indigo Girls, musicians who called upon the New Yorker's skills to create their best-selling albums. Marotta also appears on such popular discs as Marshall Crenshaw's *Downtown*, John Mayer's *Room for Squares*, David Sylvian's *Everything and Nothing*, and Robbie Robertson's *Storyville*, as well as hundreds of other pop and rock releases from knowns and unknowns alike—the lot of the studio musician.

At the core of Marotta's method is an organic, punchy tone and angular rhythms that make a groove pop with singular style and wit. Though older brother Rick Marotta tracked equally impressive records, Jerry's touch and tone are unique, and in the music of Peter Gabriel in particular, the effect can be chilling.

As part of the Security Project, which features vocalist Happy Rhodes, Warr guitarist Trey Gunn, keyboardist David Jameson, and guitarist Michael Cozzi, Marotta replicates his magisterial drumming from such ethereal Gabriel standards as "Lay Your Hands on Me," "The Family and the Fishing Net," "San Jacinto," "Games Without Frontiers," "The Rhythm of the Heat," and "Shock the Monkey." Not only does Marotta drum with incredible

faithfulness to the original recorded event, the *sound* of the Security Project is shocking in its fidelity. This is not a Peter Gabriel tribute band; it's more akin to the New York Philharmonic performing Beethoven. The band's presentation is serious, startling, and as formidable as Gabriel's material itself.

Recorded before the overuse of technology enabled today's largely artificial production aesthetic, the albums Peter Gabriel made between 1978 and 1982 (his second and third self-titled LPs, and *Security*) are recordings of great innovation and imagination, and Marotta replicates his drumming on them in the Security Project as both muse and master. You can hear Marotta breathe life anew into the Project's albums *Live 1*, *Live 2*, *Five*, *Contact*, *Here Comes the Flood*, and *Slowburn*.

Never one to take it easy, Marotta recently collaborated with singer-songwriter Flav Martin on the album *Soul Redemption*, performs with Steely Dan tribute band Reelin' In the Years and with early-American-music purveyors Annie and the Hedonists, and plays double drums with his brother Rick in the Marotta Brothers, covering material they either originally recorded or that inspired them back in the day. He also operates Dreamland Recording Studios in upstate New York. We start our conversation there.



**MD:** You run a professional recording studio in addition to drumming around the world.

**Jerry:** Yes, Dreamland Recording Studios. It's in a big church building and has a phenomenal selection of gear. I've also had a studio in my house in Woodstock for many years called Jersville. Dreamland is in Hurley, which is the next town over.

**MD:** Why operate a recording studio?

**Jerry:** I've always had gear to record, write, and produce music. But when Dreamland came about I wasn't sure I was going to still have my house with my studio in it. The studio started in the mid '80s, and tons of albums by everyone from Pat Metheny and

records. Has owning a studio, your years of session work, and having a home studio helped you to create a unique and personal drum sound?

**Jerry:** It teaches you where you get good sounds and who gets them—what studios, which engineers. I've learned a lot from doing records with engineer Tchad Blake and producer Mitchell Froom. I lived in New York for years, and then I did a lot of work in London and L.A. I've also had my own studio for many years, and I've collected gear. Getting good drum sounds is not rocket science. And sometimes people try a little bit too hard.

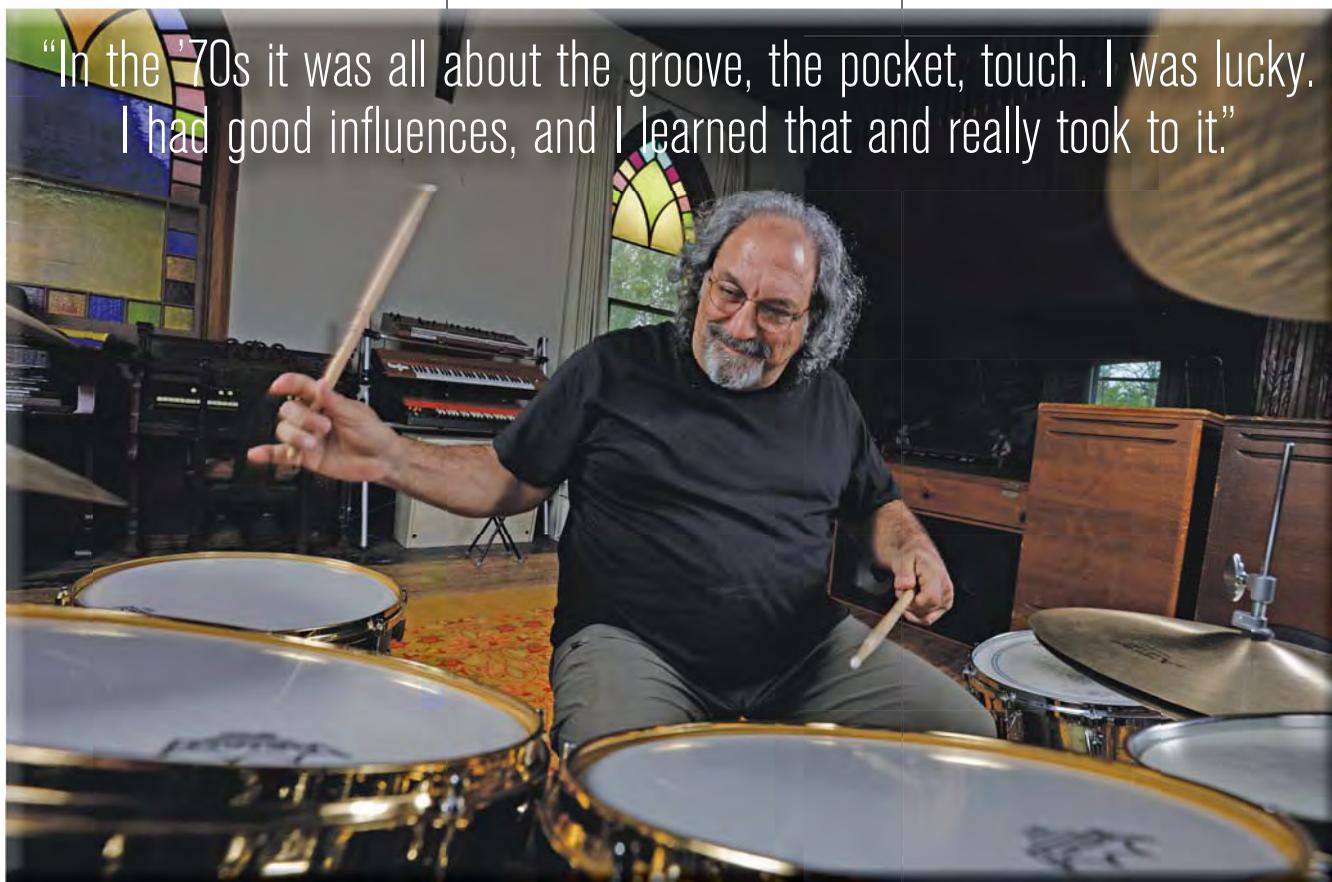
the sound.

**MD:** How do you tune the drums?

**Jerry:** I tune the bottom heads a little higher to get a little more tone. I don't tune the toms super deep. My traditional setup is 10" and 12" toms and 14" and 16" floor toms. I work my way down from the high tom. I try to find the sweet spot on the first drum, and then I work my way around.

**MD:** Sometimes you use as many as three snare drums. And your first tom is actually a snare drum with the snares off.

**Jerry:** That's almost always my setup. I used to have 8", 10", and 12" toms mounted above the bass drum. But years ago I replaced the



Herbie Hancock to Yo-Yo Ma to the B-52s were recorded there. It's a converted church built in 1896, with a 38' x 42' live room, four or five iso booths, and tons of vintage gear, including drums from Yamaha, Ludwig, Gretsch, and Slingerland, plus hand drums, gongs—all kinds of stuff. We had Snarky Puppy in recently. The Pixies did their new record here. But it's a labor of love. I don't make any money doing it. I work with people who have small budgets and work it out so that everybody gets to experience Dreamland.

**MD:** Your drum sound on the Security Project records and live videos is incredible. It sounds exactly like your drums from the Gabriel

**MD:** "Try too hard"?

**Jerry:** They screw with the sound, the EQ... Oftentimes microphone placement alone has a lot to do with the drum sound.

**MD:** But the drum sound of the early Gabriel records is *your* sound, which you also hear in the Security Project albums.

**Jerry:** And the thing about the Gabriel records is that every one of them was done by a different engineer.

**MD:** When recording as a sideman, how do you get a drum sound?

**Jerry:** I'll set up my drums, and the engineer and the assistant will mike them up. I'll bang around on the drums, and it's their job to get

8" with a 10" snare drum with the snares off. It sounded like an 8" tom, so I have the luxury of both, and I like the three-snare setup. The main snare, the one between my legs, is the really punchy one. A 10" snare is the higher-pitched one, and then to the left of the hi-hat is the fat snare. It's a little deeper. I have it tuned to where the lugs are almost rattling. That's my standard setup—three completely different snare sounds.

**MD:** Will you use three snare drums most of the time?

**Jerry:** Oftentimes I do. I might change for a bridge or a chorus, or alternate between them on 2 and 4. I'll mix them up so I can work the

three of them in, in some kind of a sensible way. I've been doing that for years.

**MD:** What's your advice to drummers in how to develop their own touch? You have a more unusual touch than even your brother.

**Jerry:** Sadly, because of computers, and what that's done to recording, drummers are getting lazy with tempo, time, and touch. When I started playing the drums in 1966, the only way you could vary any sound was with the way you hit the drum. In the '70s it was all about the groove, the pocket, touch. I was lucky. I had good influences, and I learned that and really took to it. Now engineers can sound-replace the drums. They can snap your playing to a Pro Tools grid, and that removes the unique and individual nuance of your playing.

**MD:** What's the theme behind the Security Project?

**Jerry:** We are mostly focusing on Peter Gabriel's *Security* album, and my time with Peter from 1977 to 1986. No songs from *So*; we don't play "Big Time" and "Sledgehammer." This is the earlier, ethereal music Peter was known for. There's no getting away from how the music was recorded, like "Lay Your Hands on Me," "The Family and the Fishing Net," and "San Jacinto." We don't reimagine them. But "I Don't Remember" and "Intruder"—we've put our own spin on those.

**MD:** Generally it sounds like you're replicating the drum parts note for note. I imagine you played all of these songs with Gabriel live on tour.

**Jerry:** I recorded all of the songs and played them on tour with Peter. But I was very cautious about this. I was constantly listening to what we were doing, and I'd compare that



to the recorded version. I would find YouTube clips of me playing those songs with Peter and compare how well we're doing it. And then I'd check Peter's contemporary versions. I feel like what we're doing is easily as good as any of them. I won't say which ones I think we're doing better, but I wouldn't do them if they didn't come across really well.

**MD:** How did you record the drums on the early Gabriel albums?

**Jerry:** The first one I recorded was Peter's second album, which was produced by Robert Fripp, half at the Hit Factory in New York and the other half at a studio in Holland. Steve Lillywhite produced the third record, which was recorded in the barn of an old country house in England.

**MD:** Did you record live or layer tracks?

**Jerry:** Both. In 1977, technology was very different. We'd get together and jam, Peter had some ideas, and it was usually Tony Levin, Larry Fast, and various guitar players. We'd just get together and play, and that's how we put

those records together.

**MD:** How did the practice of recording drums and cymbals separately, or no cymbals at all, begin?

**Jerry:** In that barn we started to experiment with compression, distortion, room sounds, and really twisting the sounds. When you over-compress drums and start to add distortion, the drums sound fantastic. But a cymbal doesn't sound anything like a drum. It's like recording a ukulele and a tuba into the same microphone—you'd never do it. Hugh Padgham, the engineer, got these awesome drum sounds. But every time I hit a cymbal it sounded horrible. So we pulled the cymbals down and figured we'd overdub them. When it came time to overdub cymbals, it didn't seem necessary. There was nothing missing. So that was it. No cymbals.

**MD:** How do you create a drum part?

**Jerry:** I listen to the song a few times, as much as I need to. I try to basically formulate a drum part in my head before I sit down at the

## Marotta's Security Project Setup

### Drums: Yamaha PHX

- A. 7.5x14 Brass snare
- B. 5x14 snare
- C. 4x10 snare
- D. 6.5x10 tom
- E. 7.5x12 tom
- F. 12.5x14 floor tom
- G. 14x16 floor tom
- H. 17x22 bass drum

**Heads:** Remo, including Ambassador Coated snare batter and Clear snare side, Emperor Smooth White tom batters and Ambassador Clear resonants

### Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" A New Beat or A Custom Rezo hi-hats
- 2. 22" K Constantinople Thin Overhammered
- 3. 20" K Constantinople Thin High
- 4. 22" K Constantinople Thin High
- 5. 22" K Constantinople Medium

**Sticks:** Vic Firth 7A nylon-tip and 5A wood-tip, wire brushes

**Percussion:** LP cowbell and agogo bells



## Jerry Marotta

drums. Then I refine it. And then I start hitting the drums.

**MD:** What things might change on the way to a finished take or part?

**Jerry:** Well, you never know. You think something is going to work in your head, and you sit down and have to refine it. Nothing changes dramatically. What might change is that I'll get a part exactly where I want it; we might run a take and then try something totally different to see if anything comes from it. It's very simple.

**MD:** What if someone throws in their two cents?

**Jerry:** Often people just let me do my thing because they know me, and they want my thing. If someone wants me to change my part, that's no fun. That's why I don't do a lot of sessions. What's really bad is when I come up with a great drum part, and it's very "Jerry Marotta," very unusual, left of center, and then the producer and the artist get together and think they have a great idea, and they're singing me a drum thing that sounds like every other record. That's when it gets really frustrating: when I think I can really take the song to a whole other place and make it unique and then I get shot down.

**MD:** Regarding *So*, there's some controversy as to which tracks you and Manu Katché

played on.

**Jerry:** I never heard about a controversy. I had minimal involvement with *So*. I know I played on "Red Rain." I'd been playing with Peter for years, and initially I was slotted to do his record, and then I was hired to record with Paul McCartney. Peter changed his schedule at the last minute, which coincided with McCartney's recording dates. That was McCartney's *Press to Play*. It was just Paul, me, and Eric Stewart from 10cc. I couldn't back out of that. I worked on *So* when I could, but by that point technology had completely overwhelmed Peter, and I think it became his demise. *So* was successful, so...that's his prerogative.

**MD:** What advice can you give drummers to develop a style and sound as you have?

**Jerry:** My brother and I are self-taught. I just listened and played along. My thing was, in the '60s I was a real snob about black music: Motown and Stax, and I would play along to those records. That's how I learned to play. It's changed so much now. To find one's own style, I'd say to work with players that are in the same place as you are. Develop the sound together. The day of the session drummer is over. And music has changed so much that a twenty-year-old doesn't have the same sensibility that I do. They're listening to a

whole different kind of music. A lot of it's programmed and composed on a computer. I suggest kids listen to Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, and Steely Dan's *Gaucho*, *The Royal Scam*, and *Aja*. Listen to records that were made before technology had any impact on a drummer's feel, style, or sound. Maybe that's the way to go. Listen to the Beatles; listen to old records.

**MD:** Are you from a musical family?

**Jerry:** Our father was a dancer; he taught ballroom dancing and Latin dance.

**MD:** Do you think that influenced you and your brother in how you felt rhythm?

**Jerry:** Absolutely. My parents played big band music, lots of great music around the house. My sister and brother were older than me, and they were buying records and playing them at home all the time. All of that was very helpful.



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# Dyna-Sync

# Jerry Roe

By day he makes hits with country-music superstars. By night he pounds it out with his melodic punk/hardcore/sludge metal band. And everybody—fans, musicians, the modern country scene itself—wins.

Story by Jeff Potter    Photos by Rick Malkin

It's not certain which came first for Jerry Roe: toddling or paradiddling. "There's video proof of me playing a straight dotted rock beat at one-and-a-half or two years old," Jerry confirms. "My grandfather and my dad saw that I had rhythm and got me a Remo Junior Pro kit." Once Jerry navigated the challenge of reaching the pedals on his yellow child-size drumset, his upward trajectory never ebbed.

There was never any doubt in Jerry's Nashville household that he would have a pro career. It was in the blood. His grandfather was none other than country music legend Jerry Reed, and his father, Dave Roe, is a top session bassist who's worked with everyone from Loretta Lynn to Chrissie Hynde, including a twelve-year stint with Johnny Cash.

Fast forward to Jerry playing his first pro studio session at the seasoned age of eleven, gigging around town in his teens playing country, rock, and Americana gigs, and eventually touring with headliners like Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell, Michelle Branch, k.d. lang, Alison Krauss, and Gretchen Wilson. Becoming increasingly in demand for recording dates, Roe gradually whittled down his road commitments in order to firmly establish himself as a top-call Nashville session drummer.

Between 2009 and 2012, he was active in the L.A. session scene before resettling back home, where his studio calls have continued to escalate. In addition to his recordings with Harris and Crowell, Jerry's lengthy discography includes titles by Molly Tuttle, Florida Georgia Line, Luke Combs, Grant-Lee Phillips, Lee Ann Womack, Greg Laswell, Darius Rucker, Amy Grant, Josh Groban, Scott McCreery, Aaron Watson, Will Hoge, Lee Brice, and many more. He also laid tracks for numerous seasons of the hit television series *Nashville*.

A motivation for Jerry's return to Nashville was to reunite with guitarist/singer/songwriter Buick Audra (aka B. Arson). Now a married couple, they're also

bandmates in Friendship Commanders, a duo he describes as a "melodic punk/hardcore/sludge metal band." Though Jerry was surrounded by country music in his upbringing, many of his drum heroes were from the rock and prog-rock world, and Friendship Commanders is a vital outlet for those influences.

In addition to the duo's albums *DAVE* (2016) and *BILL* (2018) and four EPs, a new EP is slated for spring and an album for 2021, accompanied by tour dates. On potent tracks like "Horrify" and "Women to the Front," Jerry serves up accurate power chops with a punk attitude, booster-rocking Buick's crunching guitar blitz and urgent vocals. In contrast, his work with country and Americana/singer-songwriter acts is frequently marked by a subtler, economical approach centered with a satisfying pocket. His robust sound and irresistible groove bring out the best in both worlds.

A multi-instrumentalist, Jerry adds bass on Friendship Commander cuts and wears that hat on numerous local gigs and occasional studio sessions. And his upcoming instrumental solo album, intriguingly titled *I Infiltrated the Belle Meade Good-Ol' Boy Network and All I Got Was This Pink Polo Shirt*, showcases his guitar, bass, and drum talents.

Jerry's extra-jammed recording schedule this past season has also reaped new and upcoming sides with Paul Franklin and Vince Gill, Keith Urban, Carly Pearce, Buick Audra (solo), Luke Combs, Seaforth, Fairground Saints, Runaway, and a Rodney Crowell album, *Texas*, where he plays double drums with Ringo Starr.

Hard work and tenacity have gotten Jerry where he is today. Yet, reflecting on his roots and musical journey, the thirty-five-year-old drummer still cherishes many of his earliest lessons. "It's like learning languages," he says. "We're better at it when we're younger—it's easier to home in on the nuances. That's definitely one of the coolest things about growing up in a musical family—having that *edge*, if you will."



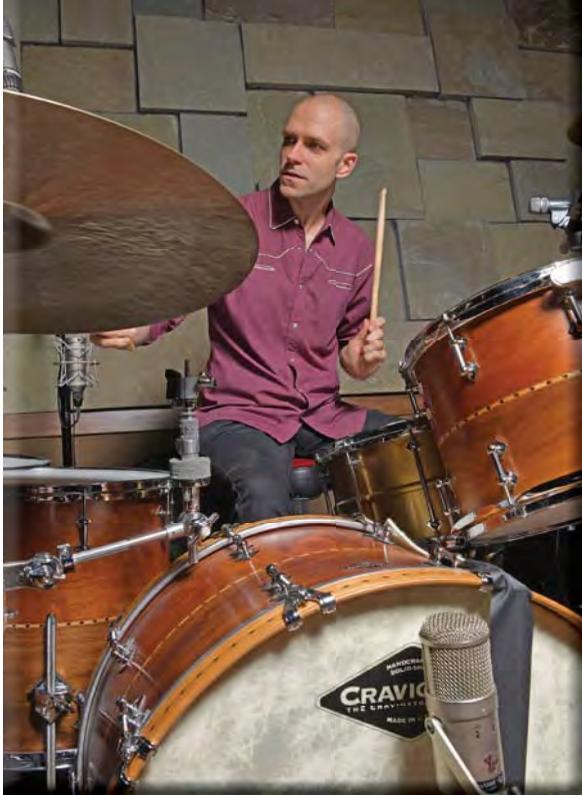


**MD:** You've been in demand for a long time in the studio scene. Many drummers—some of them plenty talented—haven't succeeded in that highly competitive world. Is there something they're not getting right?

**Jerry:** I can't stress enough about being great at what you do, and working hard is really important. And much of it is the right time and place: don't underestimate what luck and coincidence have to do with you doing well.

**MD:** Perhaps you're being too humble. It's one thing to be hired for an occasional session. But to be called consistently for a long period—*that's* more than luck.

**Jerry:** Yeah, if you weren't doing good work, you definitely wouldn't be hanging around. And there's nothing at all wrong with *not* working out in the studio scene. Your strengths may lie elsewhere. I got an early jump on it from my family; some level of nepotism factored in for getting my foot in the door. But it does take a long time. You've



got to keep going. If you are good and know you're good and you care and work hard enough, something will happen eventually. It's just always going to take longer than you

think it will.

**MD:** You've worked both in the L.A. and Nashville session scenes. Are there differences in how the sessions are run?

**Jerry:** In Nashville there's a structure that most people stick to: 10:00, 2:00, and 6:00, three sessions a day. While that kind of used to exist in L.A., it doesn't really anymore. There's a lot less band tracking now, and what band tracking there is doesn't follow any sort of rules.

Mostly it's overdubs. For example, I did two Greg Laswell records when I was there, and on the first one, I did all twelve songs in one day! [laughs] I just played to or replaced programming that was already on those tracks so that it had a real feel. Real quick and painless.

**MD:** Are Nashville sessions still frequently using loops while

recording the rhythm track?

**Jerry:** There's a move away from that. There are still some loops and programming, but it seems there's now more of a critical mass toward organic stuff and a little more reverence for the older style. It feels more right. I actually played on some shuffles lately. I never thought that would happen.

**MD:** Was the consensus that loops were stiffening things up?

**Jerry:** The loops are indicative of a type of music—more rock-leaning or hip-hop influenced—and you'd be playing some very busy drum parts. Now there's more cool, spacey psychedelic indie-pop stuff happening with a country veneer—more like honky-tonk style. What's great about playing those sessions is that lots of those bands are huge—eight or nine pieces tracking all at once.

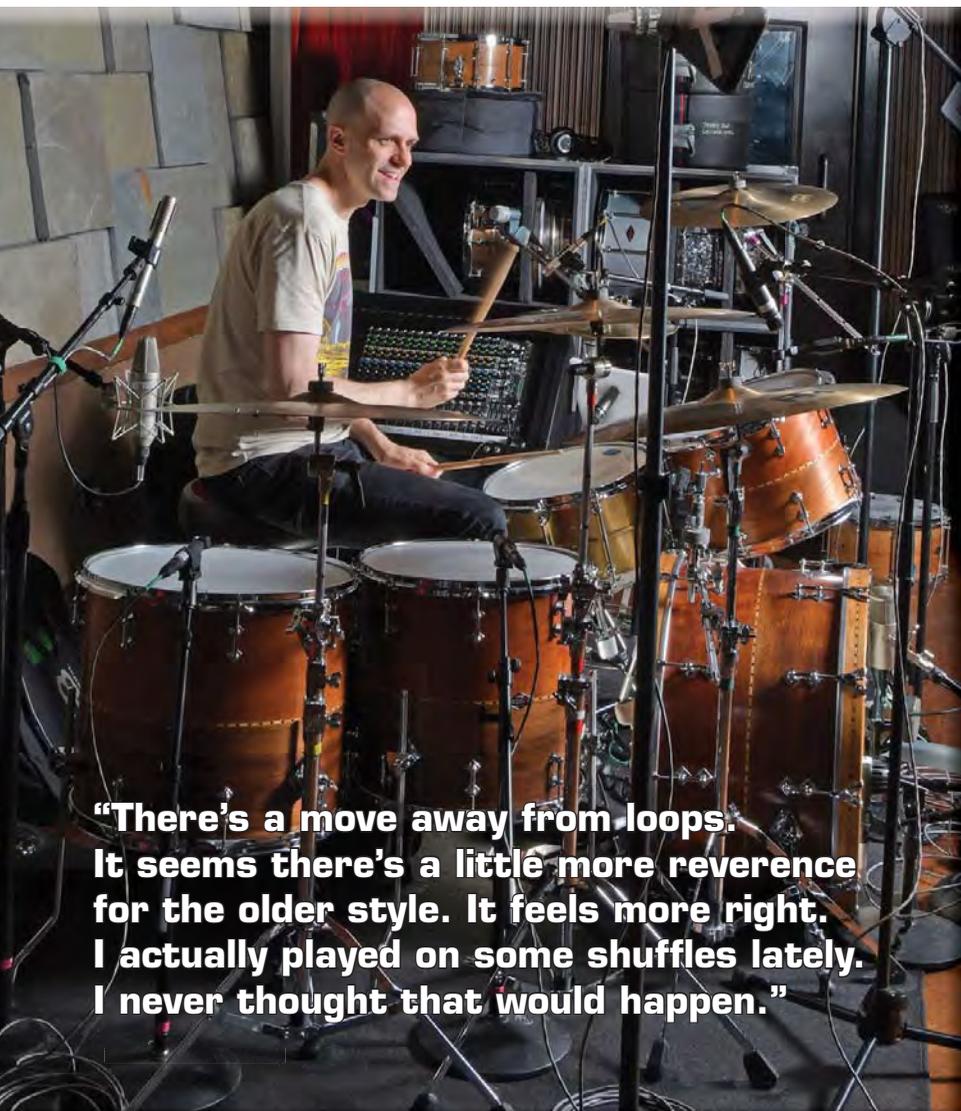
**MD:** What's the isolation situation for those large band sessions?

**Jerry:** A lot of studios have booths, but generally the core group of the band will be in the main room with amps isolated. The bass, guitars, and keys will be in the main room, but piano, fiddle, and acoustic will be in their own booths.

On the Emmylou and Rodney record (*The Traveling Kind*), we did it all in one room, with bleeding and everything. On one track, "The Weight of the World," we were all in the room, and the album take was actually what happened when Rodney sat down to show us the song, and we all just started playing along.

**MD:** Vocals and all?

**Jerry:** Yes, that's the tracking vocal. Unless he's lying to us, Rodney doesn't like to



**"There's a move away from loops. It seems there's a little more reverence for the older style. It feels more right. I actually played on some shuffles lately. I never thought that would happen."**

overdub. He just shoots for a tracking vocal. If he doesn't get it, we all go down again.

[laughs]

**MD:** How much gear do you bring to a major recording session?

**Jerry:** I send about twenty snare drums in cartage. I'll have four bags of cymbals and some percussion stuff. I have five kits ready to go. One is a weird, trashy kit with Chinas and micro cymbals that I use to create loop-style parts. It's meant to be used as a secondary kit in a small room with a lo-fi mic setup on it. Also, I have a Craviotto kit tuned regular and wide open for a big modern rock sound; a '70s Ludwig with no heads on the tom bottoms or kick front for a deader super '70s sound; a '62 Gretsch Round Badge tuned higher and more open; and a '66 Ludwig tuned low and dead. I'll often have two kits sitting around. They'll set up one while I have another one sitting in cases that has a different sound make-up.

**MD:** You've had a long relationship with Meinl cymbals.

**Jerry:** They just sound like cymbals should sound. I've been playing them for so long that other cymbals sound wrong to me at this point. Every engineer I've worked with loves them. There are so many different types; I have a big collection, and I pull a wide variety. That freedom of tonal choice, it's perfect.

**MD:** You posted a video of yourself playing onstage behind Emmylou and Rodney. It's a classic, great-feeling country groove—a deep backbeat with a subtle shuffle on top. What's the secret of that ideal placement?

**Jerry:** That I can't tell you. I've never



## Two of a Perfect Trio Jerry Roe on Making Two Sound Like Three

"The name of the game is to always be playing as full and heavy as possible," says Jerry Roe about Friendship Commanders, the band consisting solely of him and his wife, Buick Audra. "I play really big drums and rely on a fair amount of cymbal wash to take up space, and I approach my parts sort of as if I'm a second rhythm/lead guitar player to Buick's first rhythm/lead guitar and voice. As in, whenever Buick isn't singing or playing a focal/lead part, I tend to jump in with something. Whether it's a flurry of notes or just three very deliberately placed ones, it has to be very propulsive and as melodic as possible while still taking up a lot of sonic real estate. With the kind of (usually very) fast punky rock/metal we play, breaking the momentum for the sake of a 'sick fill' could be fatal! I also tend to repeat things and slowly build on them within a song in the hopes of creating drum 'hooks' whenever possible."

necessarily thought about it; I've just done it. I learned that more from being at country gigs in bars with my dad, watching the old guys do it. The whole band has to be on the same page, or it just doesn't work.

**MD:** Growing up in a pro musical family, you were thrown right in the pool.

**Jerry:** My grandfather's favorite instrument was drums. He always wished he were a drummer, and he was very particular about

who played drums on his stuff. And my dad being a bass player, of course he loved drums. And he was originally a drummer, too. He only started playing bass because there was a major shortage of bass players in Hawaii, where he grew up.

My dad was highly responsible for me getting into prog rock and metal, because that's what he really enjoyed. He had an openness and eclectic tastes that influenced

## Roe's Studio Setup

**Drums:** Craviotto Walnut/Cherry Hybrid

- A. 8x14 Brass AK snare
- B. 10x14 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 16x18 floor tom
- E. 14x24 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Meinl

- 1. 15" Byzance Brilliant Medium Custom hi-hats
- 2. 18" Byzance Jazz Medium Thin crash
- 3. 24" Byzance Traditional Medium ride
- 4. 20" Byzance Jazz Medium Thin crash
- 5. 22" Byzance Sand crash-ride with rivets

**Hardware:** DW 9000 series double pedal, hi-hat stand, snare stand, and tom/cymbal stand and 7000 series cymbal stands; Roc-N-Soc throne with bicycle-style seat

**Heads:** Remo, including X14 snare batter and Ambassador Hazy snare side, Ambassador X Coated tom batters and Ambassador Coated resonants, and Powerstroke P3 White Suede bass drum batter

**Sticks:** Vic Firth 2B, 5B, and SD4 combo maple



"As far as gear is concerned," Jerry Roe chuckles, "I use everything, basically." Pictured in this feature is his typical studio setup. For band gigs he uses a Craviotto Ash kit with baseball bat edges (12x15 tom, 16x18

floor tom, 15x24 kick, and matching 8x14 snare), and Meinl 15" Pure Alloy hi-hats, 19" and 20" Byzance Traditional Medium crashes, and a 23" Byzance Traditional Heavy ride.

## Jerry Roe

the strange mish-mash of things that I value.

**MD:** While you were building your chops, your dad must have also clued you in to important pro working skills.

**Jerry:** He liked me being into the metal guys who could play chops-y, but he did make it very clear that I needed to be able to play with a click track, to play quietly and loudly when needed, and to be able to swing. He got me into the nuances of shuffle grooves.

**MD:** Was reading encouraged?

**Jerry:** Well, I don't know how to read music. I know how to read charts. [laughs] He didn't show me how to read charts but then just booked me on my first session when I was eleven and said, "Aw, you'll figure it out!" It was an off-Music Row session in Hendersonville with some heavy dudes—guys who only like to do one take. I knew them all; I'd been hanging out in the studio. My dad said, "Look at it and it'll make sense." He was right—and being young and pliable helped. Mostly I just faked it while looking at the page and figured it out eventually.

**MD:** I understand you devoured your dad's record collection.

**Jerry:** The two most foundational, important records to me as a kid were *Red* by King Crimson and *Truth and Soul* by Fishbone. I played along with them a ton and have loved those bands ever since. Any

old Bill Bruford, I'm a huge fan.

I was also obsessed with Pete Thomas's drumming with Elvis Costello and the Attractions. Metal and grunge hit me hard. Matt Cameron was one of my most influential drummers. His feel is pretty unmatched—really laid-back all the time, but it feels like the wheel is constantly moving forward in a natural, even way. I latched on to that at a young age. Vinnie Paul was big, also Neil Peart, Dale Crover, Levon Helm, Dave Grohl, Jim Gordon, and Tom Ardolino from NRBQ. Larrie Londin was also big—my grandfather was a major factor in discovering him and getting his career going.

Also very important are all the guys I was seeing in clubs around town while I was growing up—some of them that made it out to playing with bigger guys and some of them that no one will ever know.

**MD:** Many of your early inspirations were from rock. Has it informed your country playing in any way?

**Jerry:** Maybe. In my discography, I do play on some hard-hitting stuff. But even in the very mainstream thing, what gets me hired is my ability to *not* do that. [laughs] I thought the more rock-leaning, hard-hitting playing, which was very much happening in the aughts and early 2010s in country,

would factor in more. But in the past couple of years, I've ended up getting hired to do more organic, midrange-y, quieter drums. The country and American roots influences have served me more than the rock stuff has, as far as making a living is concerned.

**MD:** Of the many tours you've done, were there any that were especially lasting learning experiences?

**Jerry:** You learn something on all of them. On my first lengthy tour at age twenty, I learned how to be myself and get along with other personalities, because it was a smaller environment, touring in a van and playing small venues. It was six months straight with a band called the Legendary Shack Shakers. I lost fifteen pounds playing super fast psychobilly/rockabilly. I learned a lot. There was even a huge fight I had to navigate.

**MD:** Inter-band politics?

**Jerry:** No! A fight broke out in the venue we were loading into. We had to get out of there. Somebody threw a cinder block through our windshield, just missing the guitar player's head.

Also, I've toured with a lot of women in my career. That taught me how to be a much better human being. And I learned a lot musically from those gigs. They value their musicians; I felt more treated as an

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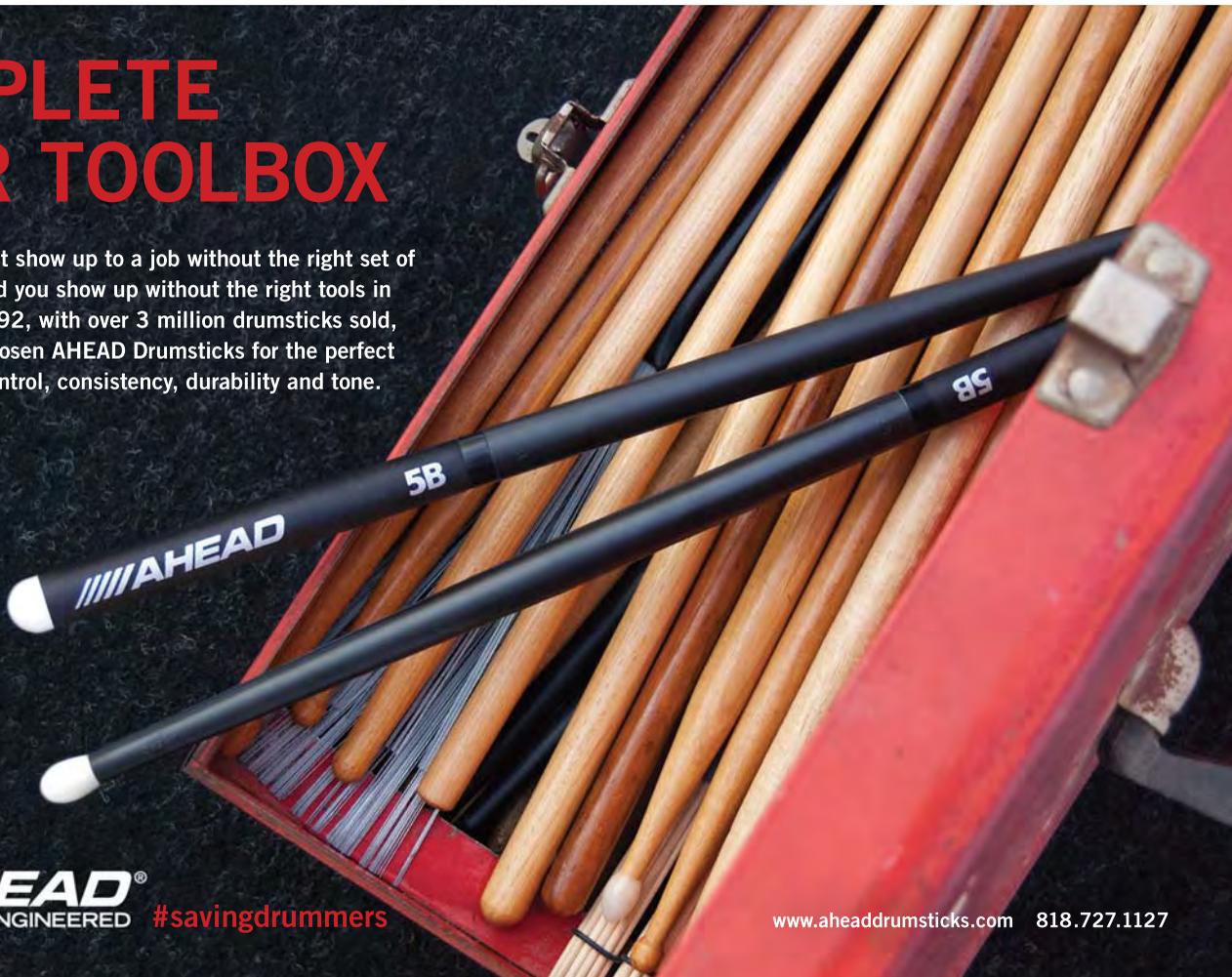
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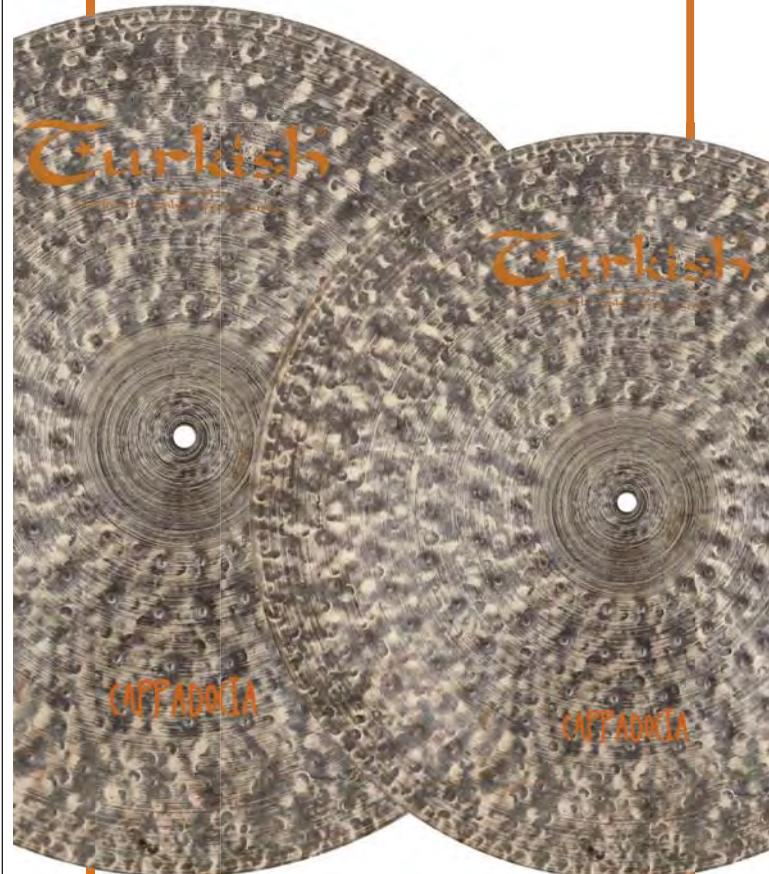
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equal on gigs with women leaders.

I'm connected from a severely feminist-man perspective. I think women are a lot less tolerant of bullshit and need to have great players behind them. The standard is just higher on those gigs.

**MD:** Technical musicianship level?

**Jerry:** Not necessarily more technically accomplished, but more *tasteful*. I played with Michelle Branch; she didn't want dudes who played like they were the center of attention. Same thing with k.d. lang, Alison Krauss, and Emmylou. I'm grateful because I gleaned a good perspective on how to play music tastefully and to be a grown man who better works and communicates in the workplace.

**MD:** Regarding feminism, Friendship Commanders has strong political messages involving equality, human rights....

**Jerry:** Buick is the direct voice of the band, and she values and lives human/women's rights. Her songs are based on personal experience, so the message comes through poetic metaphor rather than direct address. Outside of that, we believe that you need to use any influence you have for good. All of our releases benefit progressive charities, so that aligns us directly with liberal politics or leanings. People ask me if being "loud" politically has caused me trouble working in the country genre, but it really hasn't. It's never been a problem for me; it's never caused me trouble—as far as I know. [laughs] But I wouldn't care if it did.

**MD:** Your aggressive drumming with Friendship Commanders seems a polar opposite to your studio/touring work with country artists. But is there a thread, drumming-wise?

**Jerry:** It comes from the same place. Some players approach music from the standpoint of "what's fun to play," regardless of the vibe, but I just care about the song and what makes that work. Whether that be a flurry of notes played really loudly, or just hitting the same drum quietly over and over again—if that's what's best for the song, I'd rather do that. I enjoy that much more.

In Friendship Commanders, I play real fast and real loud. It's very athletic. It's about power and intimidation, almost. I have to be in good shape and make sure I eat well, because it can wear me out. That sets it apart from what I do as a session/touring-for-hire drummer, where I'm really just adapting to a pre-existing template to make a song work the best it can.

**MD:** Not having a bassist on live dates, do you alter your drumming to compensate?

**Jerry:** We accidentally ended up as a duo. In typical Nashville fashion, a bass player we'd been working with got a last-minute gig and couldn't do an out-of-town date we'd booked. So we decided, "Why don't you [Buick] use this bass rig and guitar amp at the same time and I'll play my biggest drums, and we'll just play more." I played very big drums; I needed more sound, more thunder. And I played more and more aggressively than I would have with a bass player. It occurred naturally and was a wonderful side effect for us.

**MD:** A big longevity challenge for session players is changing times and tastes. Many once-sought-after musicians have found their shelf lives suddenly cut short. Versatility must help. And adaptability must be key.

**Jerry:** But I don't think the answer to that is to be the jack-of-all-trades. The answer is to figure out what's best and most natural about your playing and figure out how to make that fit in as many places as possible. A lot of people are naturally versatile, and that's great. But there are still hallmarks to your playing that other people don't have. I definitely wouldn't use those in the interest of being more usable overall, because it will have the opposite effect in general. Because otherwise, why would anyone hire you over anyone else?



# LINDA PITMON

STEVE WYNN &  
THE MIRACLE 3  
BASEBALL PROJECT  
THE MINUS 5  
FILTHY FRIENDS  
ARTHUR BUCK

She's the drummer at the center of the Peter Buck/Scott McCaughey/Steve Wynn axis, the super prolific group of musicians whose tentacles extend back to indie-rock legends R.E.M., the Dream Syndicate, and the Young Fresh Fellows, and forward with the Minus 5, Filthy Friends, and the Baseball Project. As such, her main dictate is to rock — consistently, creatively, sometimes on a moment's notice, and always like her life depends on it. Which is absolutely the case.

Story by Adam Budofsky

**O**n the 1970 Velvet Underground album *Loaded*, Lou Reed sang about a mythical girl named Jenny, whose life, at the tender age of five, was saved by rock 'n' roll. It's a sentiment that many of us understood immediately upon hearing the song "Rock & Roll" for the first time. Rock isn't just the music we most enjoy listening to or playing. It's our belief system, our door to the mysteries of the universe, our reason to get back up when life is doing its best to knock us down, our method of communication.

If Linda Pitmon was raised in 1950s Long Island rather than 1970s Minneapolis, Reed's song could have easily been written about her. Okay, maybe the line about Jenny's overly materialistic parents would be off the mark; Linda seems to have a very loving and respectful relationship with her folks, who still keep one of her beloved vintage drumsets at the ready for her

back home. But the part about being "saved" by the music, that's not just metaphorical.

Growing up with her older siblings' 45s, Pitmon—just about when she was our old pal Jenny's age—began constructing little toy drumsets so that she could play along to her favorite songs. In high school, she was the only girl who played percussion in band and orchestra, getting good fast and hanging around the older boys who were ripping on drumsets in the practice room—but not yet playing the kit herself. Eventually she talked her mother into letting her take a couple of lessons from one of those classmates, which proved to be the only instruction she ever received on a kit. She quit band her senior year of high school (her waning interest the result of an uninspiring band director), but her love of rock music was by now baked in. Later in college, when

she studied journalism and dived competitively, she also instinctively found kinship with the kind of people who spent more time reading album credits than the sports pages. "I had this modified mohawk," Pitmon recalls. "I was the weirdo that was an athlete but also a punk."

In her early twenties, Linda began to struggle with the symptoms of severe rheumatoid arthritis. Drumming, though painful, helped her through these tough times, and when new medications proved to be beneficial, she was able to slowly learn the craft of playing drumset in bands, eventually finding some success with the popular indie group Zuzu's Petals.

A few years later Pitmon moved to New York to work with Steve Wynn, leader of the highly regarded psych-rock band the Dream Syndicate (and Linda's future husband). Twenty years later,

she and Steve remain part of an extended family of musicians, including R.E.M.'s Peter Buck and Mike Mills and the Young Fresh Fellows' Scott McCaughey and Kurt Bloch, who join together in the Minus 5, Filthy Friends (featuring Sleater-Kinney's Corin Tucker), and/or the Baseball Project, a band that plays original compositions strictly about America's favorite pastime.

We spoke to Pitmon soon after she returned home from a run of shows at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by invitation of Greg Harris, who also happens to be the former president of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Obviously Harris is just the kind of guy who would get the Baseball Project's unique slant on things, though he's by no means alone in his appreciation, as the band recently released its third well-received full-length album.



Marti Wilkerson

**MD:** Baseball players and traveling musicians would seem to have similar lifestyles: no matter how famous you are, you still have to deal with the everyday issues of travel, sleep....

**Linda:** Yeah, and in the end your responsibility is to make sure your fans walk away happy at the end of the night. You have to let everything else go, no matter how tired you are, what kind of crappy phone call you got from home.... Whatever it might be, you have to stay focused so that when you get there you can make it worth it for yourself. The payoff for me is to have a great time and feel like there's a connection with the audience and to feel like we're giving them a great night. Whatever the emotion is that you're trying to convey—the catharsis of joy or sadness in a song—that's the whole point for me: to be honest. So I'm not going to let anything get in the way of that.

**MD:** There's a theory that all art is kind of an illusion, and that the audience shouldn't see any of the nuts and bolts of it. Do you look at it that way?

**Linda:** It depends which band I'm in that we're talking about. With some of the projects I'm involved in, I would say it's actually *about* showing the process. For instance, Scott McCaughey is in a million bands, and I'm in half of them, so I can verify that he's not afraid to really let the audience in on the process. He's not always looking to present a polished rock show that has all the edges worn off, at least not at the expense of injecting spontaneity at any opportunity. Steve Wynn is similar, and I've played hundreds of shows in various projects with these two.

I don't like to feel like I'm performing in a talent show when I'm up there, and none of the people I play with have that attitude about music. It's all about creating a unique show every night and encouraging improvisation, not to see how perfectly we can spit out a honed set. Also, I'm on the east coast while most of my bandmates are on the west coast, so we don't get to rehearse. We're always playing off each other, and I sometimes change my parts pretty wildly, depending on the vibe we get going. One

of us might drop out in the middle of a song for a few measures to shake things up, we might bring things down or up dynamically together. Our approach to rock music is much looser. I mean, trust me, we're a well-oiled machine, especially if we've been out on the road for a while, but this isn't a means to an end. It allows us to be really fearless with what we do, because everyone's listening as hard as you are and will make moves with you.

**MD:** Sometimes the most fun part of a show is when something breaks down and the band handles it in a way where they're letting the audience in on it.

**Linda:** Right. How many times have you been to a show where a cable gets disconnected or something? Part of the fun is to see how

started playing in the mid '80s, the typical set was a five-piece, and that's what I played. Then my band Zuzu's Petals was on tour in England, and we were opening some shows for the Fuzztones and using their gear. This was probably the first time I had to sit at somebody else's setup. Their drummer had just a four-piece, with one rack tom, and it kind of threw me into a panic, because I did a lot of patterns utilizing both rack toms. But at the end of three shows I was like, *Yeah, this is so much cooler*, the Charlie Watts setup. At that time I was very into all sorts of '60s music, especially mod, garage, and pop stuff. So it became sort of a statement, like, "I'm more '60s." And let's face it—less to pack up at the end of the night. I've only recently started toying with the idea of adding more.



Tammy Shine

the rest of the band reacts—do they look terrified, or do they turn it into a plus? And that's happened plenty of times in the studio, too, sometimes on your favorite records—you hear this thing and think, *That's genius*, and later find out it was a mistake. I've had that happen many times to me in the studio and live and then thought, *I actually really like that. I'm going to keep it*. So you can look at things like mistakes or like part of the whole fabric that you're unrolling. Mistakes are just an opportunity for something to *happen*.

**MD:** Do you ever go through periods where you want to change up your setup?

**Linda:** My setup hasn't changed drastically over the last twenty years. When I first

We'll see where that goes.

To me it's more about how I play with what I have than about "how many things are there to hit." I've played plenty of cardboard boxes and overturned garbage bins for radio or in-store appearances. Of course I prefer playing one of my own kits. But when you don't get to do that, you have to find a way to love it. You better find some common interests—you know, love the one you're with. [laughs] And like I said earlier, nothing gets in the way of me having a good time.

**MD:** The only thing that still freaks me out is hardware that doesn't allow me to move stuff at least close to the way I want it.

**Linda:** Yeah, that can be super annoying. If I

know I'm going to have situations like that, I have some go-to things and bring as many of them as I can, including this vintage Ludwig snare stand that's super light and goes very low. My problem is I'm pretty small and sit pretty low as well, and my biggest issue is getting the snare way down there. So I throw this stand into my cymbal case. I'll also bring an extra snare head and tom heads, just in case I show up and the house kit is so bad that no amount of duct tape and napkins is going to save the night.

**MD:** Do you ever use electronics?

**Linda:** I added some pads for the Arthur Buck tour that I did last September, and that was fun. Joseph [Arthur] and Peter [Buck] made a record with loops and stuff before I was asked to do the American tour. I really liked that flavor of the drum loops on the record and thought all the loops really suited the songs. I did play certain songs more elastic and rockier, but other ones I really liked the rigidity of it and basically just changed my approach to playing to be more robotic. My natural place to sit is a little more behind the beat and swing a little bit, so I was concentrating on staying on top of the beat and being more "motorik." Joe and Peter decided our touring band needed to make the next record together, so we just recorded an album in March that Jacknife Lee just mixed and should be out soon. I hope to explore where I can add more pads for some different textures.

**MD:** How do you approach differentiating songs that are in the same groove world or at similar tempos?

**Linda:** That's a really interesting question. I think about it all the time. My minimal setup allows me to do everything that I want to do with the many bands that I play in. I'll always try to find ways to play around the beat if I can and be surprising without taking the players or the listener out of the game. It might be as simple as a kick drum pattern that develops within the verses. I try to trust my instincts and stay out of my head too much when we've only got four days to track a record. No time for second-guessing yourself! Songwriters talk about this a lot. They'll say, "I don't write the songs; I'm just the conduit." I get that feeling, too, where I just have to open myself up and pull from

## RECORDINGS

**Filthy Friends** Emerald Valley /// **The Baseball Project** Volume 1: Frozen Ropes and Dying Quails, Volume 2: High and Inside, 3rd /// **Steve Wynn & the Miracle 3** Sweetness and Light, My Midnight, Here Come the Miracles, Static Transmission, ... Tick... Tick... Tick, Northern Aggression /// **Golden Smog** Another Fine Day /// **The Fauntleroy's** Below the Pink Pony (with Alejandro Escovedo, Ivan Julian, and Nicholas Tremulis) /// **Zuzu's Petals** When No One's Looking, The Music of Your Life /// **Luke Haines** upcoming album featuring Peter Buck and Scott McCaughey /// **Arthur Buck** (Joseph Arthur and Peter Buck) upcoming album

the vibes around me—not to sound too hippy about it. [laughs]

At the same time, I'm always looking for a pattern that isn't going to be typical, something that doesn't necessarily draw attention to itself but that is taking an unexpected approach. I always feel like my greatest accomplishment is when I can put a deceptively complex part into a simple song and have you not even realize it. I've always been drawn to drummers who play like that—Jody Stephens from Big Star, Stan Lynch, Jim Keltner, Dave Mattacks—I listened to him so much with Fairport Convention and XTC. Ringo's maybe the best example. And I'm always trying to stay out of ruts with fills, trying to keep a distinct flavor, where I don't start or end in an ordinary place. I mean, if a song is begging for the stereotypical fill, there's nothing more satisfying than doing it once in a while. There's a lot to be said for giving the audience a piece of candy. But what I really love is to be amazed and just laugh, like, what the hell was that? I didn't see *that* coming.

When I was young I thought, *If I ever play drums, that's what I'm going to do*. And so when I finally did start playing, that was my approach. And maybe I wasn't always super successful in my early attempts. [laughs] I can remember doing preproduction for a Zuzu's Petals record, and we were doing it with Albhy Galuten, who's a really famous producer. I was doing a song where I intentionally put the snare on 1 and 3 rather than 2 and 4, and he kept looking at me like, "No, it's *here*," and I was like, "Yeah, I know, but I don't want to do that." I capitulated, but I always wanted to do things my own way.

**MD:** I sort of half-kidded with you backstage after the Filthy Friends show that we should open the interview just with the words "rock 'n' roll." The band was just spectacular, and was rocking in such a primal but pro way. It got me thinking about how profound a thing

this idea of "rocking" is.

**Linda:** It is profound. [pause] I'm actually going to get choked up, because this subject is so emotional to me.

It's life or death. Our lives were literally saved by rock 'n' roll. I hear it constantly from fans my age and older, whose reaction to our shows is so visceral. I think it's objectively true that in our culture, music doesn't hold the importance that it once held. It was *revolutionary*. People were moved by the messages and by the sounds. All of us worked in record shops... Steve and I were both DJs. Before I started playing in bands, I worked in all sorts of aspects of the music business. So I was a listener, a consumer of the sound and the feeling. We all grew up with it in our blood. It's hard to describe this to someone younger.

**MD:** There seems to be less true weirdness in music today, even in areas like progressive rock. Compare a band like Gong to a typical neo-prog band today.

**Linda:** There are no flying teapots! [laughs]

**MD:** Exactly—ha!

**Linda:** Today, whatever music you listen to, nobody is a freak; you're not an outcast for playing it. There is a niche and a business model attached to all of it. When we were growing up, most of the people who had bands... you were a freak, an outcast. A lot of us were pretty nerdy music head types. But even the ones who seemed like dum-dums weren't... those Ramones were no dipshits, you know what I mean? The Stooges? Please!

**MD:** Getting back to the drumming... do you think to yourself, *My priorities as a rock drummer are A, B, C...*?

**Linda:** To move and groove the song, to support the story, and to find the right voice for the song. Sometimes it's to be almost invisible in what I do and other times to make a spectacle of myself. Like any good party. My priorities are as a musician. Yeah, I'm a drummer, but I like to think I play

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Pitmon plays one of several vintage kits that she keeps in various locations, including a 1961 red sparkle Slingerland, a 1976 red, white, and blue sparkle bicentennial-stripe Ludwig, circa-'70s blue Ludwig Vistalites, and a mid-'60s Slingerland set that she

recently had wrapped in green sparkle for the Filthy Friends *Emerald Valley* tour. Additional Ludwig snares include a '70s-era Acrolite and a 1964 Supraphonic. Her cymbals of choice include 20" or 24" vintage Paiste 602s, an 18" Zildjian Kerope, an 18" A. Zildjian

& CIE "Vintage" reissue, 15" Paiste Giant Beat hi-hats ("I won't gig without them"), and a 16" model from the Cymbal & Gong company of Portland, Oregon. She also uses lightweight single-braced Yamaha or DW stands, a DW 9000 bass drum pedal, Vic Firth 8D wood-tip

sticks, and Remo heads, including Ambassador Vintage and Emperor Vintage models.

For more on Linda's gear, and to learn about her "life highlight" gig in the Arctic Circle with Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones, go to [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com).

melodically within the context of the limited kit that I have. And I've purposefully kept my tools limited, as do most of the people I play with. You don't see gigantic pedal boards with most of them. We color with our ideas more than with the technology. I'm always trying to make the most impact with the fewest number of hits, the least amount of density, because I think it allows other things to be heard. But then at times I'll throw restraint and taste out the window, because sometimes you just have to put the throttle down, which I have no problem doing.

**MD:** Choosing your spots.

**Linda:** Choosing your spots. And I don't think volume is the answer to the challenge of "rocking." My pet peeve is watching players who just pound. I mean, I hit hard, but you have to have feel. That's my goal: to get a good sound out of the drum, whether you're hitting it hard or soft. Cymbals as well. You have to know how to get a sound out of your instrument. That's the difference between being a musician and not.

**MD:** Tell me about when you started playing in bands.

**Linda:** All my friends in college were in bands, playing out, some pretty successfully. Some had records out; I would help them glue the singles together. I was always the number-one fan—but not playing. But eventually I started sneaking down to the basement while everyone was upstairs, maybe getting someone to play guitar with me. Eventually one of the band's leaders came down and said, "Hey, that's not bad. We should talk, because our drummer's leaving." Eventually I got asked to join his really cool punk-rock/Mersey beat band called the Funseekers, who are on the *Children of Nuggets* compilation. The first shows I ever did were with them, but it didn't last long and I was replaced.

After that I quit university and moved to London for a year in 1985 and worked at the Beggars Banquet record store in Kingston-upon-Thames. When I moved back to Minneapolis, I figured I'd go back to journalism school. I'd kind of sowed my wild oats, and now I was ready to buckle down. But around this time I got really sick, and it turned out I have rheumatoid arthritis, which is an autoimmune disease. I was completely incapacitated for a couple of years, because I have it in every joint in my body. I had to quit going to school, quit playing music. Obviously diving was out, though I'd already stopped just prior to that. But it gave me a

lot of opportunity to think, *Well, what is it you really want to do with your life? What are you even going to be able to do?* It was a very confusing time. I made a decision at that point that if I could ever get back to doing physical things, I needed something to kind of replace diving, something that was more about performance, which diving really is. And I had this sneaking suspicion that playing drums could be that thing that gave me a spark and made me happy. So I bought a drumset. I was living with friends, and I had a friend who would basically carry me down to the basement to play.

**MD:** No kidding.

**Linda:** Yup. And then carry me back up. I had to wear big mittens because I couldn't grip the sticks. I would really gently tap out beats, because I could barely move. It was almost meditative and healing in some way. As time went on, they got me on some medication



that helped, and I started getting back until I was able to mess around a little more, and ended up joining a couple more bands.

Eventually I joined Zuzu's Petals with two women who I'm still super good friends with. They were beginning musicians but amazing songwriters, just naturals, and we ended up touring around and putting out singles on our own. We were a part of a gang of bands in town that were friends and played shows together—Soul Asylum, the Jayhawks, Run Westy Run, Nova Mob, Babes in Toyland. Twin Tone/Restless Records signed us and we put out two records with them. We toured a lot in the States and a little in England. I did that for five years, and then when we finally broke up, I hung around for another six months, but then I was like, "I gotta shake it up. I'm twenty-nine. I don't want to be living here when I'm thirty. It's now or never."

I'd started talking to Steve Wynn a little bit.

He'd just moved to New York from L.A. Zuzu's Petals had played a show with him about three years earlier at [the famous Hoboken club] Maxwell's. I stayed in touch, and then he came through town and suggested I move to New York because he might need a drummer soon. He didn't have to ask twice. "I might need" was enough for me. I was a huge fan of his, and I figured that even if I didn't get that job, something else might happen in New York. So I moved in with my sister and ended up getting the job after an audition with him. My first show with him was in New York, the second was in L.A., and the third was in front of 8,000 people in Brussels.

So I went from playing punk-rock clubs to making a big leap with Steve. We were on the road about five months out of the year.

Then I started branching off and doing work with other singer-songwriters in New York, great people like Freedy Johnston and Amy Rigby, both of whom I think are genius songwriters. The Baseball Project started in 2007, and from there I started doing a lot more with Scott and Peter.

**MD:** Are you still suffering with arthritis?

**Linda:** Yeah, I mean, it's real obvious if you watch me try to get out of a van after I've been driving all day. [laughs] I've had surgeries, which have helped, but I have very limited mobility in my right elbow and my wrists, so my playing style is probably a little unorthodox. It's funny, I've been told I look fluid when I play....

**MD:** I have to say, having seen you play a number of times, I'm shocked by what you're saying.

**Linda:** Yeah, I think I use my shoulders more to compensate. I used to use big motions when I was younger. I used to love to watch Lori Barbero of Babes in Toyland—I liked her sense of drama. I still have a little of that in my style, but I'm definitely more controlled. But it's amazing how the human body will adapt to limitations. Every drummer I know has some kind of physical thing they're living with.

**MD:** I guess rock 'n' roll can save your life, but it kind of beats the hell out of you as it's doing it.

**Linda:** [laughs] That's right! And as much fun as we have together—and we do have a great time in the van—but we're not flying in a private plane, and we're humping our own gear. And I'm pretty sure there's a knee replacement on my horizon. I'm just figuring out when I can get that done so it doesn't affect my touring schedule. But it's not going to stop me. I might end up being the world's first bionic drummer. The show's gotta go on. And hey, it's the most fun thing in my life. I'm not going to give it up.





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# Manu Katché

**The drummer on many a classic rock album stays vital by avoiding the obvious, ignoring the plaudits, and always being himself.**

It's fitting that Manu Katché's latest album is called *The Scope*, because as the drummer describes, it's all about the minutiae, the little things that make music special. "When you scope something," he says, "it's like a microscope, and you go inside as far as you can. You go deep and concentrate on the details of what you played."

Katché has gone back and forth in recent years, putting out esoteric, subtle jazz records on the ECM label, and the more pop-oriented, grooving fare of *The Scope*, where you're served up a healthy dose of pocket playing along with the drummer's vocals. "I wrote the music on piano because that's my first instrument," says Katché. "Funny enough, I don't think about the drums. I'm not writing around the groove. I just find a loop that respects the pulsation of what I feel. It's not precise. So I can keep the spontaneity for when we track. I worked with a young producer, Jim Henderson, and we did some more electro [styles], with samples and technology."

In the game for over three decades, Katché began studio work locally in France, but quickly graduated to the big leagues when he was recruited to play on Peter Gabriel's 1986 smash, *So*. Katché recalls a turning point in the session. "We were working on the song 'Don't Give Up,' and it was an easy target, just hi-hat, intimate and quiet, a little groove in 3/4. Easy. And then we did 'In Your Eyes.' I was sitting behind the drums with Peter and [producer] Daniel Lanois in the control room, and I couldn't find a way to approach the song. So Peter put on headphones and listened to the track, stood near my

## Tools of the Trade

Katché endorses Yamaha drums, Zildjian cymbals, and Remo heads.



drums, and started doing this African dance, where you move your arms up and down and bend your legs. And I thought, *Wow, that is weird*—this guy, very British, dancing like an African. And he was awkward, because he couldn't really dance. [laughs]. But if Peter, who didn't know me very well—because it was only the third or fourth day in the studio—tried to help me like that, then there was a message there. With that dance, that was the feeling he wanted me to feel. And I thought that I was going to let go, that it didn't matter what would happen. If he danced like that, I should be able to play something from deep inside that I had never played before. And since then, I've applied this many times, when I've been stuck and couldn't find my way or I wasn't creative enough."

Katché would go on to perform with everyone from Sting to Jan Garbarek to Robbie Robertson, but he never forgot the lessons from those formative sessions, and what made him unique enough to keep getting the call. The drummer recalls, "Sting told [guitarist] Dominic



Christian Arnaud

Miller that even though 'Fields of Gold' is a simple 4/4 track, 'each time Manu plays it, it's different. Each time, he tells a story.' Instead of [playing on the] rim, I'd play a floor tom, or I'd hit a cymbal on the second beat, whatever. Instead of just bashing the drums and playing a groove that's technically amazing, I had something else. Like a painter. Of course you have to have a great sense of tempo and pulse and technique. But that's not enough. You also have to go with your instinct and your brain and your heart."

Of course, that's the rub: how to develop your own voice. "If you're trying to get into that world," Katché suggests, "instead of copying Steve Gadd or Vinnie Colaiuta, or Jeff Porcaro, or myself, you have to try to be yourself. Be what you are deeply, instead of being something else. There are so many amazing drummers in the States, and I was French, but I think they hired me because my playing was different because of my background, my culture, the movies I watched and the books I read, and the education at school I had. You have to have your

own personality."

After years of success, Katché still doesn't phone it in. In fact, he's surprisingly critical of his playing, even when his drumming is ubiquitous on the radio and fans come see him perform all over the world. "I'm not very tolerant [of myself]," he says. "I never listen back to my recordings, because I'm always disappointed. I think, 'Why did I play this? I should have played that.' But sometimes an artist doesn't want another take because he's got what he's heard in his head, even though I can do better. Of course, you're proud of what you've made, and people tell you, 'Manu, it's great.' But I'm not satisfied. And it's hard to live with that sometimes. But then after the gig you sign things and take selfies, and it's very exciting and touching. You realize you're playing for human beings. I didn't realize how many people knew my work."

**Ilya Stemkovsky**

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# Reasons to Love... The Velvet Underground

by Patrick Berkery

What do we talk about when we talk about the Velvet Underground? We mainly talk about influence. Like that line about how, even though the New York City band's albums sold relatively poorly, seemingly everyone who did buy one went on to start a band. Maybe that's why you hear echoes of the Velvets in so many major artists who've danced along rock's cutting edge throughout the years—from the Strokes to Sonic Youth to R.E.M. to Television to the Talking Heads, all the way back to Roxy Music and David Bowie.

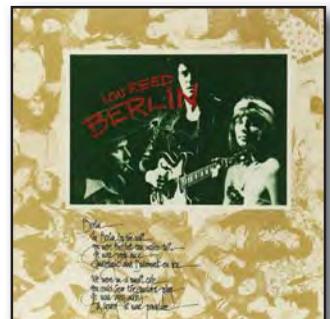
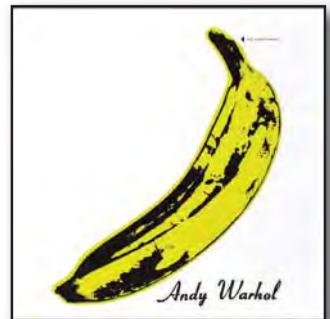
We also talk a good deal about Lou Reed, the band's chief songwriter and singer, whose post-

Velvets solo career was a wild ride of hits, misses, and experimentation that found him playing with everyone from Metallica to Pavarotti.

What we don't talk about much is the drumming—though we absolutely should. Key to the Velvets' avant-garde aesthetic was Maureen "Moe" Tucker's untrained, minimalist approach to timekeeping. Put a traditional backbeat drummer in the Velvets (which they eventually did—more on that later) and the songs on 1967's *The Velvet Underground & Nico* or 1968's *White Light/White Heat* might not sound as hypnotic and spacey, or as forward-thinking. Tucker's lack of technical

pro prowess or even a traditional setup (her kit typically consisted of a snare, a couple of toms, and a kick drum flipped on its side and mounted so she could strike it with a stick or mallet) might be the first widely known example of a rock drummer challenging rock-drumming norms.

So let's talk about the drumming on those Velvet Underground records. While we're at it, let's also talk about the drumming on solo records from Reed and Velvets bassist/violist John Cale, some of which featured drummers in the early stage of their careers who would eventually become influential players in their own right.



## "I'm Waiting for the Man"

(Maureen Tucker, from *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, 1967)

Just as "Play it like Ringo" is code for delivering a loping backbeat and tumbling fills, "Play it like Moe Tucker" usually means a drummer is being tasked with applying some deconstructed minimalism to a composition. And that's what Tucker does so beautifully here, playing unwavering 8th notes on the snare and tambourine for the entirety of the 4:37 song. The rudimentary pulse is extremely groovy, with her insistent rhythm, a pounding piano, and tinny guitars forming a tapestry behind Lou Reed's deadpan sing-speak about heading uptown to buy drugs. So many bands have duplicated this rhythmic vibe over the years.

## "Run Run Run"

(Maureen Tucker, from *The Velvet Underground & Nico*)

Reed's vocal cadence and the bounce of Tucker's shuffle feel make "Run Run Run" somewhat reminiscent of Bob Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited," which appeared two years earlier. That's where the similarities to contemporaries end. This is prime, primal Velvets. With no kick drum (if there is one, it isn't audible in the mix) to anchor Tucker's shuffle, she appears to just tap it out on the snare and hit a tom for the backbeat on 2 (sometimes with a tag on the "and" of 2) and 4. It's typically minimal, but it's as swinging and solid as anything you could play with a full complement of drums and cymbals.

## “Heroin”

(Maureen Tucker, from *The Velvet Underground & Nico*)

The same year the Beatles “Yeah, Yeah, Yeah’d” their way into America, Lou Reed wrote this dire, droning composition whose subject is made plain in the one-word title. When the Velvets tracked the final version two years later, Tucker didn’t so much keep time as she pounded the toms like someone hanging on for dear life while the track cycled from the meditative verse sections to the frantic tempo surges of the choruses (not that they resembled anything close to a typical chorus circa 1966). It’s perhaps the most Moe Tucker part Moe Tucker ever played. And she did it in 1966, when no one was playing like this. And anyone playing like this now is likely doing it because Tucker did it first.

## “Oh! Sweet Nuthin’”

(Billy Yule, from the Velvet Underground’s *Loaded*, 1970)

With Tucker on maternity leave and a concerted effort to write more radio-friendly material, the Velvets sounded different on 1970’s *Loaded*. Singer-songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Doug Yule (who’d replaced John Cale the year prior), plays drums on half the album, but it’s his younger brother Billy providing the sweet groove on this ballad, which wouldn’t have sounded out of place on the Rolling Stones’ *Sticky Fingers* or George Harrison’s *All Things Must Pass*. It’s fitting, then, that Billy Yule’s feel is somewhere between Charlie Watts, Jim Gordon, and Jim Keltner. And his fills are super tasty, from his mid-measure licks to the nearly minute-long snare and cymbal combination in the outro that begins as a fill and then subtly becomes the groove.

## “Sad Song”

(Aynsley Dunbar, from Lou Reed’s *Berlin*, 1973)

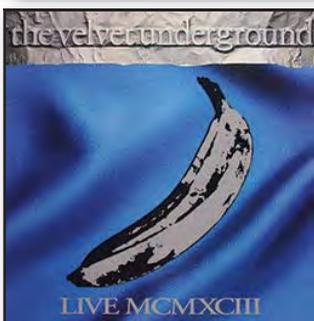
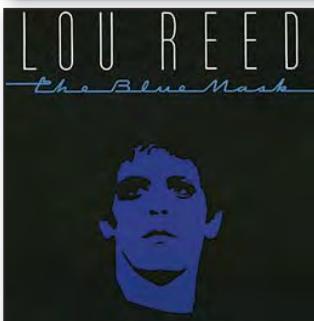
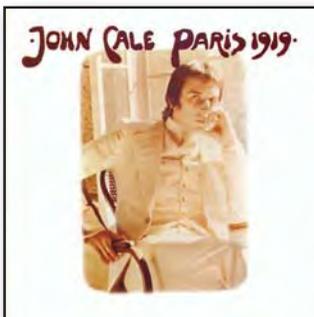
This epic production, an utterly grim song cycle about a couple in the throes of drug addiction and domestic abuse, is a magnificent showcase for Aynsley Dunbar, primarily known for his work with Frank Zappa at the time. Dunbar proved to have the perfect sensibility for the musical territory Reed and producer Bob Ezrin mined on *Berlin*. “Sad Song” opens with a flutter of woodwinds and strings that feels pure Disney. Then Dunbar enters, altering that cinematic feel with a buzz roll crescendo and a commanding beat that moves the track into a heavier, symphonic rock direction. The mood softens when the drums drop out for the “Sad, sad song...” refrains, but when Dunbar re-enters for the song’s extended coda, he’s a towering rhythmic presence, pairing a powerful groove (a backbeat on the 2 and a syncopated accent on the “and” of 4) with creative kick and tom combinations.

## “Graham Greene”

(Richie Hayward, from John Cale’s *Paris 1919*, 1973)

On this track from his classic 1973 solo album *Paris 1919*, you can imagine John Cale telling upstart Little Feat drummer Richie Hayward that he was looking for a feel that was not quite funk,

not quite reggae, but kinda-sorta somewhere between those two worlds. Hayward was an excellent choice to man the kit on a track so full of rhythmic nuance. He adds and subtracts throughout, shifting the feel as he goes from single snare hits on the ‘1s’ in the intro and opening verse into a full beat featuring some slippery, syncopated hi-hat work in the pre-chorus. Hayward cuts the groove in half for the second verse, which builds the tension leading into the pre-chorus and first chorus.



## “The Blue Mask”

(Doane Perry, from Lou Reed’s *The Blue Mask*, 1982)

Had you said in 1969, when the Velvets were still underground darlings, that Lou Reed would one day find himself working with Jethro Tull’s drummer, it would’ve been hard to fathom. But as Reed’s solo career would subsequently prove, anything was possible. So future Jethro Tull drummer Doane Perry pounding it out on 1982’s *The Blue Mask* seems about right. The unapologetically heavy title track begins where most hard rock songs end: in a haze of jarring, deliberate crescendos, with dynamic drum rolls around the kit. By the time the band settles into a slamming groove, Perry’s really cutting loose, snapping off two lightning-fast rolls before the first verse starts. He sits deep in the pocket in both the 5/4 verses and the double-time choruses, slipping in double-kick licks and more tasty fills throughout.

## “Dirty Blvd.”

(Fred Maher, from Lou Reed’s *New York*, 1989)

Fred Maher served as co-producer and drummer on *New York*, a rocking return to form that gave Reed his biggest hit in years in “Dirty Blvd.” The song is built upon the repetitive strum of an electric guitar, and Maher constructs a brilliant drum track around that simple part that is loaded with many great little details: the simple fills he employs to transition from verse to chorus that vary slightly each time around; and those faux reggae licks that ease the downshift from the 2-and-4 backbeat choruses to the four-across-the-bar side-stick in the verses. His halting pushes and tight syncopations give the choruses some rhythmic grit. And last but not least, let’s give some love to that tight, raw drum sound. Unlike a lot of tones from 1989, this one has aged like a fine wine.

## “Sweet Jane”

(Maureen Tucker, from the Velvet Underground’s *Live MCMXCIII*, 1993)

When Moe Tucker got her crack at “Sweet Jane” on the Velvets’ 1993 European reunion tour (documented on the live album *MCMXCIII*), she made it her very own with a solid, punchy beat that

locks in tight with Cale’s bass and the choppy strum of Reed and Sterling Morrison’s guitars. It bears little resemblance to the languid feel of the original or the glummy crunch of Lou Reed’s famous live *Rock ‘n’ Roll Animal* version. This instead sounds like the progenitors of indie rock returning to recast one of their classics in the style of the subgenre they helped invent. And Tucker’s drumming is a huge part of that vibe.





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# Funkify Your Swing

## Part 3: Sly and the Family Stone's "In Time"

by Steve Fidyk

**Welcome to the third installment of this series** on interpreting funk grooves within a swing setting. This concept can be helpful for players looking for a new sound and feel when accompanying other musicians. The converted funk rhythms can also provide a more direct and purposeful approach, partly due to the groove-oriented nature of each pattern. In addition, they provide a special flow to the pulse that's both spatial and funky. Thinking about rhythm and style in this manner can help any musician become more flexible and adaptable.

In the previous two installments of this series we explored swing interpretations of Clyde Stubblefield's groove on James Brown's "Funky Drummer" and David Garibaldi's classic pattern from Tower of Power's "Soul Vaccination." This month's lesson features variations inspired by legendary drummer Andy Newmark's work on the piece "In Time" from Sly and the Family Stone's 1973 album, *Fresh*.

Let's start with the foundational pattern Newmark plays. Take note of the deceptive syncopation played on the snare drum, bass drum, and open hi-hat and how each sound interacts with the bass, guitar, and organ. Andy's grooves and fills throughout the track have a lilt and swing to them. And his sound and approach reflect the contrasts found within the music itself.

As you practice, focus on your dynamic balance and consistency between your hands and feet. Practice this rhythm slowly at first with a drum machine or metronome, and be patient with your development. Here's the main pattern.

The first variation utilizes a concept called augmentation, in which the original rhythm is restated with a lengthened value to each note's duration. With this technique applied, the one-measure pattern becomes a two-measure, 8th-note phrase that we'll apply to the ride cymbal.

Exercise 3 illustrates the augmented two-measure phrase interpreted with a swung 8th-note feel. This example also augments the two 16th notes on beat 3 of the first measure and converts them to 8th-note triplet partials.

Exercise 4 applies a three-over-four ride rhythm on top of the previous kick and snare pattern.



Exercise 5 applies an offbeat ostinato voiced on the hi-hat pedal.



Exercise 6 employs the augmented snare rhythm and alternates the voicing between the snare and bass on each beat.



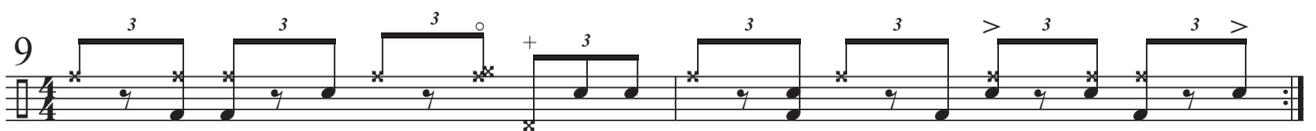
Exercise 7 takes the augmented snare rhythm and alternates the voicing between the bass drum and hi-hat. I've also added a Roy Haynes-style comping ostinato on the snare.



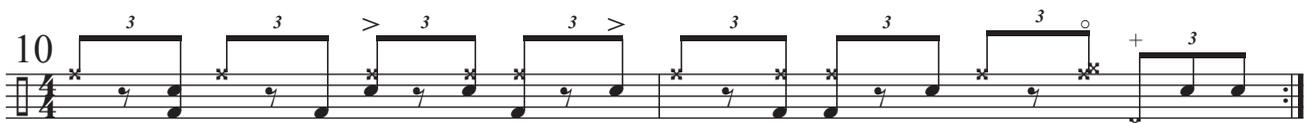
Next try reordering the previous example by playing the second bar followed by the first.



Exercise 9 displaces Exercise 3 by starting the phrase on beat 4 of the second measure of the original example.



Finally, reorder Exercise 9 by playing the second bar followed by the first.



These examples demonstrate only a few variations on this timeless groove. I encourage you to use your imagination, be creative, and try coming up with your own variations based on the original pattern. In time, you'll be able to add some heavy funk to your swing feel. See you next time!

**Steve Fidyk** leads the Parlour Project quartet, featuring his original compositions and arrangements. He is a member of the Jazz Orchestra of Philadelphia under the direction of Terell Stafford, and a former member of the Army Blues Big Band of Washington, DC. He is also an artist in residence at Temple University and the University of the Arts.



# Samba Rhythms

## Part 2: More Tamborim Independence Patterns

by Kiko Freitas

**Welcome back to our series on Brazilian samba drumming!** In this lesson I'll cover some ideas to help you develop more independence for your hands and feet, to in turn help you create new musical grooves and colors. We'll accomplish this by practicing 16th-note permutations on the snare, bass drum, and hi-hat pedal underneath the typical samba tamborim rhythm that we covered in part 1.

To review, it's important that you start by playing the main tamborim rhythm while singing each of the four possible 16th-note partials. Exercise 1 demonstrates the main tamborim ostinato we'll use throughout this lesson.

Sing these individual 16th-note partials while maintaining the tamborim rhythm with your lead hand.

After you feel comfortable playing the tamborim pattern and singing each 16th-note partial separately, we can start singing groups of two 16th notes while maintaining the tamborim rhythm. Here are some of the possible two-note permutations that we'll employ in this lesson.

Let's move the tamborim pattern to the hi-hat while playing the two-note groupings of 16ths on the snare, as demonstrated in Exercise 5. Remember to practice slowly with a metronome.

Next we'll move the 16th-note groupings to the bass drum underneath our tamborim ostinato, as notated in the following example.

6

Exercise 6 consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time. Each staff shows a tamborim ostinato pattern (quarter notes with accents) and a 16th-note bass drum pattern (beamed eighth notes with 'x' marks). The patterns are repeated across the staves.

Exercise 7 demonstrates an example of how to develop independence with the left foot playing the hi-hat pedal in this setting. A good idea is to play and sing the tamborim pattern while working through each one of the following 16th-note phrases with the left foot. In this exercise, play the tamborim pattern on a cowbell.

7

Exercise 7 consists of two staves of music in 2/4 time. The notation focuses on 16th-note hi-hat pedal patterns, showing various rhythmic groupings of beamed eighth notes.

When you feel comfortable playing the tamborim pattern together with each one of the 16th-note hi-hat pedal patterns, try playing a whole samba groove with the cowbell, snare, and bass drum while playing the previous hi-hat foot figures.

Exercise 8 demonstrates the main samba groove.

8

Exercise 8 consists of a single staff of music in 2/4 time representing the main samba groove. It features a tamborim ostinato pattern and a bass drum pattern.

Have fun practicing and playing this material. And be sure to head to [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com) to check out video demonstrations of this lesson. You can also find many examples on my YouTube channel ([youtube.com/user/mrkikofreitas](https://www.youtube.com/user/mrkikofreitas)), where I apply the concepts and grooves from this lesson in a musical setting. See you next time!



**Kiko Freitas** is a Brazilian drummer, educator, and international clinician who's performed with João Bosco, Michel Legrand, Nico Assumpção, Milton Nascimento, Chico Buarque, and Frank Gambale, among others. Freitas endorses Pearl drums, Paiste cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, and Gavazzi cases. For more information, visit [kikofreitas.com.br/en](http://kikofreitas.com.br/en).



# A New Perspective on Polyrhythms

## Five-over-Two Variations

by Aaron Edgar



The easiest way to create a five-over-two polyrhythm, or five equally spaced notes over two beats, is to play quintuplet single strokes across two different surfaces. In Exercise 1 we have a bar of 2/4 with the bass drum in quarter notes, which represents the two layer of a five-over-two grouping. We'll play quintuplet singles between the hi-hat and ghost notes on the snare to start building our layer of five.

The hi-hat pattern in the previous example is already playing five equally spaced notes over two quarter-note beats on the bass drum. Before we dive into all the fun ways we can manipulate these groupings, let's first turn this idea into a 4/4 drum groove to create a musical framework for internalizing the feel of five-over-two.

The first two beats of Exercise 2 are very similar to Exercise 1. The kick on beat 2 is pulled back by one quintuplet partial, and the ghost note on beat 2 becomes a backbeat. You may want to isolate this first half of the bar before attacking the entire phrase. The second half of the beat embellishes this first half quite heavily while still retaining the layer of five on the hi-hat with open and closed notes.

If you look at Exercise 1 and compare the ghost notes to the bass drum, we still see five equally spaced notes across two beats. However, instead of both rhythms starting together on beat 1, they line up on beat 2. A lot of the magic in polyrhythmic phrasing comes from shifting each side of the grouping to different parts of the beat. The overarching theme of this New Perspective series is that there doesn't need to be a point where both sides of a polyrhythm line up—if we're creative in our use of subdivisions. Be sure to check out the Five and Seven over Two chapter in my new book, *Progressive Drumming Essentials*, to further explore these permutations.

Exercise 3 sets up solid quintuplets in singles on the hi-hat. A ride bell on beat 1 and a snare backbeat on beat 2 phrase the layer of two. The five layer is pushed forward by half of one quintuplet partial and is played on the kick between the quintuplets in the hands. Count out loud slowly using the syllables "ta-ka-din-ah-gah," and make sure the bass drum lands evenly between the counts and hi-hat quintuplets.

In Exercises 4 and 5, the ride on beat 1 has been replaced by a kick drum to make these patterns more musical. In Exercise 4, the five layer is in the same spot as in the previous example. In Exercise 5, it's pushed forward to the next space between the second and third quintuplet partials.

There are forty different permutations of a five-over-two polyrhythm, and you can head to [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com) to see the full breakdown. The rest of this lesson sets up different types of frameworks for you to use while exploring all of those possible permutations.

First, we'll set up a groove framework with a kick on beat 1 and our right hand playing a snare on beat 2. We'll also play solid quintuplets with our lead hand, first on the hi-hat in Exercise 6 and then on the ride in Exercise 7. In Exercise 6, the left hand plays the five layer as aggressive snare rimshots starting between the first and second quintuplet partials. The bass drum voices the layer of two on the fourth quintuplet partial, or "ah." The contrast of the kick-and-snare polyrhythm within the basic "boom, bap" groove is frantically energetic!

Exercise 7 pulls our bass drum's layer of two back to the second quintuplet partial ("ka"), and the left hand's five layer is orchestrated up and down the toms.

Using a solid quintuplet double bass drum pattern sets up an excellent framework for these rhythms, as there's a solid note for every layer of the polyrhythm to either line up with or land in between. Exercise 8 starts both sides of the polyrhythm between the first and second quintuplet partials. This results in a unique syncopated feeling around the pulse. Concentrate on the quintuplets in the feet as opposed to the hands to internalize the pulse. Counting out loud is extremely helpful for getting this rhythm to feel right.

8

B R R L R R

Exercise 9 lightly dresses up our framework with our left hand adding quarter notes over the quintuplet double bass pattern. The left hand plays a low floor tom, snare, high rack tom, and snare, almost like a rock beat on its own. The polyrhythm is played between an alternate small floor tom and a medium rack tom. The right hand on the small floor tom voices the five layer starting between the first and second quintuplet partials, and the left hand voices the two layer between the second and third quintuplets of each beat.

9

These offbeat polyrhythms are even more exciting when they interact with other patterns within the rhythms. In Exercises 10 and 11, our right hand plays a fairly common quintuplet pattern, accenting the layer of two starting on the beat, plus the third and fourth quintuplet partials (“ta, ka, din, ah, gah”). In Exercise 10, this grouping is played between the stack and snare, and in Exercise 11, it’s played between the floor tom and snare.

10

11

The next few examples keep the layer of five on the snare, as we played it in Exercise 6. Our right hand plays a backbeat on beat 2 and a cymbal stack on beat 1 while also highlighting the layer of two on the same stack. Exercise 12 places the layer of two on the third quintuplet partial (“din”). Exercise 13 pulls it back between the second and third quintuplet partials. And Exercise 14 phrases the two layer between the third and fourth quintuplet partials. Also in Exercise 14, your right hand is playing straight 8th notes, producing a second five-over-two polyrhythm *inside* of the original five-over-two grouping.

12

13

14

Exercise 15 embellishes this idea slightly with a few carefully placed ride bell notes, leaving the stack to voice the layer of two.

15

The best way to practice advanced rhythms is within the context of standard grooves—for instance, patterns with the kick on beat 1 and a snare backbeat on 2 and 4. This inherently reinforces how the rhythms fit into a musical context. This contrast between what we’re familiar with and what we’re not gives us the ability to understand what we’re working on vividly and thus the ability to apply it musically.

Keep it weird!

**Aaron Edgar** plays with the Canadian prog-metal band Third Ion and is a session drummer, clinician, and author. His book *Progressive Drumming Essentials* is available through Modern Drummer Publications.



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Sold separately, the 5x14 S.L.P. New-Vintage Hickory snare combines the warmth and clarity of hickory with the crispness and response associated with a shallower shell.

The Powerpad throne case features an inside divider to allow for separate, secure storage of the seat and base. It can also store a 14" drum and a snare stand.

[tama.com](http://tama.com)



## Gon Bops Bucket Shekere

Crafted from lightweight aluminum, the Bucket shekere can be played by hand or placed on a stand and played with brushes. It's designed to provide a rich, warm percussive attack. The shell stands 8" in height and has a 12.5" opening. [gonbops.com](http://gonbops.com)



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# Memphis Drum Shop

## Memphis, Tennessee

When Jim Pettit opened Memphis Drum Shop back in 1987, he couldn't have envisioned drummers from all over the world patronizing his store via something called the internet. But that's exactly what started happening about a decade later, when Memphis Drum Shop became one of the first drum retailers with a comprehensive online operation.

Pettit says his online business model was "always evolving," and it underwent a major evolution the following decade when Memphis Drum Shop began integrating video into its website. Though Pettit admits he'd be embarrassed to go back and watch some of those early videos, Memphis Drum Shop's video output is now considered the gold standard. The store, whose staff currently includes sixteen full-time employees, offers professionally shot demonstration videos for nearly every cymbal, kit, and snare drum in stock, along with special features like the My Cymbal series (where viewers can see a demonstration of the *exact* cymbal for sale—not the next one off the shelf) and celebrity videos featuring Steve Jordan, Jason McGerr, Benny Grebb, and many more.

Gongs are another area where Memphis Drum Shop stands out, with the by-appointment-only Memphis Gong Chamber and My Gong video series. "Our drums and cymbals and gongs are our main sellers," says Pettit, who's been running the shop from the beginning with his wife, Nancy, a former schoolteacher. "It's a pretty even mix of all of that. I really try to have some cool stuff, some good new stuff, a little vintage stuff—what a player would be looking for."

We caught up with Pettit recently to get the story behind his successful business.



**I always loved drums.** I started playing when I was 12. No real formal training. I was on the road, did that for two or three years. Saw what that was about. Saw these guys who I considered at that time to be old and thought, *Don't want to wind up like this.* Got to a point when I had so many more drums in the house than I should have had that I opened up a little shop. I loved the business aspect of the whole thing. I love helping people get the right sound, get what they're looking for.

**It was a week before we sold a drum or anything.** I remembering thinking, *Oh my God, how could I have been so stupid?* We just evolved over the years. By '91 I decided to move to a much larger building. That was the start of the growth and expansion. We jumped into the website business early on, thank goodness. It was three or four years before it became successful—not a terribly long time.

**The videos were built from the ground up.** We'd seen other videos, so we were like monkeys, just copying what we'd seen. We were using little camcorders. We used to do it in a little room upstairs. Probably seven or eight years ago we hired two guys just to work on video. We needed somebody smarter than me to figure out how to do all this stuff. [laughs] We certainly had to look at the numbers to see if hiring someone for video made sense. But back when we started doing it, we were the lonesome cowboy on the prairie. There was really no help. And I really wasn't satisfied with what anybody else came up with. I said, "I'm just going to do this myself." I just wanted to create the best product I could.

**I just love gongs; I bought my first one forty years ago.** One guy put it pretty well: I just love big pieces of vibrating metal. The Gong Chamber is a unique thing that doesn't exist anywhere else. That's





### Shopper's Tip

"We tell parents when they come in to buy that first drumset for a kid, 'Yes, you can buy something cheap. But if your hardware doesn't work, if the pedals don't go up and down, I don't know if the kid's going to keep playing.' They're not going to enjoy it if the gear doesn't work. That happened to me with guitar. My parents bought me a cheap guitar. Steel strings an inch and a half off the neck, and I didn't know any difference. I couldn't play it. I equate that to the drums. You've got to have a certain quality. Yeah, it's a student kit. But you've got to give them a *chance* to make it work."



Founder Jim Pettit

really a whole different business model from the drum shop. It's a whole other clientele, and there's not a lot of crossover. We do *some* musical gongs. I just sold a gong a little bit ago for a lady in a rock band. Most of the gong business is not that at all. It's mostly for sound therapy, sound healing, yoga classes, and individuals. The profit margin is good. We wholesale to a lot of other dealers, just because we have them. But I wouldn't recommend that every music store have gongs.

**Our clientele is a pretty even mix.** We have a lot of beginners. Then we have a lot of weekend guys, the semi-pros. And we have a decent

number of pros, though not the number you have in Nashville. There's many more there. We have the working drummer here. We have what I call tourists as well, who find us online.

**Carrying boutique drums has been a very organic process for me.** I knew Johnny Craviotto way before he started making drums. The same thing with C&C—[founder] Bill Cardwell was a personal friend of mine back when he had a drum shop. We sold the first C&C drumset. Ronn Dunnett, same thing. It's all long-term friendships. We have a history with these people.



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# CRITIQUE

## TAKING THE REINS

### Johnathan Blake *Trion*

**Energetic, brave playing from this sax-bass-drums trio.**

Johnathan Blake continues to demonstrate his abilities as an exciting, creative drummer on his third album as a leader. While he notably holds the drum throne for jazz masters like Tom Harrell and Kenny Barron, Blake's inventive, driving style is on full display in this spare setting. Working in a bold tenor/bass/drums trio featuring Chris Potter and Linda May Han Oh, his drums share equal footing with his bandmates. Offering grooves filled with dynamics, color, and inventiveness, Blake navigates forays that often top the ten-minute mark, all the while maintaining flow and a sense of storytelling. (Check out the group's take on the Police classic "Synchronicity," which opens the album.) "Good Hope" features Blake's fluid drive, pushing Potter's improvisations before engaging in playful dialog. Recorded live at New York's Jazz Gallery, a hub for musicians developing new projects, the generous two-CD offering showcases Johnathan Blake's exemplary abilities. (Giant Step Arts) **Martin Patmos**



### Matt Slocum *Sanctuary*

**A former student of Peter Erskine shows fast reflexes and swift movements that pack more wallop than a punch to the head.**

Considering his prior albums—*Portraits*, *After the Storm*, *Black Elk's Dream*, and *Trio Pacific, Vol. 1*—Wisconsin native Matt Slocum could easily be considered a "thinking person's" drummer. Slocum's cerebrally flowing *Sanctuary* gathers two of the finest musicians in jazz, pianist Gerald Clayton and bassist Larry Grenadier, for an adventurous outing that absolutely glistens. Slocum's music builds steam slowly, almost blowing its top but never resulting in meltdown. *Sanctuary* is a contained but lushly swinging vehicle, beginning with opener "Romulus," which recalls the carefree groove of Vince Guaraldi offset by dancelike marching snare drum figures. "Consolation Prize" is upbeat and glimmering, while "Anselmo" traces a moody Afro-Cuban spell. (Sunnyside)



**Ken Micallef**

### Barrett Martin Group *Songs of the Firebird*

**The former Screaming Trees band member and globetrotting rhythmist offers yet another idiosyncratic addition to his ever-growing list of releases.**

Barrett Martin is a polymath, a shaman of music, and *Songs of the Firebird* is the soundtrack to his latest book, *The Way of the Zen Cowboy*. A decentralized collection of moods more than an album focused on technical prowess, *Songs* rambles along like an old truck coursing



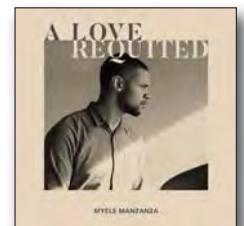
over bumpy terrain, with instruments plotting jazz-oriented solos as Martin's drums bump and grind with relaxed motion. *Songs'* press release intimates that listeners will be transported through "the American West, as far south as the Amazon Rainforest, and as far north as the Alaskan Arctic." That immense span is more felt than heard, but *Songs* certainly creates its own world. (Sunnyata)

**Ken Micallef**

### Myele Manzanana *A Love Required*

**The New Zealand drummer/composer balances beauty and intensity here—imagine the Brian Blade Fellowship meets the Gil Evans Orchestra.**

Myele Manzanana defines his own role on kit, driving this music with passion, but also highlighting and prodding the talented cast on a collection of complex, melodic compositions. "Family Dynamics" displays a range of influences, from a Dilla-esque sense of broken time to a breathtaking jazz romp behind Matthew Sheen's piano solo, followed by a



gorgeous, understated solo. His interpretive comping shines again under James Macaulay's trombone solo on "Itaru's Phone Booth," gracious and progressive. A feathery touch on "Mortality" yields to a rim-rattling double-time, before falling to nothing with a lovely buzz roll. Manzanana plays at once like he has nothing to prove and nothing to lose. His ability to amplify and enforce the music is inspiring. He lifts it. He's a player you can hear once and find yourself thinking and playing differently, more musically, on your own next gig. It certainly happened to me. (First Word U.K.) **Robin Tolleson**

## Other Drummer-Leds to Check Out

**Vince Ector** Theme for Ms. P /// **Chinchano (Juan Pastor)** El Regreso /// **Poncho Sanchez** Trane's Delight /// **Jerome Jennings** Solidarity /// **Luis Muñoz** The Infinite Dream /// **Dor Herskovits** Flying Elephants /// **Dave Schoepke** Drums on Low

## black midi *Schlagenheim*

**Genre-defying new English rockers break barriers, generate a huge buzz, and play festivals worldwide only a year after forming.**

First impressions are crucial in these social-media-centered days, and black midi, who stylize their moniker without capitalization, made it delightfully difficult to pin down what they are or where they're going based on the live material they made available prior to the release of their debut full-length, *Schlagenheim*. Moments that evoke Jeff Buckley's weirder passages, classic King Crimson bombast, your favorite new wave band, grungy noise-rock chaos, and thoughtfully crafted post rock are all par for the course here.



Twenty-year-old drummer **Morgan Simpson** proves himself capable and mature beyond his years on *Schlagenheim* and provides the drive, prodding, and at times restraint necessary to anchor the London-based quartet. Sometimes over-the-top in the manner of some of his stated prog-rock influences, Simpson also plays with the touch of a jazzier and the heart of a punk rocker on the album's ten wildly variant tracks. In particular, Simpson's jazzy swagger and sensitivity on "Western," punk-rock abandon on "953," carefully crafted groove on "Speedway," and incendiary drive on "Near DT, MI" stand out. (Rough Trade Records) **Ben Meyer**

## BOOKS

### *Melodic Stick Control* by Matt Matson

**The author has produced something rare here: a sticking investigation that uses melody to shape technique, and not the other way around.**

In *Melodic Stick Control* Matt Matson explores ten straightforward snare melodies by introducing variations in their sticking and orchestration. He bends the phrases by changing rate (subdivision) and feel (straight and swing). Using the simple melodies as a guide, Matson's exercises fill the spaces between the notes with streams of varying subdivisions, something he calls "overlays." For anyone who has studied Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, the melodies will sound familiar. For anyone who has studied Alan Dawson's *application of Syncopation*, these overlay exercises will sound familiar, too. Like Dawson, Matson's approach focuses on the way the overlays and altered stickings can embellish, reshape, and even rejuvenate those straightforward figures.

Matson introduces each new concept with a wealth of context, including preparatory exercises and tips on how to actually practice them. His detail-oriented approach makes each concept's goal and the progressive steps required to achieve it clear. However, he doesn't spell out every "R" and "L" for each exercise either, a pleasant surprise for a book so focused on sticking. Instead he supplies contingencies for each hand. ("If your last stroke was on your right, then...") This prevents you from getting lost in a sea of notation, and more importantly, makes applying these concepts to music in the "real world" much easier.

*Melodic Stick Control* is probably most useful to drummers who are already comfortable with rudiment and technique basics. Beginners might drown in the book's alphabet soup of terminology, such as "diddles," "ta'diddles," and references to hybrid subdivisions like 16th notes within triplets played as ruffs.

There are times where the sticking concepts and subdivisional combinations seem better suited for marching percussion than a kit. Yet *Melodic Stick Control* offers a great, almost sneaky way to get drumset players to work on rudiments—they occur naturally, while your mind is on articulating a melody, rather than which hand does what, and when. It allows you to keep your mind trained on the thing that likely made you want to get behind a kit in the first place: creating music. (Drum Fillosophy/Lone Star Percussion) **Keith Carne**

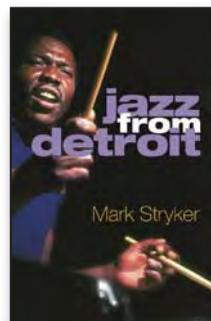
### *Jazz from Detroit* by Mark Stryker

**While Detroit often evokes the soul of Motown, the drive of techno, or the grit of garage rock, a new book sheds light on the city's equally energetic and important jazz scene.**

Although Mark Stryker's *Jazz from Detroit* is not specifically about drummers, there are plenty of stick wielders featured in its pages, including Louis Hayes and the iconic Elvin Jones. The author moves from the onset of jazz in the 1900s through contemporary artists like jazz/hip-hop heavyweight Karriem Riggins, whose credits range from Donald Byrd and Norah Jones to Slum Village and Erykah Badu.

The stories convey the realities facing anyone who wants to pursue a career in jazz. For example, vibraphonist Milt Jackson's feelings towards the Modern Jazz Quartet show a musician who felt artistically constricted by the group's brand while simultaneously acknowledging that their tours and recordings helped maintain his own stable income and lifestyle. Bassist Ralphie Armstrong's story demonstrates the benefits of confidence in marketing and the open-mindedness needed to perform with diverse artists including Mahavishnu Orchestra, Aretha Franklin, Frank Zappa, and Herbie Hancock.

Although *Jazz from Detroit* packs multiple decades into its pages, the writing does not come across as academic. Stryker does a good job of outlining the history of the music and profiling the personalities that created it. His own careers as a saxophonist and a journalist allow him to articulate the subtleties of music in the written word, and there are plenty of quotes from the musicians themselves. Still, this book is best read while you're listening to the artists and recordings explored here, fully immersing yourself in the music. (University of Michigan Press, \$39.95) **Drew Schultz**



# Sympathy for the Drummer

The subtitle to Mike Edison's new book on the Rolling Stones' drummer—*Why Charlie Watts Matters*—clearly lays out its premise. **John Colpitts** measures its success and chats with its author.

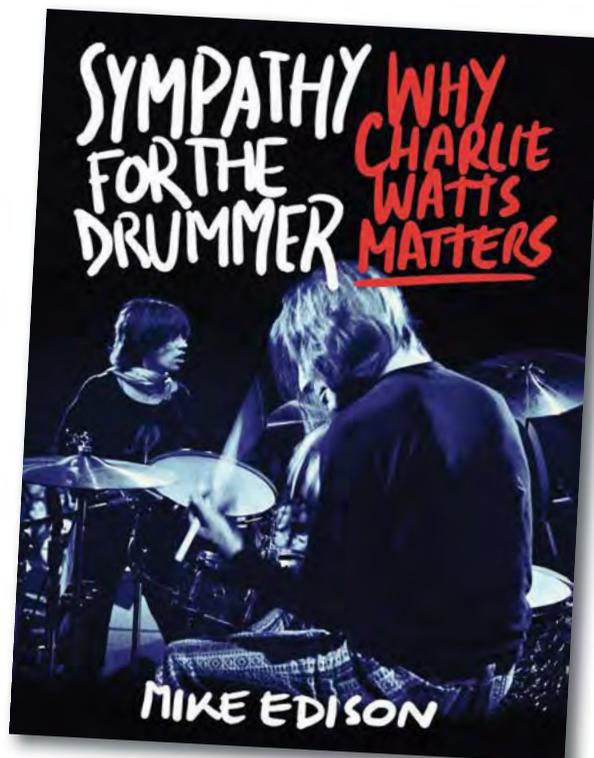
Mike Edison's new book, *Sympathy for the Drummer: Why Charlie Watts Matters*, is a fun read, even if you're not familiar with the author's provenance in the colorful literary universe of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll publishing. He's also worked as an acquiring editor at Backbeat Books, the publisher of this wonderful, opinionated, and approachable defense of the best Stone (at least for many of us who regularly peruse the pages of *Modern Drummer*). Mike is a drummer himself, with a long CV that includes stints in garage bands like Raunch Hands and Sharky's Machine. He even put in some time with the infamous GG Allin, so perhaps it's no surprise that *Sympathy* celebrates the weird, the sloppy, and the flat-out magic of Watts' elemental pulse.

An academic tome might cite countless sources or include transcriptions and expert testimony, and Edison does this when it counts. But he often makes his points through anecdotes, myth-busting, and the occasional literate hyperbole. *Sympathy* thankfully is not a ponderous academic treatise, and while Edison occasionally leans into gonzo flights of fancy, he takes the reader on a grand tour of forty years of Watts' contributions to the Rolling Stones. "Hopefully my writing and years behind the drums both show in this book," Edison tells *Modern Drummer*. "I really did try to write the very best book about drums and drumming, full stop."

Even if you're someone who doesn't feel that Charlie Watts needs a champion or a defense, Edison acts as a kind of Virgil figure through the drummer's recorded life, and even his biggest fans will emerge from these pages enriched. This is first and foremost a book about the Stones' music, and perhaps in a grander sense an argument against the mindless celebration of virtuosity. Edison walks us through the drummers who clearly inspired Watts, either via direct testimony (Watts has given very few interviews over his career) or by inference. One pleasure of the book is just how much American popular music history it traverses. Read it in front of your computer, and the unsung masters of the drums spill out of the digital cornucopia.

Watts once said, "I owe my living to Freddie Below." If you're wondering who that was—it's not too late to acquaint yourself! The drummers who haunt the early pages of this book and the formative years of Watts' apprenticeship reaffirm the debt that white blues interpreters owe to African-American musicians. A survey of performances by Odie Payne, Earl Phillips, Francis Clay, Frank Kirkland, Clifton James, Jerry Allison, Tony Williams, Earl Hines, Max Roach, and many others who are checked in this book illustrates the breadth of choices we all can make across a bar of 4/4 time.

"A lot of cats don't know what to do with space—all they can do is poop in it," Edison writes early on in the book, and this statement is a stand-in for the larger thrust of his narrative. Space is the place, time is fluid, and virtuosity is often a crutch for a lack of ideas. When we met up with Edison to discuss the book at Brooklyn's legendary Juniors, he said that the book is really about "the misplaced emphasis on virtuosity, and being 'the best,' and the nature of identity, what makes a group, and which parts are replaceable... obviously Charlie is not."



The book tries to clarify the ineffable: what is the essence of Charlie Watts? It's something beyond technique and execution, and perhaps can be found somewhere between the notes. Kenny Aronoff did the transcriptions for *Sympathy for the Drummer*, and Edison says that as they listened to "Hang Fire" from *Tattoo You* over Skype, Aronoff was amazed by the beauty of the performance and exclaimed, "If I played like this, [John] Fogerty would fire me."

Edison continued between bites from his sandwich and salad, "The accents are all over the place, he's opening the hi-hat in the weirdest places, it's totally counterintuitive, and it's totally swinging."

The few included transcriptions give the book some of its most revelatory moments, especially the "Loving Cup" 5/4, 4/4, 5/4 turnaround, which many of us might never have considered. It's a moment that supports Edison's thesis that Charlie plays the song, not the conceptual and virtuosic moments beyond the song that we get with our more technically advanced heroes and heroines.

Edison also delves into Charlie's use of the China cymbal—one of his tangible trademarks. "I worry it's too much inside baseball for civilians," he admits. "Charlie evolved. People forget how hard rock the Stones were. In 1975 they were a hard-rock band competing with the Who and Led Zeppelin."

*Sympathy for the Drummer* takes us on a journey through the Stones' catalog, and even for someone who feels like Watts is essential, the depth of his contribution is revealed here. As Keith Richards has said, "No Charlie, no Stones," and Edison wrote the book to prove it.



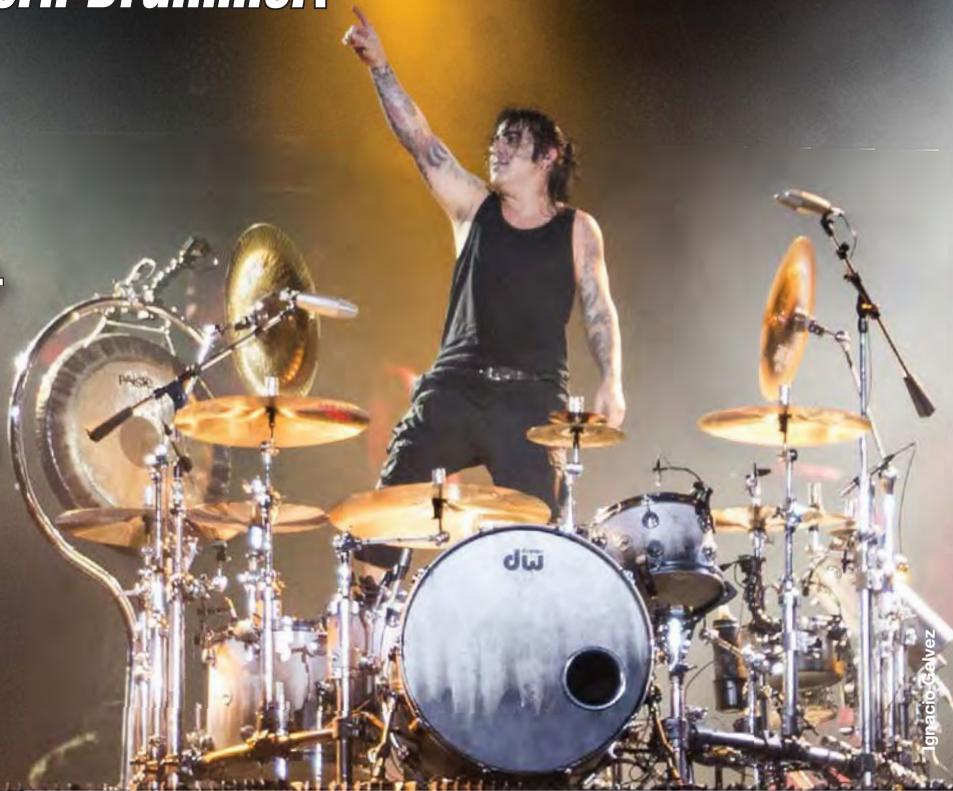
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See Maná in concert, go backstage, get a photo with Alex Gonzalez and the band, play Alex's kit, and take home some incredible autographed gear!



## About the Contest

*Modern Drummer* and Alex Gonzalez are teaming up to give one current *MD* subscriber and guest admission to the venue and backstage VIP access to Maná's December 7 show at the Forum in Los Angeles, California.

For more about Maná, visit  
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This *Modern Drummer* sponsored prize package also includes a DW stainless-steel snare, one of Alex's Paiste cymbals, some Vic Firth drumsticks, and a Remo drumhead, all of which have a combined value of over \$1,000.



To enter the contest, visit  
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\*As long as the band has a soundcheck that day, you'll attend and have the chance to play his kit.

# The 2019 DCI World Championship Results

## The Blue Devils Win Record-Setting Nineteenth World Championship

The 2019 Drum Corps International season proved to be one of the most competitive in recent memory, with several corps in contention for the championship title. At the finals, held this past August 10 at Indianapolis's Lucas Oil Stadium, Concord, California's Blue Devils corps held on to a narrow lead of less than a tenth of a point to win a record-breaking nineteenth championship. And for the first time ever, five different corps won caption awards among the Best Brass, Best Percussion, Best Visual, Best Color Guard, and Best Overall General Effect categories.

The Blue Devils' production, "Ghostlight," was a nod to the theater tradition of leaving a single bulb lit onstage during the night to allow the spirits to see. The show earned the corps the John Brazale Best Visual Performance Award, as well as their second gold medal in three years.

"It was a little bit of a shock when they announced that we won," said the Blue Devils' director of percussion, Scott Johnson, at the event. Johnson has been involved

with all nineteen of the organization's championships, including three as a marching member (in 1976, '77, and '79) before he joined the staff. "This was my fortieth season with the Blue Devils, and every year I try to make it a special experience that our members will never forget. The fact that one of the toughest judges in our activity [Jeff Prosperie] gave them a perfect 10 in the achievement section of the score sheet...that's a memory for a lifetime."

The Blue Devils scored a season-high rating of 98.325 and a 19.85 in drums, which was the top score of the night. The "Ghostlight" program featured music of the singer-songwriter Imogen Heap ("Cycle Song"), percussionist and composer Paul Smadbeck's marimba solo "Rhythm Song," television and film composer Lorne Balfe's "A True Passion" and "Stroke of Genius," twentieth-century composer Aram Khachaturian's "Symphony No. 3," pop star Britney Spears' "Circus," and an original tune by the corps' music director and arranger,

David Glyde.

"My favorite part of our show was the tap section," said Johnson. "I came up with the idea years ago when I used my wife Judy's shoes to play a flamenco part for a recording session. I originally taught it to the snares and tenors with drumsticks. Then I told them they were going to play it with tap shoes on a wooden prop, like having the ghosts dance on the stage.

"There are a lot of flams and fast notes," Johnson continued. "And scrapes—just like a tap dancer would do. The hardest thing about it was an accelerando with the front ensemble, which went from 80 to 190 bpm. It gets cranking near the end, and they're playing really fast 16th notes with shoes on their hands."

Finishing in a close second place with a score of 98.238 (their highest ever) were the Bluecoats from Canton, Ohio. Their Beatles-themed show was a fan favorite. The corps won the Donald Angelica Award for Best General Effect.

Earning the bronze medal, with a score



The Blue Devils performed "Ghostlight" to win a record nineteenth DCI World Championship.

of 96.60, was last year's champion, the Santa Clara Vanguard from Santa Clara, California. The Vanguard also won their fourth consecutive and fifteenth overall Fred Sanford Best Percussion Performance Award. (Caption awards are determined by averaging the scores from all three nights of the World Championship competition.) The last corps that won four consecutive High Drum awards was the Blue Devils, between 1983 and 1986.

"We have a process that works," explained Paul Rennick, percussion caption manager for SCV. "We attract great players, and thanks to the number of returning members from year to year, we pick up where we left off. It helps when you can start halfway to where you were before. I think it's also fair to say that we try to expand our musical vocabulary and play new things that we possibly couldn't have played years ago."

SCV's program, "Vox Eversio," referred to a theme about revolution. "In recent years, we've opened our shows with some beautiful extended front ensemble moments," Rennick explained. "We thought it would be a good idea to do the opposite this year, so we came out as gangbusters with a big percussion feature. It just added a whole different level of energy to the show."

Following the opening "Fraternity" by

French composer Thierry Deleruyelle, SCV played "Audi Media Nocte" by Swiss composer Oliver Waespi. "It's a slightly funky, sort of New Orleans-flavored piece that ended up being a lot of fun to play," explained Rennick. "Our middle piece was an arrangement of Postmodern Jukebox's take on 'Nothing Else Matters' by Metallica."

Rennick and his wife, Sandi, are SCV's percussion arrangers, and they wrote original music for the program as well. "We hit a wide variety of styles and featured every section," Sandi said. "It was just such a fun show."

Rounding out the top six were Carolina Crown, from Fort Mill, South Carolina, who won the Jim Ott Best Brass Performance Award, the Cavaliers from Rosemont, Illinois, and the Boston Crusaders, who earned the George Zingali Best Color Guard Award for their epic production, "Goliath."



**Santa Clara Vanguard won their fourth consecutive drum title while earning a bronze medal with their program, "Vox Eversio."**

Championship Saturday also featured the seventh annual DrumLine Battle, which was held in Indianapolis's Pan Am Plaza. Seven drumlines, including one from Canada and one from South America, competed in a tournament-style bracket. Oregon, Wisconsin's Shadow drumline won the final battle, besting former champions 7th Regiment, from New London, Connecticut.

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## The 2019 DCI Performers Showcase

Individual corps members had a chance to display their solo and ensemble chops during the annual Performers Showcase at the Indianapolis Convention Center on August 9, sponsored for the sixth year by System Blue. Winning percussionists in seven categories represented five different corps.

"It's awesome that System Blue supports [the Performers Showcase]," the Blue Devils' Scott Johnson said. "I think it really brings out creativity and talent, especially for many individuals who otherwise might get lost in the drumline or drum corps."

The Blue Devils had about four dozen brass and percussion members participate in the event, and three of the corps' six percussionists won in their respective categories. Michael Dy, a seventeen-year-old rookie

with the Blue Devils, won the Best Multi-Percussion award for his original drumset solo, "Full Circle." Fellow BD rookie, eighteen-year-old Grayton Hodge, played a Brian Mueller arrangement of "Danny Boy" on marimba to win Best Individual Keyboard. And twenty-one-year-old Brandon Olander, who is aging out after five years in the Blue Devils, captured his second Best Individual Snare Award with his original solo, "Flow State."

Other award-winning percussionists included Santa Clara Vanguard multi-tenor player Remy Thomas and timpanist Zachary Howard from the Troopers. Ensemble awards went to the Mandarins front ensemble and the Legends cymbal ensemble, the latter of which group won its second award in three years.

Story and photos by Lauren Vogel Weiss



Olander



Thomas



Dy

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# IN MEMORIAM

## Harvey Vogel

The Lone Star Percussion founder changed the way we get gear

**H**arvey Vogel, passed away at the age of eighty-three on August 1. In 1978, Vogel founded the iconic percussion mail-order business Lone Star Percussion in a 400-square-foot storefront in Dallas, Texas, with a tiny showroom just large enough to hold one display case. Known for an unassuming “discount price list”—which was printed in pastel colors and updated every six months—Lone Star sold percussion implements, accessories, and instruments at discount prices, often shipping orders the same day they were placed.

“Harvey had one of the most innovative concepts in getting merchandise to drummers,” said Vic Firth, the late stick and accessory manufacturer, in a May 2001 *Drum Business* article. “His stocking of inventory was complete. His pricing was always favorable, to the young player in particular. And his service was second to none in the industry. Mail orders were his primary source of doing business, and that was a new concept in 1978. His efficiency and effectiveness as a businessman were outstanding.”

“There’s no question that Harvey Vogel changed the way the consumer viewed retail percussion,” said Michael Balter, founder of Mike Balter Mallets, in that same 2001 *DB* article. “He wanted to make quality percussion instruments and accessories available to everyone. He wanted people from small-town America to have the same access to percussion products as those near the big city.”

Years before people ordered merchandise online, percussionists from all over would call the store to get Vogel’s advice on what to



Vogel with his daughter, *MD* contributor Lauren Vogel Weiss

buy. “I first met Harvey in 1978, when I was a sophomore at North Texas State in Denton,” remembers Gregg Bissonette, who recently completed a U.S. tour with Ringo Starr & His All-Starr Band. “A friend of mine told me I could get a great deal on Bunken 5B drumsticks at this new shop called Lone Star Percussion. Even though I was nervous, I called and asked for Harvey. ‘Hi! My name is Gregg Bissonette, and I’m the drummer in the One O’Clock Lab Band...’ and before I could finish my question about buying a brick of sticks, Harvey interrupted to ask, ‘Is

that your official title on your business card?’ That was my hilarious introduction to my longtime friend. God bless you, Harvey!”

“Harvey will always be an icon of our music industry,” adds Jim Catalano. “Although he intimidated the heck out of me in the early days of my time at Ludwig, he became a trusted friend, business colleague, and someone I highly respected.”

“My father was not a musician, but he loved learning about percussion and the music business, and he was always generous in sharing that knowledge with percussionists young and old, students and professionals,” stated Lauren Vogel Weiss, his daughter and a longtime *MD* contributor. “What started as a way for him to buy mallets and equipment for me as a high school percussionist became one of the most successful drum shops in the world. He also introduced me to the Percussive Arts Society and people who would become my extended percussion family. Thank you, Daddy!”



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"I grew up with classical music," says drummer, producer, and composer Konstantin Septinus of Hamburg, Germany. "I always liked the dynamic contrast between focused and open tones. However, jazz later became my true love because of the expression and flow that come with it. While always curious and searching for new sounds and inspirations, I lately found myself with these very special drums."

Septinus's mahogany Craviotto set features a 7x12 rack tom, a 13x16 floor tom, and a 12x20 bass drum, all with 45-degree bearing edges. "I equipped the toms with 4 mm AK Drums chrome-over-brass hoops," he says, "which add nicely to the wooden tone." To complement the kit's open sound, Septinus fitted the setup with Remo Ambassador heads.

In addition to the kit's AK hoops, Septinus also ordered a custom snare from the boutique Italian craftsman Adrian Kirchler. "The snare is a 6.5x14, 1 mm, single-piece brass shell with 4 mm chrome hoops and a sophisticated fan-shaped snare wire construction with five distinct snare beds," Septinus explains.

Kirchler outfitted the brass-shelled drum with coiled steel snare wires instead of a copper/silk-wound combination, which Septinus says adds

more sustain to the otherwise highly dynamic, articulate, and focused tone. "The snare's design also features ten classy tube lugs, a nice and flexible throw-off, brass T-rod and washers, and that dark patina look," he adds.

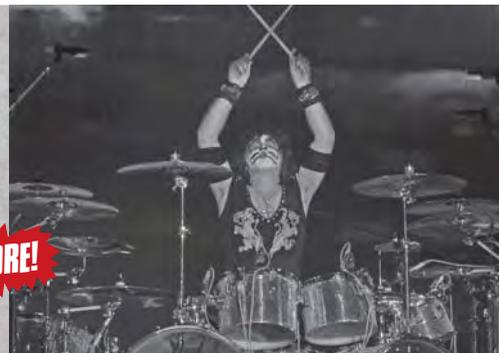
Septinus tells *MD* that he feels lucky he was able to assemble this particular setup. "I really like the dry and ultra-sensitive snare together with the full and round-sounding Craviotto drums. And the 20" solid-shell bass drum provides all the low end, almost like a bigger orchestral bass drum."

Depending on the type of gig he's playing, Septinus chooses from a variety of Istanbul Mehmet cymbals to suit his needs. "For jazz or fusion music, I prefer the MC Jazz series, a Black Sea 1623 crash, a Kirkor Kucukyan Tribute 22" ride, Horacio El Negro Hernández 13" signature hi-hats, plus X-Ray cymbals to mix dark and light textures," he says. "In the photograph, my 18" Origin Dark crash and a nice Hamer 10" splash are shown, plus a Big Fat Snare Drum Bling Ring on the hi-hats. Otherwise, I play Istanbul Mehmet's Tony Williams replicas."



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