

Product Close-Up: tune-bot & Nordic Shells



# MODERN DRUMMER

THE WORLD'S #1 DRUM COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1977

APRIL 2025

## Billy Hart

Traveling Through  
the Oceans of Time

Janet Jackson's  
Jerrod "J-Rod" Sullivan

Best Foot Forward  
Michael Cartellone  
Of Lynyrd Skynyrd



The 2025 Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Award



# EXPRESSION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

**Rick Allen**

Def Leppard  
Yamaha Artist



**YAMAHA**  
*Make Waves*

Photo credit:  
Ryan Sebastyan

© 2025 Yamaha Corporation of America. All rights reserved.



# drumr™

Learn faster. Drum better.™



# Unleash your drumming.



<https://drumr.app>





## 16 BILLY HART

Drumming From the Past and the Present,  
and Looking Towards the Future

By Mark Griffith



## 26 JERROD "J-ROD" SULLIVAN

Janet Jackson's J-Rod Sullivan

By Mark Griffith

## 34 MICHAEL CARTELLONE

Best Foot Forward

By Michael Cartellone

## 56 THE 2025 NEIL PEART SPIRIT OF DRUMMING AWARD

Presented by David Frangioni, Modern Drummer, Carrie Nuttall-Peart, Olivia Peart, Rob Silverman, Dennis Wolfe, and the Universal Music Group.

By Mark Griffith



## LESSONS

### 42 BASICS

4OD: The Four Offenses of Drummers

By Chris Lesso

### 38 TRANSCRIPTION

Tool "Chocolate Chip Trip" from *Fear Inoculum*, drummer Danny Carey

Transcription by Marc Atkinson

### 52 ROCK AND JAZZ CLINIC

Rhythmic Vocabulary Development: Filling in the Spaces in 5/4

By Michael Packer

### 43 ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming: Double-Stroke Hands, Single-Stroke Feet

By Bobby Rondinelli

### 44 JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP

Master Studies II: Paradiddles with Fill-Ins Using Single Strokes

By Joe Morello

### 48 TEACHERS' FORUM

Putting It All Together

By Ron Spagnardi

## EQUIPMENT

### 10 NEW AND NOTABLE

New pedals from Drum Workshop and The Return of Slingerland

### 12 PRODUCT CLOSE UP

Reviews of equipment from tune-bot and Nordic Shells

---

## DEPARTMENTS

### 6 EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Drumming IS Good for You

By Mark Griffith

### 7 KIT OF THE MONTH

A Budding Hybrid Drummer

### 8 JAZZ INSIGHTS

This New Year

By Peter Erskine

### 58 COLLECTORS CORNER

The Equipment of David Garibaldi

By Donn Bennett

### 65 EYE CANDY

Caleb Crosby's Kelsea Ballerini Touring Kit

### 60 OUT NOW

New releases featuring the drumming of: Marco Minnemann, Joe Labarbera, Stich Wynston, Lewis Nash, Cassius Goens, Obed Calvaire, Daniel Sadownick, Paulo Almeida, Keith Hall, Kevin "Bujo" Jones, Steve Holley, Aaron Comess, Thommy Price, Joe Peri, Paul Romaine, Kyle Swan, Michael Shekwoaga Ode, and a new book by Dafnis Prieto.



# AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

## Drumming IS Good for You!

By Mark Griffith

In the last two months we have run two features on talented drummers that have experienced drum related injuries. Last month, Mark Schulman discussed his hearing, and this month Michael Cartellone is talking about a foot injury. Although both problems emanated from playing drums and music on the "big stage" in front of huge crowds, we don't want people to fear playing drums.



Anything done to excess can be harmful, and that includes playing the drums too hard, and performing music that is too loud. Be careful and watch for signs of danger when doing *anything*. Pay attention to your body when you're playing drums, pain is never good, and (usually) will not "just go away." Ringing in your ears is bad. To prevent hearing damage, there are many forms of ear protection out there, ranging from high quality and custom molded ear plugs to headphones that allow us to reduce the sound of the drums and hear music at a lower level when performing, recording, or practicing. In-Ear monitors *can* protect your ears. However, if your in-ear monitor level is too loud, you are doing more harm than good. Practicing (uninterrupted) and constantly is also bad for you. Our muscles need time to recover, our brains need time to process, and our bodies need time to relax and rehydrate. All of those "breaks" should be built into our practice time.

There are many positives in drumming. After practicing a specific groove, fill, solo, or song for a while, nothing feels better than the sense of accomplishment of *finally* nailing it! Drumming can also be therapeutic. At the end of a long day, nothing relieves the tension of life like playing the drums. Nothing teaches us self-discipline and commitment like studying and learning to play music. Learning to express your emotions through creativity, improvisation, and within the context of music is a vital aspect of music and drumming, it's good for your well-being and GREAT for the soul! Lastly, drumming and music is fun, it creates and spreads joy!

Whether you are a professional, a student, a weekend warrior, or someone who likes to put the headphones on and wail away... Playing drums (and music in general) IS good for you. Just be careful and take care of yourself while you are performing, practicing, and playing. That way you'll be reaping the MANY rewards and benefits of drumming and music for the rest of your life.

Look at this month's cover feature interview. Billy Hart is 85 years old, at the top of his game, and is one of the most influential and successful drummers living and working today. This month's interview and photos were booked between Billy's busy schedule of teaching at three different schools, touring Europe (twice!), leading his band for a week of shows in New York City, and various recording sessions.

Drum long and prosper!

Editor-in-chief, Director of Content  
Modern Drummer

@ModernDrummer

modern\_drummer

@modern\_drummer

## MODERN DRUMMER®

Founder Ronald Spagnardi 1943–2003

Co-Founder Isabel Spagnardi

Publisher/CEO David Frangioni

COO Carolina Frangioni

Content Director Mark Griffith

CTO Jason Mehler

Art Director Charlie Weinmann

Marketing and Collaboration Danny "Ziggy" Laverde

Marketing Coordinator Ricardo Rodriguez

Director of Collaboration Evan Stanley

Photography & Archivist Felipe Laverde

Contributing Editor & Photographer Alex Kluff

**THE MD PRO PANEL/ADVISORY BOARD:** THE MD PRO PANEL/ADVISORY BOARD: Carmine Appice, Kenny Aronoff, Eddie Bayers, Gregg Bissonette, Jason Bittner, Bill Bruford, Will Calhoun, Terri Lyne Carrington, Matt Chamberlain, Peter Erskine, Daniel Glass, Alex González, Danny Gottlieb, Benny Greb, Matt Halpern, Horacio Hernandez, Gerald Heyward, Taku Hirano, Jonathan Joseph, Jim Keltner, Paul Leim, Pat Mastelotto, Rod Morgenstein, Andy Newmark, Carl Palmer, Stephen Perkins, Dafnis Prieto, Rich Redmond, Brian Reitzell, Jim Riley, Bobby Rondinelli, Antonio Sánchez, Cindy Blackman Santana, Chad Smith, Steve Smith, Todd Sucherman, Billy Ward, Kenny Washington, Dave Weckl, Paul Wertico, Dennis Wolfe

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Donn Bennett, Bob Campbell, Peter Erskine, Brian Hill, Daru Jones, Chris Lesso, Tony Verderosa, Tim Northrup

MODERN DRUMMER magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published digitally monthly and print bi-monthly by MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc., 1279 W. Palmetto Park Rd PO Box 276064 Boca Raton, FL 33427. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Boca Raton, FL 33427 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2024 by MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

**EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:** MODERN DRUMMER Publications, 1279 W. Palmetto Park Rd PO Box 276064 Boca Raton, FL 33427. Email: [info@moderndrummer.com](mailto:info@moderndrummer.com).

**SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE:** Modern Drummer, 1279 W. Palmetto Park Rd, PO Box 276064, Boca Raton, FL 33427. Change of address: Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address and send to [info@moderndrummer.com](mailto:info@moderndrummer.com)

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Modern Drummer, 1279 W. Palmetto Park Rd PO Box 276064 Boca Raton, FL 33427.

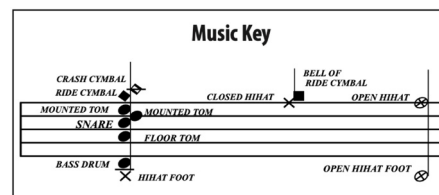
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 41480017 Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: PO Box 875, Stn A, Windsor ON N9A 6P2

**MEMBER:** National Association of Music Merchants, Percussive Arts Society

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photos but cannot assume responsibility for them.

Subscribe today at [moderndrummer.com/subscribe](http://moderndrummer.com/subscribe)

MODERN DRUMMER ONLINE: [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com)





### A Budding Hybrid Drummer

This month's Kit of the Month comes from Sarvasv Vaish from India. He writes, "I have looked at photos of drum kits in *Modern Drummer* magazines for years. I always thought it would be a great honor to have my drumkit in *Modern Drummer*. What makes my drumkit special is that I made this kit myself by combining an old Roland e-kit with my new Tama drum kit that I got from my father for my birthday. This drum kit can be used to play various genres of music ranging from heavy metal to blues and country. My two biggest drumming motivators and drum idols are Joey Jordison and Lars Ulrich."

Sarvasv's kit is a hybrid drum setup of a seven-piece Tama Superstar maple shell set consisting of toms in 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 12x14 and a 14x16 floor tom. His bass drum is an 18x22, and his snare is a 6.5 x14. He uses the Roland TD-1 for a tambourine, China cymbal, and his left sided bass drum sounds.

His cymbals are Paiste PST 7's in 16" and 18" crashes, and a 20" ride. He uses the practice cymbal from his Roland kit for a 16" China sound. His drumheads are Evans G2 clears for the 9x12 tom and 14x16 floor tom, a G1 for his 12x14 tom and Remo BA for my 7x8 tom. He uses a coated head for the snare, and an Evans EMAD for the bass drum. Sarvasv uses a Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand and right bass drum pedal, and practice pedals for his left bass drum and his e-tambourine. All of his electronics go through a Carlsboro EDA50 amp.





# This New Year

By Peter Erskine

Happy 2025. That “Happy” being said, this year has been off to a rough start so far: fires, flooding, deaths, and political upheaval. It seems like everyone I know has been touched by both sadness or madness. Me? My cheerful heart wants to celebrate gladness. This is part of the drummer’s place in the cosmic scheme of things: we do our best to make rhythmic sense of everything. THAT said, the universe is really challenging us at the moment.

I began the new year early in the morning, departing our Las Vegas hotel room to make the drive back to Los Angeles in the hope of beating whatever New Year’s Day traffic there might be on the 2-lane highway back to LA. Turns out our timing was good, but a 4:30 a.m. leave time will do that for you. We counted ourselves fortunate getting out of town before the EV cybertruck exploded into flames in front of a hotel. Scary news, not as overbearingly tragic as the story of carnage that came out of New Orleans. I cannot tell you how many times I have strolled along Bourbon Street, and this news hit close to psychic home.

Barely a week later, vast portions of Los Angeles burnt down. I cannot tell you how many friends lost their homes and lost everything. We were fortunate. Meanwhile, when things were looking imminently dangerous, my wife and I evacuated. For several reasons, our departure was hasty, and I found it interesting upon later reflection to consider what we chose to “save” by putting it into the car: a change of clothes, our dog Minnie, all of our important papers and passports, ONE cymbal, one microphone, two cameras, and a bagful of hard drives. I said a silent goodbye to our home and *actually* thanked our home. Like I said, we were lucky where many others were not. All of us are still in shock, the future is not clear and there are so many questions. Yet, out of this city-wide disaster came moments of transcendent strength and grace from all the victims with whom I spoke.

This reminds me of a wonderful bit of dialogue from the 1984 film *Starman*, written by Bruce A. Evans and Raynold Gideon. This conversation takes place between the alien “Starman” (played by Jeff Bridges) and “Mark Shermin” (played by Charles Martin Smith.)

**Mark Shermin:** *Have people from your world been here before?*

**Starman:** *Before yes. We are interested in your species.*

**Mark Shermin:** *You mean you’re some kind of anthropologist? Is that what you’re doing here? Just checking us out?*

**Starman:** *You are a strange species. Not like any other. And you’d be surprised how many there are. Intelligent but savage. Shall I tell you what I find beautiful about you?*

[Shermin nods]

**Starman:** *You are at your very best when things are worst.*

Without disclosing any identities, I can tell you that I

encountered THE most generous of spirits in the persons who lost everything in the LA fires! This is not only a testament to THEIR greatness and their grace, but it should provide hope to all of us: life does go on, no matter what.



What does this have to do with jazz drumming? Nothing and everything.

I’ll start with the everything. Can you think back on a gig or a rehearsal or being in the recording studio or practicing while someone listened in ... and you felt self-conscious? Ashamed? Bummed-out by the way you performed? In the grand scheme of things, how important do those moments feel? I bet we’ve all suffered embarrassment or lack of confidence at one time or another. A little perspective can go a long way.

The idea of giving or “giving up.” That’s the same as “surrender.” Do these words conjure an image of weakness? Not to me. The notion of giving is sumo-strength powerful in my book. Drumming? When I leave out notes, or when I play softly, I help to create a musical environment that is more like a musical universe where all manner of things can happen because I’ve opened the noise floor, as it were. The difference between loud and unbelievably loud is only so many decibels. While the difference between incredibly soft and unbelievably loud is infinite by comparison. “*To infinity and beyond!*” When I leave room for the music to breathe, fresh ideas come through the window! And when I do this, I can see and feel the other musicians smiling. This happened to me just the other day. It’s one of the better tricks of musical nature.

Which somehow brings me to death. Nothingness.

Words fail. But I’ll try.

Live life. Cherish one another.

Do your best and do no harm.

Pay attention.

Breathe.

Relax!



Meanwhile, we should all do what we can to help others in a time of true need. There are fundraising websites, and there are opportunities to participate in caring for others less fortunate. I recommend seeking these opportunities out versus staring at your smart phone and scrolling through whatever kind of “porn” the phone/website is dishing out. And, if nothing else, go for a walk and get some fresh air.

Turning from the landscape ravaged by nature to a landscape ravaged by political rage. I have a good friend who, without fail, likes to remind me that the “universe is right on schedule.” He



Peter and Joel Taylor



Will Kennedy

of the music of Weather Report. I was happy to discover that this old dog could still do some old tricks. Playing the music of Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter and Jaco Pastorius again — after having avoided it for some time — felt good to do and it was fun. It’s good to treat yourself

to the opportunity every once in a while, of experiencing “if I knew then what I know now.”

This reminds me of a line from my book: “What makes good judgement? Experience. What makes experience? Bad judgement.” (*Guglielmo Ferrero, an early 20th-century Italian journalist, historian, and novelist.*)



sees all of what’s going on as a necessary reminder. I’ll leave it at that. And I’ll hope that Starman’s observation proves to be as true as it rings.

I used the word “perspective” four or five paragraphs ago. Inadvertently timely, as the update to my “Drum Perspective” book has just been released by the Hal Leonard publishing company. My long-trusted colleague and friend Rick Mattingly did the editing, and we decided to name this update “Jazz Drumming Perspectives.” More of my musings but with practical advice, musical examples PLUS digital links to over 50 performances and examples. Old-fashioned book printing meets 21st-Century technology. I like that. It was a pleasant surprise to see the book released and being promoted at this year’s NAMM show. Along with “my” signature snare drums at the Tama Drums booth. I said hello to plenty of people at the show. Life.

## Memories

...provided by the great jazz singer, poet, lyricist and storyteller Kurt Elling and his invitation for me to join his celebration

The Kurt & Peter show will be coming to Pennsylvania, Ann Arbor and Chicago later this year. Kurt will then play this music with the Yellowjackets. Will Kennedy is tearing it up with the band more than ever, check him out! And I’ll be touring once again fronting my Dr. Um Band with vibraphonist Mike Mainieri as our special guest. “Steps into the Weather.” Why not?

Having said it before, I’ll say it again: HAVE FUN when you play. And if you can find some poetry in your musical moments, you will have raised the art and, in that very moment, helped to make the world a better place. And THAT, my drumming friends, is beautiful. 🥁

**Check out Peter’s drummer profile page, and get a copy of his Legends book at [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com)**





# NEW & NOTABLE

## NEW PEDALS FROM DRUM WORKSHOP REDESIGNED DW 2000 PEDALS

Drum Workshop, is introducing the redesigned, upgraded entry-level 2000 Series Accelerator Bass Drum Pedal. These pedals are suitable for drummers who want to start playing DW pedals or as a backup or practice pedal for more established players.

For more than 50 years DW has been at the forefront of innovation, improvement, and development of drum hardware. The adaptability and state-of-the-art features of the new 2000 Series bass drum pedals, make it a practical and flexible choice for drummers at every stage of their journey.

The remodeled, robust, all metal-frame single and double bass drum pedals now feature a single metal chain Accelerator™ drive system, adjustable footboard and beater angles, and a steel base plate with an anti-skid rubber mat for superior stability. In addition, the durable, two-way DW101 beater with a memory lock comes standard. The double pedal has a drive shaft with DW's telescoping universal joint with memory locks for smooth, reliable playing.

The tried-and-true design and engineering of the all-metal DW 2000 Series bass drum pedals is the perfect introduction to DW's industry standard hardware.

To find out more about the 2000 Series Accelerator Bass Drum Pedal collection, please go to <http://www.dwdrums.com/>.





## THE RETURN OF SLINGERLAND

The wait is over, the Slingerland Drum Company, steeped in decades of drumming history, is back! Formed in Chicago in the 1920's by H.H. Slingerland, the Slingerland Drum Company was known for its iconic kits and snare drums. In the 1930s, the brand launched the legendary Radio King drums, and the renowned drummer Gene Krupa became the company's first endorsee. Over the decades, Slingerland continued to create innovative drums and inspire generations of drummers.

Although the company stopped producing drums in 2008, today, many producers, studios, and music collectors own at least one vintage Slingerland. "Slingerland is one of the great American drum brands, so I am thrilled to be part of the next chapter in the Slingerland story," explained DW Founder Don Lombardi. "Slingerland has a rich legacy and is dear to my heart, so when Chris, my son, presented me with the purchase of the Slingerland brand for my birthday in 2019, our talented craftsmen began working to leave no stone unturned in preserving the company's sound and details everyone knows and loves."

To mark the historic return, a new Radio King Limited Edition Snare celebrates Slingerland's craftsmanship, history, and sound. Built to the same design specifications that made the original a favorite with drummers worldwide, this is a faithful recreation of the legendary snare from the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The shells are constructed using steam-bent solid Maple and period-correct Nickel-plated hardware, Nickel-over-Brass Stick Chopper hoops, and a genuine calfskin batter head. Only 50 Radio King Limited Edition Snares will be made in each size and color. They will be available in two sizes, 7 x 14" and 5 x 14", and in four unique finishes: Black Diamond Pearl, White Marine Pearl, Blue and Silver Lacquer, and Black and Gold Lacquer. Each snare is numbered

and signed by Don Lombardi, and each will be sold with a Radio King snare case. The Radio King snare is just the beginning of many new drums from Slingerland, we will be designing and crafting a full line of drums for the next generation of drummers.

The next chapter of the Slingerland story is here, and we're



back to celebrate the heritage, launch new innovations, and carry forward the Slingerland legacy one drum at a time. To learn more about new and upcoming Slingerland products, please visit <https://www.slingerland.com/>.





# PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

## NORDIC SHELLS - DIY SNARE KIT - WATERFALL BUBINGA

By Jason Mehler

Nordic Shells of Maple Grove, MN has earned a reputation among drummers and custom drum builders for producing some of the finest shells on the market. Their refined manufacturing process and Grade-A materials ensure that each shell delivers exceptional tone, durability, and aesthetic appeal. Nordic Shells has now broadened their product lineup to include a DIY snare kit, allowing drummers to craft their own high-quality snare drum with ease. For this month's Product Close-Up, I will order and build a DIY Snare Kit, sharing my thoughts about the process and the finished product.

### About the DIY Snare Kit

On the Nordic Shells website, you can place a custom order for a Do-It-Yourself Snare Kit, this is where you choose from a selection of Nordic's heirloom quality drum shells, along with all the hardware and services needed to build a professional-grade snare drum from scratch.

### What's in the Kit?

Nordic's DIY Snare Kit includes 1 premium handmade snare shell, 2 triple-flanged chrome hoops, lugs, tension rods, chrome throw-off and butt plate, washers, spacers, mounting screws, threaded air vent (optional), snare wires with straps/strings, top and bottom drumheads, and a drum key.

Nordic has a wide selection of carefully handcrafted hardwood drum shells to choose from including Teak/Maple, Maple Max, Birdseye Maple, Vertical Zebrawood/Maple, Curly Maple, Standard Maple, Maple/Poplar, Maple/Gum, Mappa Burl/Maple, Ziricote/Maple, Ash, Birch, Bubinga, Cherry, Mahogany, Walnut, Waterfall Bubinga, Fiddleback Makore/Mahogany, Mahogany/Poplar, Mahogany/Lauan, Purpleheart, and Ribbon Mahogany/Poplar.

Along with the parts, Nordic's DIY Snare Kit includes expertly applied services including sanding, bearing edges, snare beds, and drilled holes. They will also install reinforcement rings when needed. Finally, the DIY Snare Kit includes step-by-step assembly instructions and a QR code link to a full video demonstration to guide the building process.

### Ordering the DIY Snare Kit

I set out to build a side-snare that embodies the bold, deep snare sound that was iconic in the 1980s. To place my order, I went to [Nordicshells.com](http://Nordicshells.com) and clicked on the DIY SNARE KITS link in the navigation menu. The first step was to choose a shell species. For my new side-snare I chose Waterfall Bubinga because of its warm, rich, and punchy tone, and its aesthetic appeal. The Waterfall Bubinga shell is a ten-ply shell made up of one-ply Waterfall Bubinga as the decorative outer layer, and



nine-ply of standard Bubinga as the inner layers and applied in an alternating grain pattern for strength.

The next step in the ordering process is to choose the diameter and depth of the drum. As of this review, the only diameter available is 14", which was exactly what I was looking for anyway. I chose the maximum depth available, which was 7".

Moving on, the next steps were to choose the lug count, bearing edge cut, ring installation (yes or no,) and whether to include an air vent. My drum will be a ten-lug drum with a 30-degree round-over bearing edge and rings for that vintage vibe. I chose the air vent option as well. Sanding with 150 grit paper, snare bed carving, and hole drilling are all included services, so there was nothing to configure in that regard.

That's it! I added my drum to the cart and placed the order.



Overall, it was a very easy process. These drums are custom made to spec, meaning the shell layers aren't even formed prior to ordering. For that reason, there is 10-15 business day lead time on all DIY Snare Kits.

### Unboxing

The Nordic Shells-branded package arrived within the expected delivery window. The shell was wrapped and free from damage and the high-quality chrome parts and accessories were all included.

What a beautiful shell! Even without a finish applied, the raw Waterfall Bubinga pattern is mesmerizing. The drum had no blemishes or imperfections. The bearing edges, rings, holes, and snare bed were pristine. There were no gaps where the internal plies meet, which speaks to the precision of Nordic's manufacturing process.

### Applying a Finish

The real "Do-It-Yourself" portion of the process is choosing how to finish the drum. There are many finishing choices to apply to the shell such as staining, dyeing, matte finish, gloss finish, and so on. For my new drum, I chose to use a wood conditioner called Butcher Block. It is a simple wipe on/wipe off process that is repeated a few times. The result is a matte finish that really brings out the depth and swirly shimmer of the Waterfall grain pattern. It goes without saying that I am extremely satisfied with the outcome.

### Assembling the Drum

Although I am very familiar with drum assembly, I tried to approach it as a novice, relying on the included assembly instructions. The large, printed instruction sheet is very well-written with color diagrams identifying the various components. The components themselves are labeled and packaged separately, to avoid any confusion.

I began assembling the drum as instructed, beginning with the tubular lug installation. In my case, there was no wrap

applied to the shell, so Nordic provides extra metal lug washers as spacers to fill the gap and allow a secure attachment. I appreciate that the washers are metal, as I believe rubber bushings could slightly dampen the drum shell's resonance.

The next step was to attach the throw off. Luckily the holes were pre-drilled so the placement on the drum was obvious. While installing the throw off, I noticed another fine detail about Nordic's process. The snare bed and throw off holes are placed where the seam of the outer wood layer meets. So, the thin seam hides behind a beautiful chrome throw off. Nice! I continued with the steps, installing the butt plate, air vent nut, heads (Evans G2 Coated & Snare Side 300,) hoops, and snare wires.

### Testing the Drum

I tuned the drum using the Tune-Bot Studio drum tuner which I recently reviewed for *Modern Drummer*. The evenness and clarity of the drum's tone was evident immediately. When struck, the drum produces the exact sound I set out to achieve. It is thick and punchy with power and presence. The snare wires are very responsive, resulting in a cohesive mix of tone and sizzle. It sounds so 80's! I'm absolutely thrilled with this drum. Not only does it perfectly capture the sound I was aiming for, but it also looks stunning.

### In Conclusion

Whether you are a seasoned drum builder or a first-time DIYer, the Nordic Shells DIY Snare Kit provides the perfect foundation for creating a professional-grade snare drum that's both unique and performance-ready. The total price of the Waterfall Bubinga snare drum build came to \$570 dollars, a competitive price at the time of this review. The solid construction and appealing price make the DIY Snare Kit a worthwhile option for anyone looking to add a great drum to their collection. Get your own at [nordicshells.com](http://nordicshells.com).





# TUNE-BOT STUDIO

By Jason Mehler

Overtone Labs of Denver, CO introduced the first Tune-Bot over 12 years ago. Since then, Tune-Bot has become a leader in digital drum tuning, offering a more precise and consistent tuning method for drums. For this month's Product Close-Up, I will be reviewing the Tune-Bot Studio.

## Features and Specifications

The Tune-Bot Studio has a tuning range between 30Hz and 400Hz, with a Hi-Range setting that extends up to 450Hz. It has a frequency resolution of +/- 0.5Hz, which means it can read the frequency of the drum in increments of 0.5Hz. The response time of the Tune-Bot is 750 milliseconds after striking the drum. The Tune-Bot weighs approximately 72 grams (without batteries) and its dimensions are 3.94 inches by 2.36 inches. It is powered by two AAA batteries, which are included in the package.

The Tune-Bot features a four-color LCD display, and six buttons for navigating the settings. On the back of the device is a spring-loaded claw that attaches to the rim of the drum.

The internal features include Filter Mode, which helps avoid false readings, Difference Mode for easier matching of lug pitches, and Kit save mode which lets you store the settings for up to 5 kits with 10 drums each. Furthermore, you can store the top and bottom head settings, as well as the fundamental note settings for each drum in each kit.

## First Impression

The Tune-Bot Studio comes in a circular carrying case that resembles an old film canister. The case is padded on the inside for protection and looks like it would survive being tossed around in a drum hardware case. The Tune-Bot itself is sleek and compact. The four-color LCD display is large enough to view from a few feet away and the buttons are clearly labeled.

## Learning the Tune-Bot

At first, I expected that getting used to the Tune-Bot would involve a bit of a learning curve. However, I quickly acquainted myself with the settings and features thanks to the included manual and its diagram of the button layout.

In addition to the product manual, I found that Tune-Bot offers online resources, including a tuning calculator, which simplifies the process by suggesting pitch and frequency targets for different drum sizes and tuning preferences. Other resources on Tune-Bot's website include a Tuning Guide to help drummers grasp the concept of pitch tuning, video tutorials that walk through the Tune-Bot's features, and Artist Tunings which showcase the preferred tuning settings of renowned drummers like Dennis Chambers, Ray Luzier, and more.

## Testing the Tune-Bot Studio

For the test, I'm using my PDP drum kit which features 8X10 and 9x12 rack toms, a 14x16 floor tom, 18x22 bass drum, and a 5.5x14 snare. I began with the 10" rack tom. Using the Tuning Calculator on the Tune-Bot website, I chose the maximum resonance tuning option, which suggested that both the top and bottom head be tuned to 253 Hz. I removed the drum from its stand and placed it on my drum throne to mute the bottom head. After clipping the Tune-Bot Studio to the top rim, I powered it on and began testing. Using a stick, I struck the drumhead about one inch from the edge near each lug. The Tune-Bot instantly displayed the head's frequency, which I initially tuned by ear, using traditional tuning methods. To my surprise, the drum was already close to the 253 Hz target frequency. As I tapped around the drum, the numbers fluctuated

plus or minus up to 10 Hz. I quickly found that adjusting opposing lugs in pairs made it easier to reach the target frequency, as tuning individual lugs independently often led to repeated tuning adjustments. I used the Filter

mode of the Tune-Bot to fine-tune each lug for precision. After achieving even tuning on the top head, I flipped the drum over and repeated the process for the bottom head. Once both heads were dialed in, I re-mounted the drum on the stand and played it as usual. The result was a perfectly tuned drum that produced a clear, defined tone, maintaining its pitch without any noticeable drop-off as it decayed.

I had a similar experience with both the 12" and 16" drums in that achieving the target frequency was relatively easy. The snare and bass drum were slightly more challenging.

For the snare drum, I started with the bottom resonant head which is traditionally set at a very high tension (+400Hz). However, this made it difficult for the Tune-Bot to detect the frequency, causing the readings to fluctuate wildly between taps. Luckily, Tune-Bot has addressed this issue by including a Hi-Range feature. This extends the range of frequency detection up to 450Hz, making it easier to tune things like the snare-side resonant head. Once Hi-Range mode was activated, the Tune-Bot was more consistent. The top head of the snare was much easier to tune. Tune-Bot's recommended frequency was 150Hz, but I chose to go a bit higher at 200Hz on this particular drum.

For the bass drum, I found that the ideal settings for my preference were 66 Hz on the front resonant head and 60 Hz on the batter head. Reaching the target frequencies was straightforward, but I had to hold the Tune-Bot in one hand since clipping it to the rim placed it in an awkward position. After tuning, the bass drum sounded phenomenal, with the exact tone and punch that I was going for. I went ahead and stored the entire kit's tuning settings in the Tune-Bot for quick recall for my PDP kit.

## Conclusion

I found the Tune-Bot Studio significantly enhances overall tuning consistency. The ability to quickly recall and achieve accurate, repeatable tuning is a huge advantage both in the studio and on the road. Even for those using a hybrid tuning approach where traditional methods are employed, the Tune-Bot can act as a reference point or benchmark to start from.

For drummers aiming to achieve precise and repeatable tunings, the Tune-Bot Studio is a worthy investment. If the price is too steep, Tune-Bot offers the Tune-Bot Gig at a reduced price, which does not have the kit storage, Hi-Range mode, or 4-color LCD.

The Tune-Bot Studio retails for \$99.95 and the Tune-Bot Gig is priced at \$69.95. Find them both at: <https://tune-bot.com/>







# YOUTUBE MEMBERSHIPS *ARE HERE!*



## ***CLUB LEVEL PATRON***

SHOW OFF LOYALTY  
BADGES, USE EXCLUSIVE  
EMOJIS & GET EARLY  
VIDEO ACCESS!



## ***ALL ACCESS VIP***

CLUB LEVEL PATRON PLUS:  
ENJOY MEMBERS-ONLY LIVE  
STREAMS, EXCLUSIVE  
POLLS & PREMIUM  
CONTENT!

***JOIN NOW!***



**@MODERNDRUMMEROFFICIAL**



# Billy Hart

## Drumming from the Past and Present, and Looking Towards the Future

By Mark Griffith

When you walk into a concert hall or a jazz club and see a five-piece set of Pearl drums with an 18" bass drum, 10" and 12" power toms, a 14" floor tom, and a series of overlapping Zildjian cymbals on the right, each with a smaller upside-down bell, splash or China cymbal mounted on them, you know you are in for something very special! That is Billy Hart's set, and Billy Hart is a living drumming legend. Billy is supremely open to all music and deeply interested in all approaches to drumming and musical traditions. He is a seeker and the infinite student of the drums. He is actively teaching in person at three different colleges every week, Montclair University in NJ, New England Conservatory in Boston, and Oberlin in Ohio. He teaches from an in-depth self-assembled curriculum, and a legendary and hefty packet of information that is worth its weight in gold. When you study with Billy, and from his extensive curriculum, you learn as much about R&B shuffles, Indian Tihai's and Konnakol, Songo and Timba, and Brazilian Samba Schools, as you do about JDilla, Max Roach, Justin Brown, and Rashied Ali.

About 70 years ago Billy Hart started playing drums, he was self-taught and he listened to all the drummers around Washington D.C. The young Billy was developing a sound and a voice on the drums, then he heard Roy Haynes, and everything changed. Since then, Billy Hart has appeared on over 600 recordings and is (arguably) on more straight-ahead jazz records than any other drummer. He recorded with Philly Joe Jones, he recorded with Miles Davis, he was there at the birth of fusion as a member of Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band, he followed Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette in Stan Getz's band, and John Coltrane even called him to play in a double drummer band with Rashied Ali. In 2016, The WDR Big Band recorded some mind-blowing arrangements of Billy's music and recorded them on the record *The Broader Picture*. He has recorded 16 records as a leader, leads two different bands, co-leads the bands *The Cookers* and *Quest*, and has three new records as a

leader coming out this year. *Just* (on ECM,) a yet untitled record being released in Japan that reunites his band from the 90s including Dave Fiuczynski, Chris Potter, and Mark Feldman, and a hard swinging date on *Smoke Jazz*. Not to mention the several recordings that Billy appears on as a sideman coming out every month. Billy is a living link to drumming's past, and a vital link to drumming's future, he also has a new book coming out in July called *Oceans of Time: A Musical Autobiography*.

After twenty-plus years of shared activity, the Billy Hart Quartet – with Mark Turner, Ethan Iverson, and Ben Street – is still distinguished by its stylistic openness, that is a consequence of setting out to embrace all the things that drummer-leader Hart likes to play. Kevin Legendre wrote about the quartet's previous album *One Is the Other*, "If ever there was an example of contemporary jazz that draws extensively on all the traditions while infusing some of the melodic clarity associated with the more challenging end of popular song, then this is it," Hart is a drummer of enormous experience, who has played through many of jazz's idiomatic upheavals, Billy now favors a 'multi-directional' sound approach, and his younger bandmates respond accordingly, each piece that they play, subtly opens another door. The quartet is an alliance of four highly individual improvisers. As pianist Ethan Iverson has noted: "A jazz group is a sensitive mechanism. You've got to play together and listen hard, but there's also a way you need to stay your own course." In the early days of the Quartet, Hart said of his band: "They're brilliant contemporary conceptualists. Playing my older tunes, I'm not playing any freer with anybody than I play with them. Mark profoundly understands Coltrane, but also has total command of Lennie Tristano's vocabulary. With Ethan, it's like playing with Thelonious Monk or Andrew Hill one minute and Herbie Hancock the next." It has remained a forward-looking group thoroughly grounded in the music's history.





WCA  
Big Band

RAGILA

Photo by Alex Kluff



**MD:** One characteristic that has always amazed me about your drumming is how you are able to support every soloist very differently and you give them the exact support that they need in that moment. I hear this specifically in bands you play with that have bigger front lines and many different soloists. I heard

bands, I can never predict how or what you are going to play behind a soloist, it's always different, and yet it always seems right. Where did that develop?

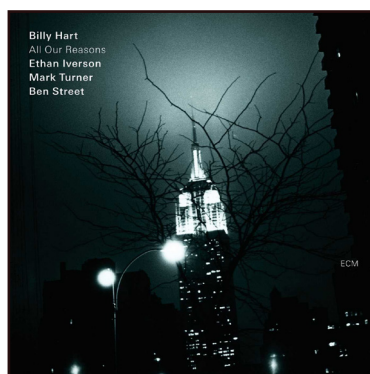
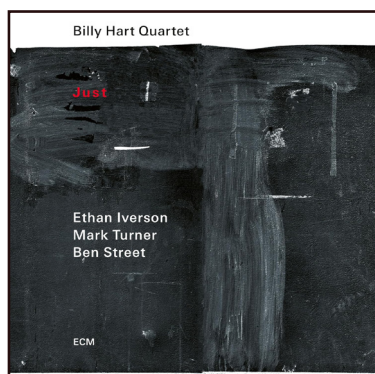
**BH:** I've been influenced by a bunch of different guys and one of them was Mel Lewis. Mel used to tell me, "One thing I like about you is that you make every band sound like it's your band," he told me that more than once. When we were doing with the Saxophone Summit band, someone interviewed Dave Liebman and asked him what he liked about my playing, and Dave said, "Billy Hart is a storyteller." Now, I don't think of myself like that, but that's what he said.

**MD:** But it seems that you are always able to help the soloist tell *their* story, and you do that so well.

**BH:** We all have basically the same musical influences. I'll say something that I heard Tony Williams say. Tony said, "I think a good drummer is a drummer that can play with a pop band one day, playing with a Symphony

**The conductor and/or the drummer have the serious responsibility of conducting something that they are hearing in the present, not conducting, or playing with something they've heard in the past.**

it when you played with Eddie Henderson, Bennie Maupin, and Julian Priester in Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band, The Saxophone Summit (with Michael Brecker, Dave Liebman, and Joe Lovano,) in your old band Great Friends (with Sonny Fortune, Billy Harper, and Stanley Cowell) and The Cookers with David Weiss, Eddie Henderson, George Cables.) When I listen to those







Billy Hart © John Rogers / ECM Records

Orchestra the next day, and play with a jazz singer the next day," I always agreed with that statement.

As a teacher, one of the things that I teach is that the drummer's responsibility is like the responsibility of a conductor of a Symphony Orchestra. The conductor and/or the drummer have the serious responsibility of conducting something that they are hearing in the present, not conducting, or playing with something they've heard in the past.

**Mel [Lewis] used to tell me, "One thing I like about you is that you make every band sound like it's your band," he told me that more than once.**

**MD:** Is that is what keeps you in the present to accompany what is happening (now) ?

**BH:** It is the conductor (and the drummer's) responsibility to know the music. A lot of people think, 'Well I've heard this before, I'll just count it off and be assisted by the people I'm playing with.' I don't believe in that. I'm not the most studied drummer but as you look around here at my house, you are surrounded by music. And if I am playing someone's original

**A lot of people think, 'Well I've heard this before, I'll just count it off and be assisted by the people I'm playing with.' I don't believe in that.**

music, I ask them to please send me their music ahead of time. Lots of guys don't want to do that, I want that. If you are a great sight reader that's fine. But I think great sight readers play the music *too well!* I don't think they assist with the compositional component of a song. I believe there are drummers who play

patterns that influence the harmonic direction of a song. I learned that from listening to Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Philly Joe. That's what they did. Younger drummers don't notice and don't pick that up on that.

**MD:** When someone sends you their music ahead of time, how do you learn it?

**BH:** I listen to it.

**MD:** What if there's no recordings and they just send you sheet music?

**BH:** Either I find a recording, or I ask them to send me a simple recording of the composition on the piano. I tell them, "Just play it on the piano and send it to me that way, and definitely send me the written music." I'm not the greatest sight reader in the world, but I can read music. If I have a recording and the written music, I not only know what the composer wrote and what he's been listening to, but I know what and how he thinks.

I love music. My grandmother was Marian Anderson's first accompanist, besides that two of my earliest mentors were saxophonist Buck Hill and pianist-vocalist Shirley Horn. If you hear my compositions hopefully, they make you think of Shirley, I'm just used to hearing the piano that way. I remember asking Shirley if she spent a lot of time listening to Bill Evans, and she said, "Bill who?" I told her he's one of those piano players that have a (sort of) French Impressionistic approach like Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc. And she said that she had listened to them, but that she also like the Russians like Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky. So, I immediately started to listen to those composers. Between that and the influence of my grandmother taking

me to the Symphony, I grew up listening and developing an understanding of European Classical music. Then as I got older, I was more interested in 20th Century Classical Music like Alban Berg, Charles Ives, John Cage, and those kinds of guys.

**When [Alan] Dawson taught, he never played the drums with his students, he played the vibes. He was teaching his students to respond harmonically; I hear certain things that Tony would play that I can relate to because he was responding to harmonic movement.**

I think of Alan Dawson is probably the all-time great drum set teacher, but through my love of Classical music I met the principal percussionist with the Minnesota Symphony, a guy named Marvin Dahlgren. He (and Elliot Fine) wrote the book called *4-Way Coordination*. Dahlgren brought me the layout for that book before it was even published. He had only brought it to one other guy, and that was Elvin Jones. Every time Dahlgren would come through town, or if I went through Minneapolis, he would take me to his performances with the symphony. I've had an ear for that kind of sound, and that music is what

**MD:** You mentioned Alan Dawson, did you know or have any experience with Alan?

**BH:** When Dawson taught, he never played the drums with his students, he played the vibes. He was teaching his students to respond harmonically; I hear certain things that Tony would play that I can relate to because he was responding to harmonic movement. Plus, he played with Herbie, and they were studying this stuff together. Dawson taught all those guys like Bobby Ward, Clifford Jarvis, and Tony. Clifford

studied with Dawson before Tony, and Clifford had all the facility and chops. I saw Clifford Jarvis for the first time when I went hoping to see Roy Haynes in New York, and Roy wasn't there, but Clifford was there. That was the first time I had ever seen someone my age that played drums that well. When I went to Dawson's place, I saw that he had Dahlgren's *4-Way Coordination* on his music stand right next to "The Ritual." That helped me understand Tony's playing on "Seven Steps to Heaven" a little more.

**MD:** When you saw Clifford play, was he doing the left foot quarter note thing that Tony made famous? Because Herbie told me that Clifford was the first guy that he had heard do that.

**BH:** I don't remember that, but I do remember his chops.

**MD:** When you were younger did you practice the Wilcoxon stuff?

**BH:** Of course!

**MD:** I know you knew Tony, and there are lesser and lesser people around every day who knew Tony, tell the readers something about Tony.

**BH:** Tony's father was a saxophone player so he could hear music. Saxophonist Sam Rivers, who was a big influence on Tony, was also a pianist who played 20th century harmony, then he was studying with Dawson while Alan was playing vibes. Again, it wasn't something he was looking



Photos by Alex Kluit

built the relationship between me and Herbie Hancock. My classical musical exposure also helped when I played with organist Jimmy Smith. The first time I played with him, he played some solo stuff that sounded like European classical music. You don't hear many organists playing like that. However, in the back of my mind I was familiar with what he was playing because I was interested in contemporary Classical music and that European sound. In that way, Jimmy Smith was sort of like Herbie Hancock, they could both resolve the most contemporary, European, Classical harmonies with the funkier and bluesiest stuff you would ever hear, and I could always hear where they were going.





for, the music was right there.

As a teacher and a student, I'm interested in the contemporary versions of this stuff. Max Roach came along just as the swing era was ending, but he joined the next thing, which wasn't bebop, it was playing rhythm and blues.

**MD:** I know Philly Joe did some R&B playing with Joe Morris and Bull "Moose" Jackson, but I wasn't sure if Max did.

**BH:** Playing Rhythm & Blues and for dancers is something EVERYBODY did. They didn't talk about it much, but they did it. Then while people were dancing to Rhythm & Blues and Louis Jordan, they were listening to the Afro Caribbean music and they brought Latin jazz on the scene starting around 1945. What I didn't realize as I got older was that they took the Rhythm & Blues from the shuffle and turned it into straight eighths. Then you had straight eighth's when you were playing the Blues with Ray Charles, Fats Domino, Chess Records, Stax, and Motown. Dare I say that there would be any kind of rock'n'roll or hip hop today if it wasn't for that combination of music.

Being a Coltrane enthusiast, I fell in love with his music on Miles' record *'Round About Midnight*. There was a phrase that he played during his rhapsodius solo on "All of You" that I have never been able to get out of my head. I followed his playing all the way till his last records with Rashied Ali (*Stellar Regions* and *Interstellar Space*.) I think of John Coltrane as a Gospel saxophonist. With the emotion in his music, and his way of living how could you not? When people asked him what he was trying to do with his music; he said, "I simply want to be a force for good." So, when all the saxophonists that came after him, whether it was Wayne Shorter, Bennie Maupin, Sonny Fortune, Billy Harper... those are the guys that I've been playing with my entire life, I'm familiar with where they are all coming from. There isn't any music that I'm not interested in. Plus, I studied the evolution of this instrument. During the pandemic I was hired to do a class on Zoom to discuss the history of drumming. I started with Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Chick Webb, and brought it all the way up to today. I've been teaching for a long time, one of my first "legitimate" students was Harvey Mason.

**MD:** What did you teach him?

**BH:** He would come to my gigs with his mother, and he was sitting very close to me and asking me lots of questions. He wanted to know about playing over the bar line, and how he could learn that? I directed him to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical music that I just mentioned. That music helped him hear music that was going across the bar line, then he and I took it from there. I told him about Berklee. Every time I played in Boston he would still come to see and hear me play. Steve Jordan and Buddy Williams would always come to my gigs in New York, I thought Steve Jordan was a perfect combination of Harvey Mason and Steve Gadd.

**MD:** A little while ago you said, "There isn't any music that I'm not interested in." Does that mean that isn't any music that you would not play?

**BH:** I can't think of any, no.

**MD:** And I think that answers my original question. The reason you support soloists so well is that you are willing to go anywhere with them. Wherever they want to go, you'll go there. You teach your students a lot of Latin, Caribbean, and Brazilian music, where do you start.

**BH:** Clave'. The son clave' comes from Africa through Spain to Havana, but the rhumba clave' came from Africa straight to Matanzas and straight to Brazil. One time I asked Rashied Ali about how he was playing with Coltrane, and he said, "You just play Latin really fast, that's it." Now that's a that's a weird way of looking at it, but I at a certain point I can see that.

When it comes to the Brazilian thing, I'm from Washington DC. There was a guitar player down there named Charlie Byrd. Charlie Byrd also played European classical guitar, he got famous, and he travelled around the world. When he played in Brazil, he saw that every kid in Brazil could play the guitar. But the bass player in the band was Keeter Betts, and he went out and discovered the people playing Bossa Nova. Keeter Betts is the guy who convinced Charlie Byrd to start playing the Bossa Nova, and I was standing right there when Charlie Byrd told Stan Getz, "I've got this new music, Bossa Nova, you should check it out!" And we all know what Stan Getz did with the Bossa Nova.



The next thing I knew was everyone was starting to listen to Indian music. We just lost Zakir Hussain who was a huge influence on me, and he was an influence on Tony too. But I haven't been chasing all this music, it has all come to me organically. Thankfully I can pass this stuff along to younger drummers like Nasheet Waits, Marcus Gilmore, Eric McPherson, and my students like Kush Abadey and Kassa Overall.

**MD:** You mentioned Stan Getz. You played with him after Tiny Kahn, Roy Haynes, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette. I don't want to get into the "Stan Stories" I'm sure you have them in your book. But what was that gig like?

**BH:** I knew his whole book by the time I joined the band. Playing with Stan was the same kind of story. He was influenced by Charlie Parker and Lester Young (obviously,) and he had my guys (Roy, Tony, Jack) in the band before me. However, I didn't know

about Tiny until Stan told me about him.

**MD:** It helps that your group has three strong writers in Iverson, Turner, and you. Ethan Iverson contributes four contrasting compositions to *Just*. The sly, floating “Chamber Music,” the erupting “Aviation,” the abstract blues “South Hampton,” and the lilting “Showdown.” Mark Turner and you each bring three tunes. Turner’s pieces are “Billy’s Waltz,” which is both a graceful dance and a vehicle for blues-conscious swing, the up-tempo vamp “Top of the Middle,” and the freely expressive “Bo Brussels” has a theme that continues to unwind in unexpected ways. Your contributions include updates of two of your well-known tunes, “Layla-Joy” and “Naaj,” which you have returned to on multiple occasions in your long career. Let’s talk about a few songs from the new record *Just*.

**BH:** But don’t forget about bassist Ben Street. He has been playing with Danilo Perez for over 30 years, so he brings a strong Latin knowledge, and a deep knowledge of all the different

be connected to that.

**MD** What is the tune “Aviation” about?

**BH:** That is loosely based on George Shearing’s “Conception” which loosely turned into Miles Davis’ “Deception,” but our “Aviation” had a little Benny Golson twist.

**MD:** The song “Just” is beautiful, you wrote that, where did it come from?

**BH:** Like I said before, Coltrane used to say that he plays music for the betterment of people, I hear him like a gospel singer. The word “Just” says it all to me. It’s the term for right or correct, I like when something is just.

**MD:** How about Mark Turner’s tune “Bo Brussels.”

**BH:** Mark Turner is a great composer, that tune is coming out of his study of Lee Konitz and Lennie Tristano. It’s like a sideways blues. Mark writes some amazing music that is sort of like Paul

Bley’s music. Of all the saxophonist’s coming out of Coltrane, (in my opinion) Mark is the strongest. On one of my tunes from our record *All Our Reasons*, I asked him to play an intro like Coltrane would, and it was PERFECT! He’s a contemporary thinker. I recognize that his way of thinking is coming out of Lee Konitz (and Warne Marsh) because I made six records with Lee Konitz.

**MD:** I know you have recorded “Naaj” before, but how was it originally written?

**BH:** I recorded that back on my record *Rah*. I wanted to see how this band would interpret it. It’s written like the music Chick Corea wrote for his band Circle (with Dave Holland, Anthony Braxton, and Barry Altschul.)

**MD:** How do you approach recording an ECM record differently?

**BH:** There is a different tradition to ECM. American jazz drumming comes from the tradition of Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Chick Webb, and Papa Jo Jones. ECM music is coming out of drummers like Jon Christensen, John Marshall, Tony Oxley, and of course Jack DeJohnette. It’s just a different approach to playing, there are different patterns that are played. I am familiar with that approach because of my playing with Charles Lloyd and Bobo Stenson on records like *The Call* and *Canto*.



Photos by Alex Kluff

**ECM music is coming out of drummers like Jon Christensen, John Marshall, Tony Oxley, and of course Jack DeJohnette. It’s just a different approach to playing, there are different patterns that are played.**

clave’ rhythms and patterns to the band.

**MD:** What can you tell me about “Showdown”?

**BH:** That is like an Ethan Iverson version of a Burt Bacharach sounding tune.

**MD:** Tell me about the song “Layla Joy.”

**BH:** That was originally written for my record *Enchance* with Dewey Redman, that record is coming out of my love for Coltrane. I wanted to see if we could play that tune a little smoother and more traditionally.

**MD:** Where does “Chamber Music” come from?

**BH:** Ethan is always busy working with a dance troupe, it might

It also has to do with the new harmonic thing that George Russell came up with. George was teaching at the New England Conservatory at the time, and George Russell was originally a drummer. He’s the guy that came up with the harmony for Dizzy’s “Cubano Be Cubano Bop,” so he came up with that and through that he comes up with a whole new harmonic system and contemporary harmonic patterns. Just like I said about tracing the lineage of drumming up from Papa Jo, Big Sid Catlett, and Kenny Clark, all the way to Eric Harland and Marcus Gilmore, you can take trace the history of harmony too.

**MD:** How do you compose? Do you write from a melodic or harmonic standpoint, which usually comes first?

**BH:** Melody for sure. You hear things like Coltrane’s fourths,



**I hear this newer band (with Ethan, Mark, and Ben) that has recorded three times for ECM (*All Our Reasons, One is the Other, Just*) as a “coffee table avant garde jazz group.” We have sort of rounded off the edges of the typical avant garde, and made it a little more presentable, like a coffee table book.**

and you know that Coltrane and Benny Golson were friends, so there's a certain sound that goes into that friendship. I've heard their chords, and the descriptions of them enough, and even if I can't play that chord, I know how it sounds and how to describe it, and that will give the band enough of a reference point to play off that sound. That's (sort of) what it was like when I recorded with Wayne Shorter.

**MD:** You also played double drums with Freddie Waits on Bennie Maupin's ECM record *Jewel in the Lotus*. And you have played double drums with many drummers throughout the years. You played double drums with both Al Foster and Jack DeJohnette with Miles, you played double drums with Lenny White with Eddie Henderson, and with Ndugu on Herbie Hancock's tune “Ostinato,” and there's many more. How do you approach playing jazz with another drummer?

**BH:** By the time I had done all of that, I had already played with

**Like I said before, Coltrane used to say that he plays music for the betterment of people, I hear him like a gospel singer. The word “Just” says it all to me. It's the term for right or correct, I like when something is just.**

Herbie in that band, Mwandishi helped me prepare for that kind of playing. It's like the way I teach, right now, if you come to my studio at Oberlin, there's three drum set's in there. My way of teaching is through the student and me playing together. It's not that different from playing with another musician, you have to listen.

**MD:** What is the difference between leading this quartet with Ethan, Mark, and Ben, and leading your other band with bassist Santi DeBriano and a bigger front line with guitarist David Fiuczynski and violinist Mark Feldman?

**BH:** I hear this newer band (with Ethan, Mark, and Ben) that has recorded three times for ECM (*All Our Reasons, One is the Other, Just*) as a “coffee table avant garde jazz group.” We have sort of rounded off the edges of the typical avant garde, and made it a little more presentable, like a coffee table book. But since the quartet was so sparse, the texture allowed my drumming to speak clearly. For the first time, I also started setting up many of the pieces with unaccompanied drum solos. Ethan insisted on

including many blues pieces, to the point where I've been surprised at how much of a blues band the quartet has become. Mark, Ben, and Ethan have all expressed appreciation at how playing in

my band gives them a chance to learn about the tradition.

My other band was conceived over 40 years ago. That band was coming out of more of a Latin-Caribbean-Brazilian vibe. That band is louder and more aggressive.

**MD:** The recent Quest record *Circular Dreaming* is some of my favorite playing of yours. However, it is all Miles Davis tunes that Tony played drums on, how do you play those tunes without feeling like Tony is looking over your shoulder?

**BH:** Tony, Jack, Joe Chambers, Al Foster, Billy Cobham, and I are all contemporaries. We are all coming at music from the same background. Although I think Billy was coming out of more of a Bernard Purdie approach. We all *hear* music the same, but we *play* it differently. In a hotel room in California, I remember asking Tony about the big flams that he was playing. I said, “Man, I know that sound from the records. Why don't you show me

what that is, because I'm gonna learn how to do it anyway?” Tony said, “Yeah, I know you will, and then he told me those flams were coming out of a rudiment. He showed me the sticking of his Swiss triplets on the hotel pillow. I suspect Tony got those Swiss triplets from Alan Dawson.

**MD:** You also played on Michael Fienberg's record called the *Elvin Jones Project*, and you were playing all Elvin tunes that he had put his thumbprint on. I'll ask the same question. How do you play Elvin's music without feeling like you have to copy or mimic Elvin?

**BH:** Out of the blue, Elvin gave me a bass drum pedal once, and said, “Don't ask me to show you anything, because if I could



Billy Hart © Bart Babinski / ECM Records

show you, we would all be Max Roach.” I felt like he was telling me to continue to take drumming even further. He was a good friend and a mentor. Regarding his music and that recording, you don’t have to play his music like him, and nobody ever could, so you just be you.

**That was the first time that I played in the multi-directional drumming style. I had already heard Beaver Harris and Sunny Murray play like that before. Rashied Ali told me that “multi directional” was what John Coltrane called the freeform feel...**

**MD:** You and Al Foster both played on a live Philly Joe Jones record from 1977 called *Philly Joe Jones Quintet Plus Two: At Storyville, Drums Night*. What was that like?

**BH:** Intimidating, but again Al and I were both coming out of Max, so we were very compatible with Philly Joe’s approach. I was on Philly Joe’s left, Philly Joe was in the middle, and Al was on Joe’s right. I remember playing these big “Philly Joe drags” on a solo, and my hands started way up high. Then Philly Joe played the same idea, and his hands were down very low, but he got the same exact big sound with much less arm movement. That was a big lesson. At one point on that record, I played some Max

**Tony, Jack, Joe Chambers, Al Foster, Billy Cobham, and I are all contemporaries. We are all coming at music from the same background.**

Roach stuff, and as soon as Philly Joe heard that, he rolled up his sleeves as if to say, “OK, now we’re getting serious.” Al has always inspired me too!

**MD:** What inspires you about Al’s playing?

**BH:** Everything. His touch, his sound, how he has taken the language of Max Roach and made it his own.

**MD:** What Washington DC drummers did you grow up listening to?

**BH:** I heard Jimmy Cobb when he came through with Miles, I always loved Harry “Stump” Saunders who could swing really hard, then there was Bertell Knox and Ben Dixon.

**MD:** How do you approach a band that doesn’t have a chordal instrument (like a piano or guitar) in it? Like playing on Joe Lovano’s *Quartet’s* record with trumpeter Tom Harrell, bassist Anthony Cox, Lovano, and you?

**BH:** Not much differently, that space lets you hear where the piano would play and then you absorb a little of that role on the drums. I hear it like the Bill Evans trio with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian.

**MD:** You have been doing a

lot of piano trio recordings recently with Bill O’Connell, Mamiko Watanabe, and others. You recorded a trio way back with Walter Bishop called *The Trio*, a nice trio recording with Joe Bonner called *Triangle*, six trio records with Hank Jones, and I love the trio record with Billy Childs called *Bedtime Stories*. I also love your playing on Aaron Parks’ new recording *Find the Way*, and on the two *Hays Street Hart* recordings. How do you approach different piano trios differently?

**BH:** That all goes back to my early playing with vocalist and pianist Shirley Horn. The way that Shirley played, you learned about both the Ahmad Jamal tradition and the Oscar Peterson tradition in Shirley Horn’s music. Playing with Shirley was like playing in both of those trios at the same time, she was an important mentor of mine. Although Ahmad’s thing was a little different because he loved New Orleans drummers from Vernell, to Idris, to Herlin Riley. The way that Vernell Fournier played with Ahmad Jamal was very important he brought that second line thing, and that beat for “Poinciana” is still mystifying people. Then you hear Tony playing that same groove on “Sister Cheryl”

**MD:** Or Idris playing it on Roberta Flack’s “Feel Like Making Love”

**BH:** And you KNOW how important Vernell, New Orleans drumming, and that beat is.

**MD:** Can you tell me about the time that Coltrane called you to offer you a gig?

**BH:** I had just gotten back from Japan, and my drums hadn’t even gotten here yet. I was home about a day and my phone rang. Coltrane asked me to play a gig with Rashied Ali also playing drums. This was after Elvin had left, and Coltrane wanted to have two drummers. Unfortunately, I told John that my drums were still at the airport, and I hadn’t gotten them back yet from the tour. If I was going to play with Coltrane, I really wanted to present myself correctly and play on my own set of drums, so I politely declined the offer because I didn’t have my own drums to play. I have always felt *really* bad about that, later someone told me that I should have thought about what John



Photos by Alex Kluff



heard in my playing, not what I needed from the drum set.

**MD:** Yeah, Coltrane was hiring *you*, not *your drums*. That's a shame, but you did have a chance to record with Pharoah Sanders.

**BH:** That happened because I was working with Lonnie Liston Smith. When I first got to that gig, Pharoah wouldn't even speak to me. Pharoah looked at me and shook my hand but didn't say anything else. We stood next to each other in silence for about 15 minutes, until the crowd got restless. They even started slow clapping in unison to encourage the start of the music. Finally, Pharoah turned to me and said, "OK, you got it." He wanted me to just play a long introduction drum solo. Well... *trial by fire*. I went up there, and started something that could have been an introduction, but nobody came in. I kept playing, like some up-tempo time, a few choruses of rhythm changes or something.

That was the first time that I played in the multi-directional drumming style. I had already heard Beaver Harris and Sunny Murray play like that before. Rashied Ali told me that "multi directional" was what John Coltrane called the freeform feel, where conventional structure was abandoned, and the rhythms could cut in any direction. Rashied Ali told me, "It's like you're playing fast Latin," and it's certainly true that Rashied, Milford Graves, and Andrew Cyrille had some Afro-Cuban heritage in their conception. A week after that first gig, we tracked the song "The Creator has a Master Plan," for the album *Karma*.

**MD:** In 1971 There was a point where you were recording separately with both Joe Zawinul on the record *Zawinul*, and Wayne Shorter on *Odyssey of Iska*. Was there ever mention of you joining Weather Report?

**BH:** I think so, I think they were trying me out. I had just moved to New York, and I was playing with Marian McPartland and the phone rang, I almost didn't pick it up because I was rushing. But I picked up the phone and it was Zawinul asking me to come to the studio right away, I called a sub, and I went to the studio with Zawinul. Herbie was involved with both of those situations too, and that's when Herbie Hancock asked me to join the Mwandishi band, so I did that instead. We recorded *Mwandishi*, *Crossings*, and *Sextant*. Then in 1972 I recorded with Miles.

**MD:** To get back to my first question, when you put those records together in the 80's with big instrumentation and including people like Steve Coleman, Kevin Eubanks, Bill Frisell, Kenny Kirkland, Dave Holland, and Mark Feldman, I always imagined you were including all those different soloists so you could play differently behind them. Is that what you were doing, or am I thinking too much?

**BH:** I wasn't thinking like that. When you go into my record *Enchance*, you are hearing me deal with Coltrane's last period of

music. I never stopped listening to Coltrane, wherever Coltrane went, eventually I went there too. I knew that Coltrane had studied with Benny Golson, but I didn't know that Coltrane had also studied with Ornette, but you can hear it. That is what brings him to all the younger cats like Albert Ayler and brought me to drummer Beaver Harris. I loved his playing! That's my guy!

**MD:** Beaver Harris was from Pittsburgh and recorded with Archie Shepp.

**BH:** Beaver was a baseball player, and he was he was going to be a professional baseball player. When Tony told me that he was gonna leave Miles' band, I asked him who he was going to recommend for the band. He told me he was going to recommend Beaver Harris, because Beaver wouldn't be afraid of Miles.

**MD:** That makes sense, because Miles' band (with Tony) and Archie Shepp's band (with Beaver Harris) had done a European

tour together in 1967. You can hear Archie's band on a live recording from that tour in '67 called *Freedom* (with Grachan Moncur III, Roswell Rudd, and Jimmy Garrison.) On that tour and after that tour, I heard a distinct change in Tony's drumming and Miles' bands. You have talked about Rashied Ali, Sunny Murray, and now Beaver Harris. And I know Andrew Cyrille is a friend of yours. Can you talk about how the avant garde drumming and music tradition has influenced you?

**BH:** Well Tony was aware of that through Sam Rivers. For me, it was always the avant garde music that got me. But like I said, it was already there with the composers like Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc. Then there's Bill Evans and his trio with LaFaro and Motian. And we already talked about the later Coltrane and playing with Pharoah. I played like that on *Enchance*, *All Our Reasons*, and I played like that with Charles Lloyd. There is a certain type of rhapsody in Rashied's playing,

Rashied studied with Philly Joe, I love Rashied's playing.

After reading this fascinating interview with this busy and highly influential modern drummer, educator, bandleader, and sideman. I'll ask you to reflect on this legendary and contemporary musician for a second... He has seen, done, and *is doing* it all. He has inspired drummers like Peter Erskine, Lenny White, Terri Lyne Carrington, Vinnie Colaiuta, Lewis Nash, Adam Nussbaum, and Damion Reid. For a drummer half his age, Billy's constant schedule of recording, teaching, and playing might sound simply exhausting. However, he is still learning and seeking, he is in touch with *all* the music of *today*. And don't be surprised if, during a stimulating conversation, Billy asks *you* if *he* could take a lesson with *you*. He inspires us all. Not bad for a man who is (*only*) 85 years young!





# JANET JACKSON'S JERROD "J-ROD" SULLIVAN

BY MARK GRIFFITH

Growing up in Georgia, 45 minutes outside of Atlanta, Jerrod "J-Rod" Sullivan is the epitome of chill, but his drumming is anything but chill, it's all about power. Coming out of the R&B Neo-soul scene of suburban Atlanta in the 1990s and 2000s, he still calls Cartersville, GA his home. J-Rod's drumming background is becoming a common story with drummers his age. How did he get started? He begins his answer with a single word, "Church. It started in my mom's kitchen banging on pots and pans, then my grandmother bought me my first kids drum set, and I busted the heads. Then my parents got me a Remo Junior Pro Kit, I took a couple lessons from the drummer at church, and pretty much after that, I was self-taught. I learned a lot by watching VHS tapes, DVDs, and YouTube videos during my school years while participating in concert band and marching band." Today, J-Rod has taken his drumming influences to the masses playing drums with the legendary Janet Jackson.





**MD:** What did you learn when you took some lessons from the drummer at church?

**JS:** The church was the first environment where I saw musicians playing together live as a band. It was where I learned to interact with other musicians, groove, position my hands while playing, and improve coordination.

**MD:** What videos were you watching?

**JS:** My parents got me a VHS tape focused on concert snare drum. I forget what it was called, but I just mimicked the guy that I saw on that tape; I can't even remember who it was. Then, when YouTube came out, I watched a variety of different drummers. The Modern Drummer Festival was a huge inspiration for me with Aaron Spears, Gerald Heyward, Teddy Campbell, and others.

**MD:** How long was it until you started playing in bands outside of church?

**JS:** The way I broke into the gigging scene was through YouTube. I was already playing in church, but I wasn't born into a family of musicians. Early on, I didn't hear anything about gigs, and my only way of getting noticed, getting heard, and getting in front of the right people was through YouTube and Myspace. I learned that you could post content and drum videos, so I started doing that. Just through being consistent with that when I was 16, I had a local guy from my hometown reach out and say, "Hey I saw your content and your profile on Myspace, I'm from Cartersville too, and I know a keyboard player that needs a drummer for a gig this Valentine's Day, is it cool if I connect you?" He connected me with that Valentine's Day gig, and you know how it goes... You get on the gig, and you meet a new group of people, and if you do well on that gig it's the snowball effect. That group of people gets other gigs and other opportunities, and they need a drummer, and they ask if you can do their gigs. That's how I broke into it. Doing the first gig and then just networking with different people.

**MD:** Work begets work. What type of music were you playing on those gigs?

**JS:** R&B stuff, it was a blend of R&B and Gospel music, but it was more on the inspirational side of things. Love songs, ballads, and some funk and R&B.

**MD:** And I'm sure there were lots of cross sticks. What type of music did you grow up listening to?

**I didn't know a lot of drummers by name, but I knew the songs, the melodies, and the grooves. When I got a little older, I went back and found out who I was listening to as a young kid.**

**The church was the first environment where I saw musicians playing together live as a band. It was where I learned to interact with other musicians, groove, position my hands while playing, and improve coordination.**

**JS:** Gospel and R&B. I didn't come from a family of musicians, but my parents and my grandparents love good music, so I was exposed to a lot of James Brown, Earth, Wind, & Fire, Frankie Beverly and Maze, Michael Jackson, and others. On the gospel side, it was John P. Kee, Hezekiah Walker, Kirk Franklin, Fred Hammond, Marvin Sapp, and others. I didn't know a lot of



drummers by name, but I knew the songs, the melodies, and the grooves. When I got a little older, I went back and found out who I was listening to as a young kid.

**MD:** Who were some of your other favorite drummers?

**JS:** Calvin Rogers was probably the main drummer that I listened to on the radio, especially for Gospel music. His playing on "Rain on Us" is the tune that I always came back to. Of course, his drum solo on that song is amazing, but there was also the Fred Hammond and the Marvin Sapp stuff too. Calvin's pocket and feel have always resonated with me; he just sticks the groove. That's where I was inspired. Chris Coleman is an amazing all-around musician. I was able to meet him when I was studying at the Atlanta Institute of Music in 2011. Seeing Chris Coleman play all the different musical styles in person inspired me to step outside of my comfort zone. He suggested that if I started exploring some different styles of music, I would be a beast and I would start to develop my own sound. So I started to explore.

**MD:** What was he telling to explore?

**JS:** All styles but specifically Latin music and straight-ahead jazz, he was motivating me to be versatile.

**MD:** What did you learn at the Atlanta Institute of Music?

**JS:** I graduated from high school in the summer of 2011. That fall was when I started attending the Atlanta Institute of Music.

**Seeing Chris Coleman play all the different musical styles in person inspired me to step outside of my comfort zone. He suggested that if I started exploring some different styles of music, I would be a beast and I would start to develop my own sound. So I started to explore.**

At that time, I was gigging pretty consistently, and I wanted to keep that momentum going while learning everything I needed to know about the music industry and drumming. Then, I could take that information and study on my own. There's no way you can learn everything in one year, but if you gather a lot of information, then it's your job to put in the work and study it thoroughly, and that's what I did. I was able to maintain the momentum and continue to elevate my career.

**MD:** What type of stuff did you study at the Atlanta Institute of Music?

**JS:** One of the main reasons I attended the school was because I didn't know how to read music. I wanted to learn music theory and how to read notation. I was eager to understand different note values, rudiments, and how to apply them. Before, if someone asked me about what I was playing, I couldn't explain it, and I didn't like that. I believed that by attending school, I would gain more knowledge about my craft and be able to articulate it better. This way, if I was in a rehearsal and someone asked me to place a kick on the "e" of four, I would understand their instruction and execute it.

**MD:** How do you think that education has helped you get to where you are today?

**JS:** A lot, even though I don't have to read music a whole lot now, when it comes to charting and learning music all of that has helped me speed up my process for being able to learn

music. It really helps communicate music when you know the different types of notes and understanding note values. If someone calls me to play certain things, or certain ideas in exact places, I know exactly what they mean. I'm just more knowledgeable about what I'm playing, and I have a better understanding of what everyone else is doing.

**MD:** Were there any other drummers that you listened to a lot?

**JS:** Yes, Tony Royster. I joined a band in 2013 called The 4 Korners, and the guitarist and the keyboardist in The 4 Korners were in Tony Royster's band ASAP, that's how I first found out about him. I heard him playing with ASAP and then I saw the Evolution DVD. Tony's speed and precision around the kit really inspired me to be clean and precise when I played.

When I first started playing jazz fusion, I was coming from an R&B and Gospel background. Then the guys in The 4 Korners told me to check out the Chick Corea Electric Band and Dave Weckl. That was their influence and where they got their inspiration. I studied that music and Dave's drumming, and I learned his approach. That's when I really started to pay attention to my dynamics. Coming from the church, I was always told to play hard with power, that's all I really knew. But when I started playing fusion, the first thing that the keyboardist told me was that my snare hand was louder than everything on the kit, so to tone it down and really work on your dynamics. That's when I began to mix myself better and balance out my levels on

**There's no way you can learn everything in one year, but if you gather a lot of information, then it's your job to put in the work and study it thoroughly, and that's what I did. I was able to maintain the momentum and continue to elevate my career.**





the kit. I started making sure that everything was balanced, and I sounded balanced. That really helped me sound more musical when I played. That was a pivotal moment for me in my musical journey. It's when I feel I began to develop my own identity.

**Teddy Campbell is another one. He is super versatile, and I love the way he uses his hi-hats. He was one of the first people I heard whose hi-hat work really inspired me.**

**MD:** What else did you hear when you were listening to Weckl's playing?

**JS:** I interpreted his approach as keeping a solid groove while adding percussive elements around it. He stays in the pocket but incorporates various nuances and musical elements that fill up the space, approaching it more like a percussionist. This concept was one of the main takeaways I got from him.

**MD:** What drummers have you been checking out recently?

**As drummers, in small intimate settings, we don't want to be wailing on the drums as if we're playing in an arena. However, it's also crucial to know how to play with power when we're in an arena; we can't just tap on the drums.**

**JS:** Larnell Lewis. I found out about him in Snarky Puppy. His approach and musicality are amazing, he's definitely a favorite of mine. Teddy Campbell is another one. He is super versatile, and I love the way he uses his hi-hats. He was one of the first people I heard whose hi-hat work really inspired me. The first time I heard Teddy's hi-hat work was when he came to Sonny Emory's drum camp in Atlanta back in 2008. He was the only person I heard doing that stuff, and he really inspired me. Another thing about Teddy was his versatility and the way he could sight read, sing, and play drums all at once without missing a beat.

**MD:** Explain how you interpreted Teddy's hi-hat thing?

**JS:** He plays a groove with his main hi-hat pattern, but at certain moments, he spices it up by adding a quick little 32nd note trill on the hats to express himself and add some flair.

**MD:** Talk about the process of balancing the sound of the set. I always refer to that as the "internal dynamics" of the drums. I just saw JR Robinson play some live (small room, unmic'd) gigs, and I sat right next to his drums, and it sounded like I was listening to a record. Everything was balanced perfectly, and he was doing it all from behind the set with his hands.

**JS:** It's important to know and learn how to play the room. As drummers, in small intimate settings, we don't want to be wailing on the drums as if we're playing in an arena. However, it's also crucial to know how to play with power when we're in an arena; we can't just tap on the drums. While we're mic'd and can let the mics work for us, it's still important to know how to play the room. When playing the room, we ensure that all our limbs are balanced. One way to work on this is by recording ourselves, then going back to look at the WAV files and listen to the recording. This allows us to see when we're peaking and being too loud, but we can also hear it. It's important for us to work on this because it makes a significant difference. Like you said about JR, when he plays, he sounds like a record. That's how I want to sound.

As musicians, it's essential to record yourself. When trying out

new things, listen back and imagine yourself in the audience. Ask, "Does that sound good? What does it feel like?" Critique and adjust as needed. Over time, you'll learn what works and what doesn't. For example, even with Janet Jackson gig today, I record rehearsals to review what works and what doesn't. I assess, "Let me avoid that next time," or "Let me keep this consistent because it worked well."

Continuous self-study, editing, and learning are keys to improvement and growth.

It's crucial not to become complacent or stagnant during gigs. Instead, aim to evolve and improve continually, especially in specific situations and performances.

**MD:** We've gotten a little ahead of ourselves, but can you give me an example of something (drum wise) that you have removed from your playing in Janet's show? And something that you discovered that you liked (drum wise,) and kept in?

**JS:** In Janet's live show, the band gets the opportunity to solo and since I'm on triggers I can't play too many ghost notes, it's got to stay solid. The first time I had that solo spot, there was a moment when I played a fill that was based around 32nd notes. When I listened back, I noticed that it didn't translate and wasn't articulate in the arena. I was

listening back, and I saw footage on YouTube and I thought, *'That's coming out!'*

Here's something that I kept. In "Love Will Never Do" one night I played this simple kick and open hi-hat thing with Janet's vocals, I didn't even really notice it, but the band called it out to me. Actually, the keyboard player said, "You did something on 'Love Will Never Do' that sounded amazing, keep it!" So I went back and listened to it, and I just accented on one of her lyrics, it was simple but since everyone liked it, I thought *'I'm keeping THAT!'*

**MD:** After your study around Atlanta and in church, how long did it take for you to start gigging regularly?



**JS:** I started doing fill-in and spot gigs for main drummers around 2014, gigging a couple of times a week. It was my first time playing outside of church and my own band, leading to opportunities with more well-known artists and jazz keyboardist Alex Bugnon. Things became more consistent around 2013-2014.

**MD:** Back then Atlanta was the smooth jazz capital of the world.

**JS:** In my opinion, it still remains as the main thing in Atlanta currently. Recently, I have been doing a lot of session work with Gerald Albright.

**MD:** How did you move from Alex to Gerald?

**JS:** I may have a festival gig with Alex and various other jazz artists. While backstage in the green room, you network with these artists and introduce yourself. When they hear you killing it on stage with an artist, they ask for your contact details. Opportunities can arise when they need a drummer for a tour or other projects. This all comes down to meeting different musicians and artists, as it often happens this way. Sometimes someone hears your name or hears about you from someone else needing a drummer. They then check out your work and reach out. Additionally, social media and posting content on my page has played a crucial role in my journey.

**MD:** Are you still a big social media guy?

**JS:** I normally focus on creating content, but lately, I've shifted to documenting instead. Due to my schedule, I'm not home

**As musicians, it's essential to record yourself. When trying out new things, listen back and imagine yourself in the audience. Ask, "Does that sound good? What does it feel like?" Critique and adjust as needed.**

enough to create a bunch of original content. Instead, I capture moments like sound checks and performances with my band during live shows, and that's what I've been sharing recently.

**MD:** How did things progress from Alex to today with Janet Jackson?

**JS:** I was part of the house band at a jazz festival in Barbados where we played behind Alex Bugnon and Jeffrey Osborne. The performances all went well. In 2019, I received a call from

Jeffrey's manager because their drummer, Kahari Parker, had passed away. They asked if I could start doing shows with them since they remembered me from the festival in Barbados. On the same day I was supposed to fly out for my first show with Jeffrey, everything shut down due to the pandemic. Eventually, as things started to open back up, they called me back and asked if I was still available, to which I said yes.

Following my time with Jeffrey Osborne, I landed the Janet Jackson gig. This opportunity came about when the Musical Director Eric "Pikfunk" Smith, who worked with Lalah Hathaway and Janet Jackson, discovered me online and reached out to me on Instagram. Before offering me the role, he inquired about me through mutual friends to gauge my character. After a successful short tour in South Africa with Lalah Hathaway last January, where Eric observed and assessed how I conducted myself on the road and interacted with others, he then offered me the opportunity to join the Janet Jackson tour. It all started with a simple DM on Instagram.

**MD:** How do you learn music for a gig?

**JS:** Honestly, it depends on the type of music. If I'm playing jazz fusion with my band, I don't necessarily chart that material out. I just listen to it and immerse myself in the music.

Then, I get behind the kit, work things out, and play through it after living with the music for a while. My approach is similar with other styles of music, but I do like to chart songs in other situations. When I chart songs, I start with the basic foundation and the format of the song. For example, how many bars are in the hook? How many bars are in the chorus or the bridge? This gives me a visual image of the song. When playing it at a show or in rehearsal, I can visualize the song in my mind. I like to do this well before getting behind the kit for certain situations like a pop, R&B, or Gospel gig. That's usually my





approach. I like to have at least a month to spend with the music so that once I'm on the gig, I don't have to think about it; it feels like I've been there for years! That's my usual process.

**MD:** How long have you been on the Janet Jackson gig?

**JS:** I started last May, so it has been about eight months.

**MD:** How familiar with Janet's music were you before you got to the gig?

**JS:** Somewhat familiar, I had my favorites that I had heard, but it's one thing to recognize the music, it's another thing to learn it! To immerse yourself, to learn all the patterns, to know what's going on "sonically," to know the sounds and you know all that kind of stuff; I really had to dig and immerse myself in her music.

**MD:** Talk about the differences between *hearing* the music and *learning* the music.

**JS:** I've heard a lot of Janet's records in the past, but I've never had to learn any of them (except for a few for cover gigs.) I've never really delved into the drum sounds in her music. On this gig, I use a lot of triggers. I had to sample certain snares and kick sounds. I really delved into her music, learning the ins and outs to replicate the records as closely as possible. However, I also need to add live embellishments to the music. Now, I approach the gig aiming for authenticity. Before, I was just listening and enjoying it, but now I have truly immersed myself in the music and understand the approach. I hear what Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis were aiming for back in the day when they were producing—I hear and understand it now.

**MD:** Are you triggering a lot of the original drum sounds from the records?

**JS:** Yes. Sometimes Jimmy and Terry will send over the stems for certain songs, and we'll be able to grab certain drum sounds. But on some stuff, those sounds simply weren't available, and we had to create replica versions of those sounds and get as close as possible. Pretty much every snare and kick sound that I play is triggering the sound from the record. What the audience is hearing is a blend of the of the sample sound and the acoustic drum sound.

**MD:** How would you explain their approach to the drums and the production of classic records like *Rhythm Nation 1814*?

**JS:** The drum sounds on those records are huge, in your face, and powerful. I find myself playing with more power and less finesse on this gig.

**MD:** I know Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis have produced several of Janet's biggest records including *Control*, *Rhythm Nation 1814*, *Janet*, *The Velvet Rope*, *All for You*, and *Unbreakable*, but how involved are they in Janet's live music?

**JS:** I'm not sure, they came around back when I first joined the band to offer some advice from the audience perspective.

**MD:** After you got the Janet gig, how long did it take for you to feel super comfortable on the gig?

**JS:** We rehearsed for three to four weeks, and after that I would say it took me about three shows to really feel comfortable. After three shows, I didn't have to use my iPad to glance at notes and barely had to look at the set list, I just knew it. Now, I don't have to think about as much, it's muscle memory at this point.

**MD:** What was the rehearsal process like?

**JS:** When I first joined, I was the new guy, so it took some extra time to bring in a new drummer. My tech and I spent about two days dialing in my drum sounds and electronic sounds and getting my setup ready. I had to decide what to use, what to leave out, and how to set everything up. After those two days, the entire band rehearsed for about two weeks, running the show multiple times a day. In the third week, the dancers joined us, and we focused on working through the choreography. I added specific elements to match their moves. Janet joined us in the fourth week, and we spent that time running the show multiple times a day from start to finish.

**This opportunity came about when the Musical Director Eric "Pikfunk" Smith, who worked with Lalah Hathaway and Janet Jackson, discovered me online and reached out to me on Instagram.**

**MD:** Before this, had you ever played with dancers?

**JS:** Yes, but not in this way; There are certain things that must be present in the music every night. I often tell people that with this situation, you can't really improvise a lot because everybody is looking at the drummer and relying on you for something. The dancers are counting on you to play two claps in one song, and the band depends on you for specific drum accents in

**There are certain things that must be present in the music every night. I often tell people that with this situation, you can't really improvise a lot because everybody is looking at the drummer and relying on you for something.**

each song. You can't really deviate from the plan. While there are moments in the show where we showcase the band or the drummer, for the most part, it's crucial to stay consistent and play everything exactly as rehearsed every night, from one show to the next, because many people are relying on you.

**MD:** How do you like playing with DJ Active?

**JS:** He's the icing on the cake for the whole situation. There are certain moments in the songs where I'll be playing a groove, and he'll join in and do some scratch stuff with me, and it's perfect. It just feels right; it feels like it needs to be there. In certain songs, he'll insert some acapella vocals, play interludes, he just makes it feel live. He thinks like a musician; he's not "just a DJ."

**MD:** Is Janet playing music from her entire career on the tour, she has done a pretty wide variety of music throughout her life?

**JS:** Yes, we're playing stuff from way back all the way up to her latest music. The entire show is about 32-40 songs. It's a wide range of music for sure.

**MD:** Drumwise, how do you approach the different eras of her music?

**JS:** What I've noticed is that the Rhythm Nation stuff, like "State of the World" and "The Knowledge," features more solid and powerful grooves, while the newer stuff incorporates more of a hip-hop and trap approach.

**MD:** What are some of your favorite tunes to play in the live show?

**JS:** "Alright" and "Control" are just great tunes. "Rhythm Nation" and "Feedback" are fun to play. "Come Back to Me" is a ballad, but I like it. "Love Will Never Do" is another one that just feels good. I love the groove on that one. Those are my favorites.

**MD:** Who was doing this gig before you, and how did they influence the way that you approach the gig?

**JS:** Before me, there were George “Spanky” McCurdy and Mike Reid. I listened to both of them a lot. The MD had me study Mike’s playing before my audition. He told me to focus on the nuances, but I struggled to differentiate between Mike’s improvisation and his dance music. After recording myself playing the show, I sent in some videos. Eric replied, saying the vibe was there and it sounded great, but I missed some key elements for the dancers. For my audition, I tried again, this time learning everything Mike did exactly to show I could handle it. I mimicked Mike’s playing, feel, and nuances precisely to ensure I didn’t miss anything. They liked it. During rehearsals, the MD sometimes said, “You don’t have to mimic Mike exactly; be yourself.” That’s when I understood. Initially, I imitated everything just to get my foot in the door.

**MD:** Did Mike Reid create the blueprint for this gig?

**JS:** Absolutely. He did, and that’s the approach they wanted, so that’s what I learned, *exactly*.

**MD:** Mike is ALL about the details, when you were studying his playing what stuck out, and what did you key on?

**Paying attention to the details is what separates many musicians. If you can cover the details and make the music feel good, you’ve got the whole package.**

**JS:** There’s this one thing of Mike’s that really stuck out to me. He does this open hi-hat thing when Janet is singing that accents and goes with the rhythm of what she’s singing. Mike is just a great musical drummer, as you said. It’s his attention to detail and how he places all his fills; it just fits. Paying attention to the details is what separates many musicians. If you can cover the details and make the music feel good, you’ve got the whole



package.

**MD:** What are some of the details that you are bringing to this gig?

**JS:** My feel, and how I’m able to just lock in with the with the click. I guess it’s just me being me. I can find moments to be myself while I’m enhancing and serving the music.

**MD:** When you find moments to be yourself, what are you bringing?

**JS:** A youthfulness and a little spice. There are certain moments in the music where I play a transitional fill that goes from a verse to a hook. Those little pockets, those little moments are when I’m really able to be myself. I feel like if someone is listening to the show and the drumming, based on how I approach those certain fills and how I set up certain hits, they can tell when I’m able to be myself, within reason of course! Me and Eric (the bass player) have a certain chemistry that’s important. There are certain moments throughout the show when he’ll play a riff and I’ve gotten so comfortable with the show now that now I’m anticipating what he’s about to play, so I’m able to accent with him, and that makes the band sound super tight. That’s how I feel I’m able to bring myself into the gig. But it’s my job to make sure that it feels good, Janet is happy, and everybody’s happy.

**MD:** Tell me about your debut solo record *The Comeback*.

**JS:** We released that in 2023. The project has a similar vibe to The 4orners but features added saxophonist Kyle Schroeder and percussionist Joey Gonzalez. The 4orners is a four-piece jazz fusion band, with me on drums, James “JT” Thompson on bass guitar, Clarence “T-Lee” Hill on keys, and Isaac “Ike” Thompson on guitar. For my record, I aimed to capture The 4orners sound while infusing it with more of a Chick Corea Electric Band feel. My approach to *The Comeback* involved more groove. This record truly showcases who I am as a musician.

**MD:** How are you liking the Janet Jackson residency at Resorts World in Las Vegas?

**JS:** I love it! The show is fun, and a bigger production compared to the tour. We started in December, then there was a break, then we came back, and we’ll be back again in May, so it’s an on-and-off situation. I like to travel, but I also like being in one place.

**MD:** What drums are you using?

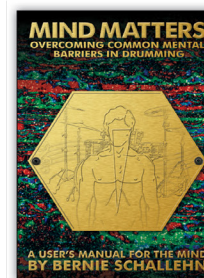
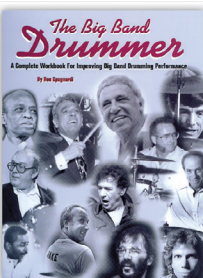
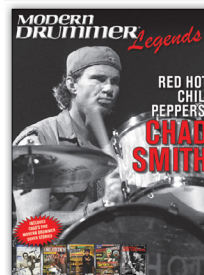
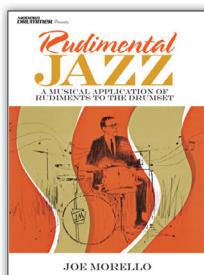
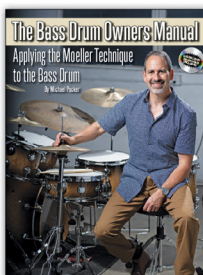
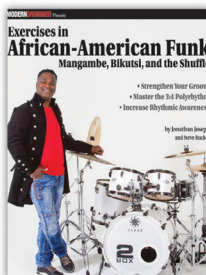
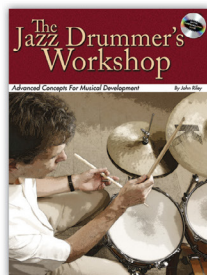
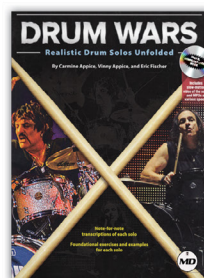
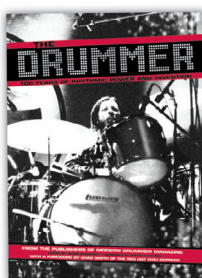
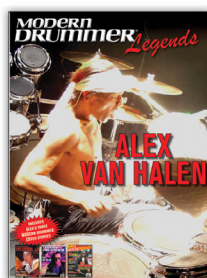
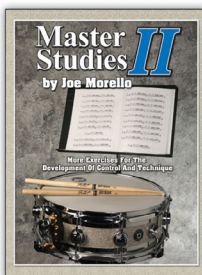
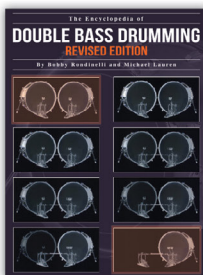
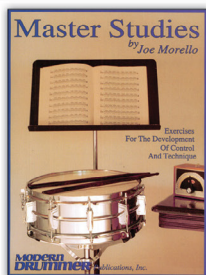
**JS:** With Janet I am using a Pearl Masters Maple Gum with three racks two floors and three snares. My snare is a Pearl 6.5x14 Reference 20 ply, my deeper ballad snare is a pearl 8x14 Reference One, and my small popcorn snare is a 5x10 Pearl Custom. I’m using Zildjian cymbals, with a couple crashes, a splash, and a stack. I think I have eight cymbals in my current set-up. I’m using Remo heads, my tom heads are clear Vintage Emperor’s, the resonant heads are clear Ambassadors, my snares get Control Sound X’s, and my kick has a clear P3 Black Dot.

You can learn more about J-Rod and see his tour kit on his recent *Modern Drummer Tour Kit Rundown* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4DlejLyGPs> and learn more about him on the *Modern Drummer Podcast* <https://youtu.be/Y4DlejLyGPs>. He also has an apparel brand called Pocket Apparel that you can check out at <https://gotpocketapparel.com> And of course you can check him out live on tour with Janet Jackson or at their ongoing residency in Las Vegas. 🥁



# MODERN DRUMMER®

BEST SELLING DRUM TITLES WORLDWIDE



Available in print and digital format at [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com) or from your favorite music retailer

# BEST FOOT FORWARD

BY MICHAEL CARTELLONE

**L**ike most of you reading this article ... I am a drummer. And, I would imagine, like *a lot* of you reading this article ... I am a basher. I bashed my way through basement bands as a school kid. I bashed my way through the Cleveland, OH club scene playing Top 40 music. I bashed my way through a recording project in New York City with Eddie Jobson. I bashed my way through my first arena tour with the Tommy Shaw Band. I bashed my way through five years with Damn Yankees. And, I have bashed my way through the past twenty-seven years (and counting) with Lynyrd Skynyrd. You may wonder if all this bashing ever caught up to me. It did. Here's what happened ...

Like many stories, mine began very innocently. I was just a nine-year-old kid who wanted to learn to play drums. I studied with a wonderful teacher ... a "by the book" rudiments guy. I couldn't get enough and loved every minute of it! I should

mention, this teacher never taught me how to play a drumkit ... that came about a year later when I started to play along to Beatle records ... and I simply applied all the rudiments I learned on the pad, to the *drumkit* my parents had just bought for me. It happened very organically.

At this point, I followed the natural progression of joining basement bands, playing at school dances, and eventually gigging in bars. During this time, the environments I was playing in gradually got louder and louder. And, without even realizing it, my drumming also gradually became louder and louder. I didn't *try* to play louder ... it just simply *happened*. It started with my kick drum. I noticed my foot had begun to lift off the pedal board ... and my heel was up. This translated into more power and more volume. Again, I did not consciously try to do this. It's safe to say a lot of you out there also play heel up, so I know you can relate to this. As a result of the heel up approach, I realized I had started to *bury* the beater into the drumhead. Although unplanned, it seemed to help push the sound forward. It also felt very powerful, to be honest. I should mention that my left foot on the hi-hat pedal naturally also went heel up. With my

feet in this position, it gave me a feeling of balance and good posture on the drum throne. By the way, as my foot was getting louder and stronger hitting the kick drum, so were my arms ... hitting everything else.

Speaking of arms, I have always been very disciplined about them ... always stretching and warming up before playing. I am proud to say as a 62-year-old drummer, I have never had any issues with my hands, wrists, or arms. That said, I can't help but notice as I write this, the glaring fact that as I was always so careful protecting my hands, wrists and arms from injury, I never stopped to think about my feet.

Oops.

Anyway, over the course of the years, as the bands got bigger and the tours got more elaborate, I continued experimenting with various drumstick sizes and more importantly to this story, the shoes I wore while drumming. For most of my career, I wore wrestling shoes. They enabled me to feel closer to the pedal, without a lot of *shoe* in the way. They gave me a sense of immediacy while playing, even though they absolutely gave my





foot no support. I didn't really care at the time and never gave it a second thought, to be honest. However, eventually I started to have random aches in my feet ... specifically, the toes on my right foot. So, I moved from the wrestling shoes to heavier tennis shoes. That seemed to help. However, I still played heel up and buried the beater into the head ... playing harder and harder ... louder and louder. And that was fine ... for many years.

Then, it wasn't.

Everything changed at the end of 2023. Lynyrd Skynyrd had finished a successful tour and I was home with a fair amount of time off. One night lying in bed, out of the blue it felt like someone jabbed a red-hot dagger into the big toe on my right foot! What the hell? It was so intense, I realized something was very wrong and made an appointment with an orthopedic doctor. He did an X-ray of my right foot and then asked me, "When did you break your big toe?" I said, 'I have a broken toe!' He told me the break looked like it was a few years old and was surprised I didn't know about it. He also pointed out a loose bone chip and a fair amount of arthritis in the second joint of the big toe. Well, that explained the random aches I started experiencing a while back!

I explained what I did for a living and how an issue with my right foot ... the *kick drum* foot ... could be a monstrous problem. He told me the hard truth: this was not going to go

away and would only continue to get worse. He offered to immediately give me a steroid shot, directly into the toe, saying I should get some relief but couldn't promise how long it would last ... and then he told me the only way to really correct this was with surgery. And, that surgery would include putting a steel rod into my toe and it would never bend again. Seriously? *That* was the way he would correct this? No thanks. I took the steroid shot and got the hell out of there.

As you might imagine, I was completely blindsided by this. Had I really created such a problem with the big toe in my kickdrum foot, that the only solution was surgery? Surgery on my kick drum foot? The idea terrified me. What if something goes wrong? My career would be toast. Holy crap, now what?

I realized I had some time off before Skynyrd went back on the road ... and not wanting to contemplate surgery at that point, I decided I would do everything I could to avoid it. Then I systematically went through all the factors that created this situation.

The first thing I did was change the position of my foot on the kick pedal. I lowered my heel ... not all the way down to the heel plate, but I flattened the position of my foot and used my entire foot to hit the pedal. This took away the downward jamming of the big toe into the pedal as I had been doing and it also meant I didn't need to bend the toe. This was a noticeable



improvement. Now, I had played heel up for fifty years at this point, so there was definitely an adjustment playing with a flatter foot. An interesting sidenote: at first, there was one unexpected challenge ... playing bouncy, dotted eighth notes ... which I discovered was not as easy to execute with the flatter foot. It stands to reason, I suppose, that it's easier using the toes and catching the bounce back of the beater. I also stopped burying the beater into the head. This took away some of the impact my foot had been absorbing. These were big changes for me, but I knew I had time to get comfortable with them, before going back to work. The other thing, was buying different shoes.

I discovered there were steel toe tennis shoes on the market (I had never heard of them) and bought a pair. These would help protect the big toe and the weight of the shoe also helped do some of the work, keeping the beats strong on the kick drum. I was curious to see if anyone else had experienced a big toe injury like mine, so I went on some online drummer forums. There were a few drummers who had various foot pains, but no one said anything similar to what I was dealing with. Someone mentioned using carbon fiber shoe inserts, for foot support. So, I bought a pair which I placed in my shoes. These inserts helped make my shoes less flexible ... further removing the chance of bending the big toe and helping to keep my now flatter foot, better supported.

When the next tour kicked off in the spring of 2024, I was feeling good. The steroid shot continued to give me relief, thankfully, and I was ready to hit the road. I shouldn't have been surprised, though ... after about a month of gigs, the pain returned. At first it was random. But eventually, every beat 1 and every beat 3, hurt. A lot! I started wrapping the toe in medical tape and would ice my foot after the shows. The pain was so intense on some nights, I remember limping off the stage at the end of the show. There was no way around it, I was going to need to see an orthopedic doctor, again. The reality was hard to face ... if I didn't take care of this, it would likely derail my career. Plus, it wasn't a consideration to keep playing through the pain.

This time however, I followed a friend's referral and went to see a doctor name Bernard Martin. He is located in

Smithtown, NY (out on Long Island) and part of the Stony Brook Medicine Group. Dr. Martin concurred with what the first orthopedic doctor said ... surgery was the only way to correct this. However, unlike the steel rod in the toe nonsense, Dr. Martin said he would do something called the Keller Procedure, which he had done many times before, successfully. This would entail cleaning out the arthritis and the bone chip, and then permanently inserting a piece of animal ligament into the damaged joint of the toe, to act as a cushion. Plus, when healed, my toe would be able to bend as normal. He said I wouldn't be able to drum for two months as I would be in recovery and

wearing a surgical shoe. But, after that he said I could start drumming again ... slowly and carefully. Dr. Martin also explained that although I would be drumming pain free, my foot would still be healing for six months ... this made me understand that I needed to be careful and really respect the healing process. This all sounded good to me, especially as I knew I would have four months off before the band resumed work in 2025. So, we scheduled the surgery for mid-October. I also got another steroid shot in the big toe, which helped me to play the remaining 2024 tour dates pain free.

The surgery, I am relieved to say, went very smoothly. Dr. Martin came into the recovery room and told me once he opened up my toe, he discovered the X-rays had not shown the extent of the damage. He found that I only had 10% cartilage remaining ... three fractures ... six bone chips ... a hematoma which

needed to be drained ... and in the damaged joint, the bone-on-bone rubbing had created jagged edges to the bones. He said it was the worst toe he had ever seen, in this type of injury ... and he couldn't even imagine the amount of pain I must have had just walking, let alone, drumming. Even though I was still coming out of anesthesia, I immediately said, 'I have been in the music business most of my life and have a high tolerance for pain.'

Once a week, for the next six weeks, I would see Dr. Martin for follow up appointments. It was fascinating, seeing the foot change ... turning all sorts of crazy colors and watching the swelling slowly reduce. During this time, my therapy





consisted of toe stretches and walks up and down the hallway of my apartment building, to try to keep scar tissue from forming and to regain flexibility. And, as I am not a sedentary type, I continued doing my daily sit-ups and push-ups ... which was challenging without putting pressure on my foot but I figured it out.

I need to backtrack just for a second, if I may. A week before my surgery, I spent the day with my buddy, drummer Steve Smith. In my opinion, Steve is one of the best drummers out there and I know many of you respect him, as I do. Steve was kind enough to share some bass drum exercises, which could help me when I resumed playing again. Beyond showing me different ways to place my foot on the pedal, the main focus was letting the beater come all the way back after striking the head. As I mentioned earlier, I had already stopped burying the beater, but Steve's exercises further helped to take away that blunt absorption I had gotten used to. It also strengthened the muscles in my shin, which helped to develop playing off the bounce better. Steve went one step further (or *Steps Ahead* ... sorry, I couldn't resist the pun,) and gave me this cool kickdrum practice pad he had marketed. So, in addition to the stretching, walking and floor exercises I mentioned, I also started drumming at home ... playing the pad to keep my hands in shape ... and playing Steve's kickdrum pad, working on the exercises he taught me with my left foot. My right foot was still in the surgical shoe. I play two kick drums (or a double pedal, depending on the configuration,) so these exercises were invaluable and helped my left foot to develop, knowing that my right foot would soon follow.

Before long, I got the green light from Dr. Martin to begin drumming in my rehearsal room. I will tell you, the first time I (carefully and lightly) stepped on a kickdrum pedal was terrifying. I was convinced the now healed incision would break wide open and all this would have been for naught. Fortunately, that didn't happen. But, those first few days were humbling. Even though I was barely tapping the pedal, my foot would ache. *Of course* it ached; it was only eight weeks ago that my toe was sliced open like someone cleaning a fish! Anyway, with each passing day, things began to get better. I was still playing lightly, but I started to feel the strength return. With each passing week, the aches were subsiding, and I was playing longer without getting tired muscles throughout my foot. Even so, I still had setbacks. I would be playing nice and easy, with the power and volume slowly increasing ... and then I would hit the kick too hard while crashing a cymbal and immediately have a nasty cramp. Take your time, I kept saying to myself. Don't rush this. Sometimes, I would listen to myself ... sometimes I wouldn't.

After drumming almost every day for six weeks, I felt *Show Ready*. I was confident and feeling like I was firing on all cylinders. Steve Smith had told me after recovering from every injury he ever had, he always came out of it a better drummer. It occurred to me, when recovering from an injury, you have time to stop and think what to do ... and what not to do ... so you won't

make the same physical mistakes. Steve's comment was very motivating for me as I dove back in. And yes, I felt I was playing better than I was before the surgery. More importantly, I felt I was approaching drumming smarter. I wasn't bashing anymore and yet I was playing with strength, conviction, and finesse. I felt focused and was looking ahead toward staying healthy and protecting my career. It was a great place to be, especially after what I had gone through over the past year.

The crescendo of this story happened the first week of February 2025, when Lynyrd Skynyrd was about to have our first gig of the year, and monumentally, my first gig *after* the surgery. I realized my biggest challenge was going to be playing with the now smarter approach to drumming I had fine-tuned at home. But now I would be doing it onstage with the band and in front of an excited audience. As a little reminder of what I had gone through, and to prevent myself from bashing like Animal from *The Muppets* again and creating new physical problems, I taped a photo of my opened-up toe during the surgery (which Dr. Martin had given to me) right on top of my kickdrum, so I would see it during the show. That should keep me in line!

I am incredibly relieved to say that first gig went exactly as I had hoped! All the hard work I put in during my drumming rehab paid off handsomely. I was able to stay focused and controlled while hitting the kick drum pedal and never overplayed. My foot felt great and comfortable on stage and I had no pain! Admittedly, now and then during the show, I realized my arms were hitting too hard, perhaps from the adrenaline. But, my foot on the kick pedal stayed controlled, which I was happy about. I'm thinking this upper body/lower body balance will get better the more gigs I do. By the way, throughout the show I did glance down at that mid-surgery photo and I feel it really helped! I was happier ... more than you could ever know ... having gotten that first post-surgical gig under my belt!

So, there you go, my friends. That is my cautionary tale. I am hoping that my story, in some way, can help raise awareness of how we can all take better care of ourselves, while acknowledging the physical demands we face as drummers. And, if what I went through can help one of you out there avoid the same scenario, even just one of you, it was worth it. 🥁



# Tool "Chocolate Chip Trip," from *Fear Inoculum*, drummer Danny Carey

Transcription by Marc Atkinson

This month's transcription highlights the incredible drumming of Tool's Danny Carey. The song "Chocolate Chip Trip," from their 2019 album *Fear Inoculum*, serves in part as a tribute to the legendary Billy Cobham. "Chocolate Chip Trip" mirrors the opening of Cobham's *Stratus* from his album *Spectrum*, where a repeated sequence lays the foundation for an extended solo before the full band joins in.

A few notes on the transcription: I chose to notate it in 7/8 rather than 7/4—not just because of the tempo but also to better capture the speed and precision of Danny's playing. Additionally, at this tempo, distinguishing between 16th-note triplets and a 16th note followed by two 32nd notes can be nearly impossible by ear. While both interpretations could be valid, I prefer to rely

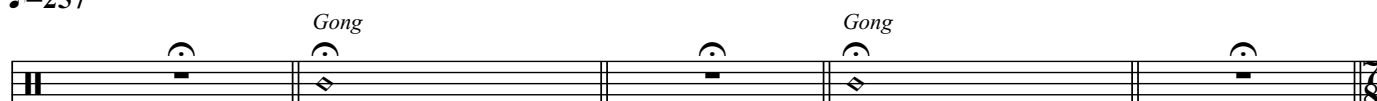
on the phrasing and the surrounding context. With that in mind, I notated measures 84 through 88 as triplets to best reflect the feel of that passage.

Once you've tackled this, do yourself a favor—go listen to *Stratus*. And maybe grab some chocolate chip cookies while you're at it



♩=257

## CHOCOLATE CHIP TRIP



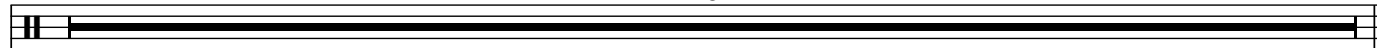
TEMPO

7



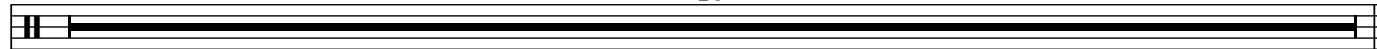
6

6



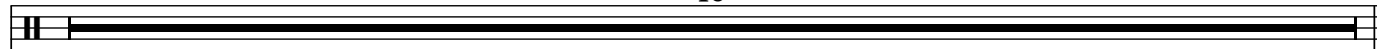
13

10



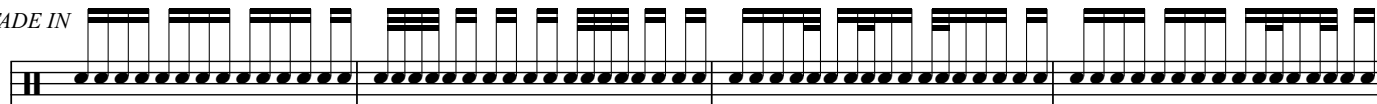
19

10



29

FADE IN

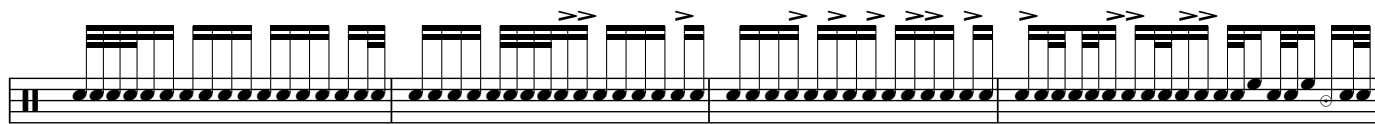


39

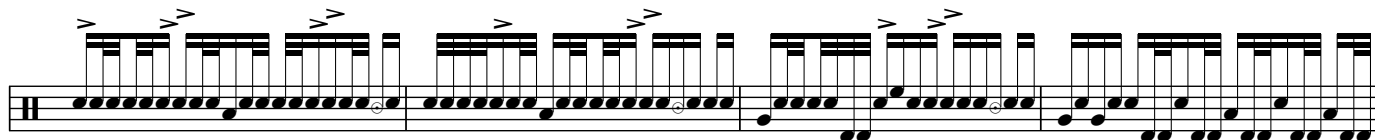




43



47



51



55



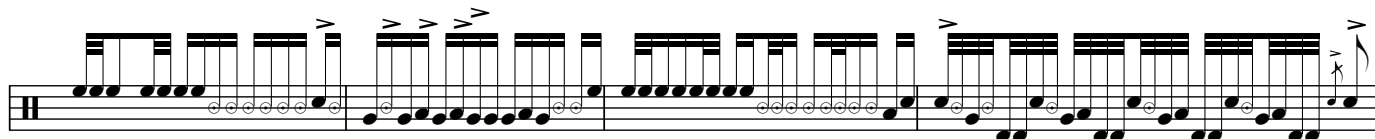
58



62



66



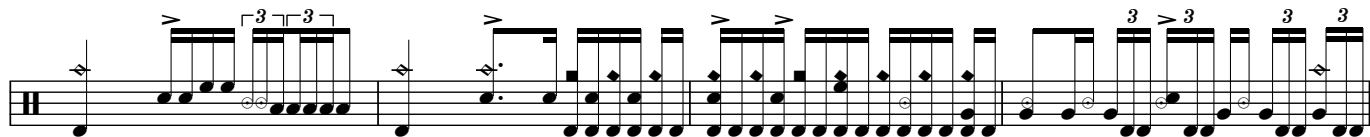
70



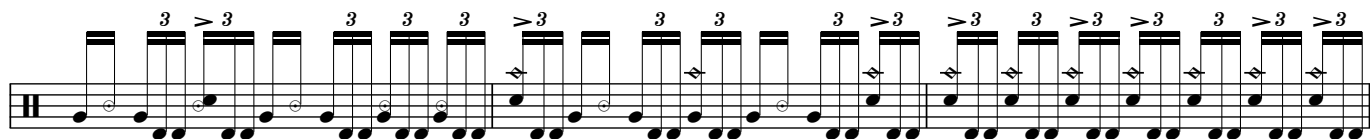
74



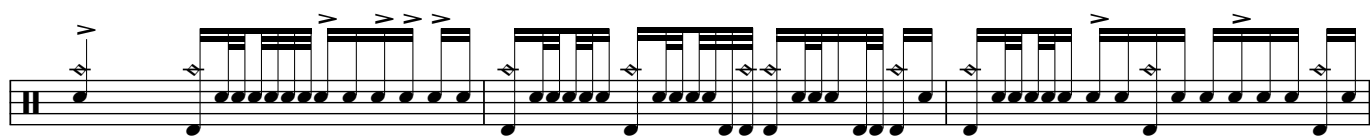
78



82



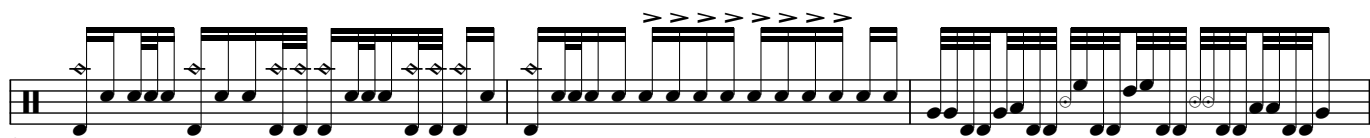
86



89



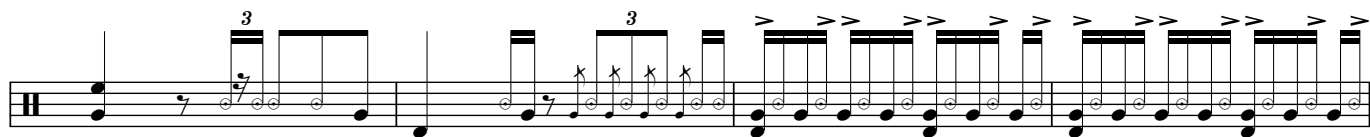
92



94



97



99



103



107

111

113

115

117

121

125

8

133

8

FADE OUT

141

3

Marc Atkinson, a dedicated musician, honed his craft under the guidance of the renowned Gary Chaffee. Now calling Las Vegas home, Marc is on the brink of unveiling his labor of love—a comprehensive transcription book that promises to captivate music enthusiasts worldwide.

**Check out Marc's *Modern Drummer* profile page at [moderndrummer.com](https://moderndrummer.com)**



# 40D: The 4 Offenses of Drummers

By Chris Lesso

## ***'Listen, or your tongue will make you deaf.' Native American proverb***

Drumming creates SYNERGY. Synergy is when  $1 + 1 = 3$ , it's when we as a group go to a place that any one of us couldn't have gotten to on our own. We are stronger together! Drumming can be a solo voice, but more often than not, it's the foundation for the music we love. The four offenses are about being a giver versus a taker. As servant heroes we can choose to add to the bigger musical vision, not detract from it. Some drummers have flashy technique and all the latest gear, but no one will play with them because they're breaching the four offenses without even knowing it. The masters have identified these four areas to make the music come alive, clear out the noise, and come back to center.

### **SPACE**

On the drums it's all too easy to wail away nonstop, never coming up for air. It's selfishly fun, but sonically destructive. Instruments like trumpet or saxophone have no choice but to leave space to breathe. Singing rhythms before we play them can give us that same feeling. Adding gaps to our drumming brings back an ebb and flow to the groove, empowering and inviting those around us to shine. In life, space is where all creativity is born. Genius loves solitude. There's so much noise in the world, sometimes we can't hear the signal. Minimalism reveals what truly matters as distractions melt away. It's in space and silence that our future self is incubating.

### **TIME**

Bending time is the rhythmist's superpower. Drummers are granted the power to alter space and time. We dictate the feel in the rhythm, whether it lays back, hits dead center, or pushes forward with urgency. In life, timing is mastery of strategy and action, when all our skill comes into play. It's seeing the bigger vision, and then working backwards to the small actions we need to do in the now. Long term moves make zero sense to short term thinkers. In business, the Japanese approach isn't to see things one or five years out, but to operate from a hundred-year plan and beyond. Timing is a game of chess, intuitively knowing our next moves to set the pace of the game. It's controlling the flow, using all our focus to ride the wave in the moment.

### **DYNAMICS**

There are no straight lines in music. Like a wave, we're always going up or down in intensity, rising or falling, never flat. What happens when we play too loud for too long? The music becomes lifeless, boring. The word 'climax' comes from Greek roots meaning 'ladder'. Music can climb to great heights, and then fall like an ocean wave. When our drumming embodies this, it goes right to the heart of the listener. Dynamics are emotional content, getting the audience to lean into the music and sit on the edge of their seats. I don't know much about art, but when I stand below a painting I do know if it moves me or not. When you play, do we feel something? Dynamics are passion turned into sound. In life, dynamics are to live a lifetime rich with the ups and downs of joy, loss, passion, and adventure. We can only use dynamics to their full effect once we're aware of them. When we wake up to new dynamic ranges, it changes the way we play forever.

In



southern Africa, the Himba tribe sees color differently than we do. They have many words to describe all the different subtleties of shades of green, but no one word for blue. What researchers found, was that since the Himba didn't have separate words to distinguish blue and green, they generally saw them as one color. But what they could see were minute differences in tints of green that most people would never notice. Since their language allowed for them to pick up the subtle shifts, they experienced color in a whole new way that others would miss. Awareness shapes our perspective of how we see the world. How wide is the spectrum? It's limitless, and there's more beneath the surface than we realize.

### **LISTENING**

If there was one of the four areas that's most important, it's this one. Through listening, the other three offenses come into fine focus and their deficiencies can be addressed. Listening is to be in the present moment, fully engaging our senses. Bassist Victor Wooten runs a music nature camp where the first thing you do is immerse yourself in the woods. Instead of opening a book on a music stand, he leads musicians into the forest to take in the waterfalls and birds. Some of his guided nature walks even take away the sense of sight to enhance the ears. Imagine walking through deep forest wearing a blindfold. What array of sounds would you hear that you didn't hear before? If we can open our awareness to enrich our being, we'll never be the same. Think of some words that describe nature to you. Now use those same words to describe music. Do they fit both contexts? This is the spirit that Victor leads his camp with to make the connection from music to nature. In life, nature is the key to being natural, it's where the orchestra of creativity thrives. Nothing in nature compares itself to anything else, it just is. Reconnecting is the key to opening our listening to experience the everyday in a whole new way.

One of my mantras is "Don't Compete, Create." Truly creating is when we contribute to something greater than ourselves, and we can use these four areas as a guide. To be a drummer is to be a servant leader. Thinking only like a "drummer" won't get us into the zone where music lives and breathes. When we create from this limitless space, first we feel it, then the band feels it, and then it ripples out to the audience and outward with no end. See the video lesson on The 4 Offenses of Drummers and get your free drumming flow guide at [chrislesso.net/drumflow](http://chrislesso.net/drumflow)





# Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming: Double-Stroke Hands, Single Stroke Feet

By Bobby Rondinelli

In the new and revised edition of the *Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming*, Bobby includes nine new double bass drumming chapters. The new and expanded edition covers contemporary techniques such as bass drum double strokes, feet-only exercises, binary and ternary rhythms, "skiplets," beat turnarounds, the "ladder", and playing doubles with the hands while playing singles with the feet. These concepts will challenge your playing while expanding your double bass vocabulary. If practiced with intention and diligence, this material will help to prepare you for the demands of today's



music. This material is advanced, but completely attainable for anyone who has completed the previous chapters in the book.

Getting used to playing doubles with your hands while your feet are playing singles can be quite challenging. But it's worth the time invested. I use doubles with the hands because most people can play a double stroke roll more evenly, and for longer periods of

time then they can play singles. Feet are also good followers. If you play a rhythm with your hands, then you can follow along with your feet. Start the rolls with the right hand and the right foot first, and then alternate the stickings.

Playing grooves that incorporate fives or nines with the feet can be difficult. A good way to even them out is to play double stroke rolls on top as in examples 5-8.



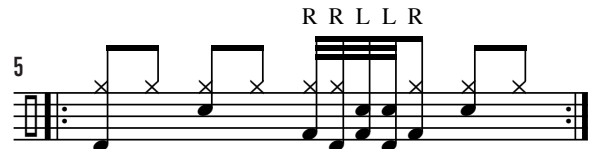
Example 2 has a 5-stroke roll in the hands with a 5-stroke ruff in the feet. This exercise will help you gain control in short spurts, while also teaching you to lead with either foot. Start slowly, accuracy is more important than speed.



In example 3, we have a nine-stroke roll in the hands and a nine-stroke ruff in the feet. When it starts to lock in, increase the speed.



Example 4 is an open roll in the hands with the feet playing singles. Try this one as well as the other exercises at different tempos.



This concept will work with all dupe and triplet-based rolls. Our feet are more ambidextrous than our hands. We favor our strong hand in daily activities—we open doors, comb our hair, and write with our strong hand. But even if we always start with the same foot when we walk, the other one is right behind. Just remember to start slowly and be sure that you can mentally hear the rhythms before you play them. Then the feet are sure to follow.



## Master Studies II: Paradiddles with Fill-Ins Using Single Strokes

By Joe Morello

As a follow-up to Joe Morello's legendary *Master Studies* book, he released *Master Studies II* in 2006. Joe was a masterful teacher and helped many great drummers with their musicality, technique, and touch. Joe was also masterful at creating exercises, many of Joe's exercises were variations or outgrowths of his time studying with George Lawrence Stone, but many also came from Joe's own musical mind. *Master Studies II* is another wonderful book filled with the exercises that Joe developed for (and with) his students, it is also filled with wisdom from the master Joe Morello. Join *Modern Drummer* as we explore Joe Morello's *Master Studies II*. This month we will build on the paradiddle combinations that Joe created, with his concept of fill-ins, which is adding (or filling in) notes between the primary notes of a sticking such as paradiddles.

This exercise builds upon the previous Paradiddle Combinations seen in last month's lesson. Now we have added fill-ins with single strokes. This exercise will help you build control as well as increase your ability to play a single-stroke roll. Again, practice each of these slowly at first, and focus on achieving accuracy.

## Arrow Notation Key

Up and down arrows	= Full Stroke
Dash	= Tap Stroke
Down arrow	= Down Stroke
Up arrow	= Up Stroke

This key is the same as used in the book *Accents and Rebounds* to show continuity in Joe's continuation of his teacher G.L. Stone.

1

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

2

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

3

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

4

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

5

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



6

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

7

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

8

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

9

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

10

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

11

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

12

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

12

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

13

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

14

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

15

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

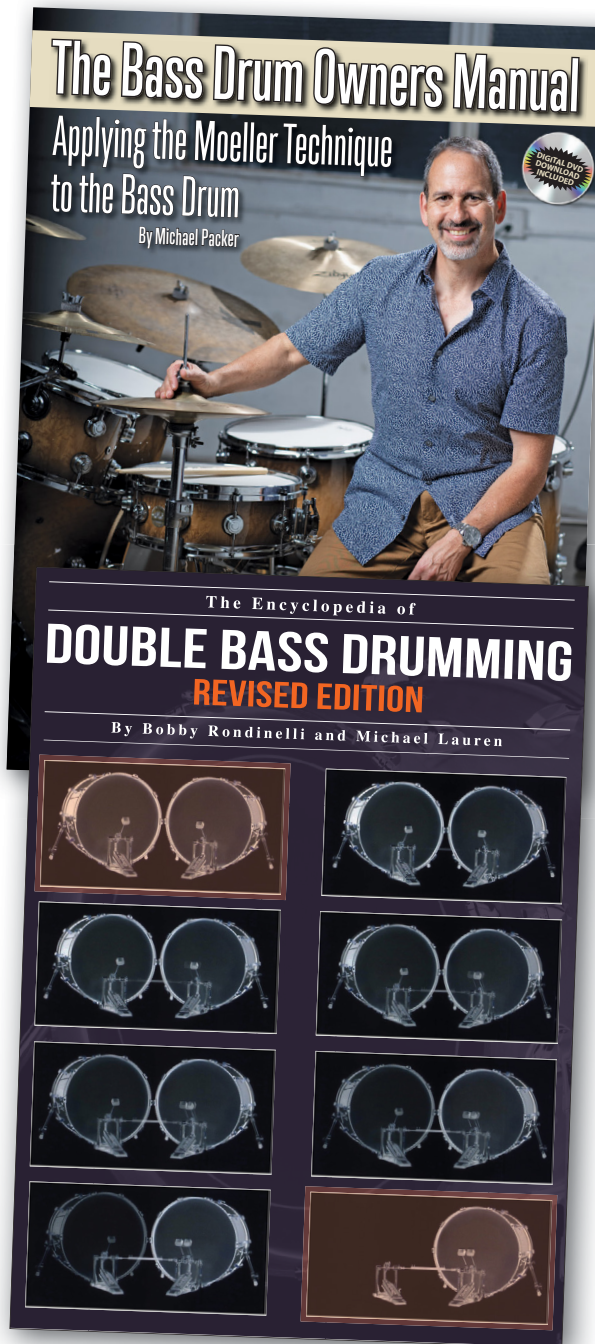
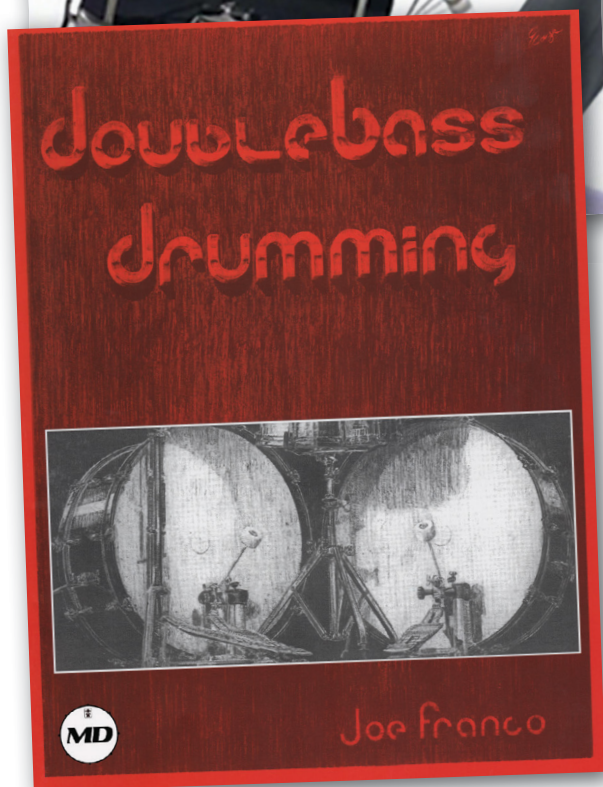




# **MODERN DRUMMER**

Lessons From The Greats

## **Bass Drum Technique Books**



BUY FROM YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC RETAILER  
CHECK OUT MORE AT **MODERNDRUMMER.COM**

# Putting It All Together

By Ron Spagnardi

*Modern Drummer* founder Ron Spagnardi wrote an excellent book called *Understanding the Language of Music, a Drummer's Guide to Theory and Harmony*. This book spells out the basics of theory and harmony in a very easy to understand way. It is a fantastic book for drummers looking to learn about the language of music beyond drumming. We are honored to reprint the parts of Ron's book here in *Modern Drummer* for everyone to read and learn.

This month we will be talking about more common Chord Progressions. Chord Progressions are the chords (harmony) that support the melody of a song, and the chords (changes) that soloists improvise on when they play a solo. All (or most) music consists of Sound, Melody, Emotion, Rhythm, and Harmony.

Lastly, this month we present three standard tunes so that you can test your understanding of everything you've learned in this series of columns, and apply some of your newfound keyboard

skills. Each tune is notated in standard lead sheet format (melody and chord symbols.)

**"Time After Time,"** Key signature: C, time signature 4/4, 32 bar ABAC form.

**What to watch for:** Note the I, vi, ii, V7 progression in the first four bars, and the use of half diminished chords in measure 7, and full diminished chords in measure 28. Be sure to always correctly distinguish between the two. Notice the *b*9th extension (B flat in the A7 chord in measure 12.) Do you also notice that the B $\flat$  on the third beat is the melody note?

Composers often make the extension a part of the chord symbol even though the extension occurs within the melody. A similar thing happens in measure 15, where the D in the melody is actually the #11th of the A $\flat$  7 #11 chord.

**"It Could Happen To You,"** Key signature: G, time signature: 4/4,

The image displays two musical lead sheets. The first, "Time After Time," is in C major, 4/4 time, and 32 bars. It features a melody line with chord symbols above and Roman numerals below. The progression includes I, vi, ii, V7 in the first four bars, followed by half-diminished chords (B $\flat$ 7 and A7 $\flat$ 9) and a full-diminished chord (A $\flat$ 7 $\sharp$ 11) in later measures. The second, "It Could Happen To You," is in G major, 4/4 time, and 32 bars. It also shows a melody line with chord symbols and Roman numerals, including a half-diminished chord (B $\flat$ 7) and a full-diminished chord (E $\flat$ 7 $\flat$ 9) in later measures.



form 32 bar ABAC.

**What to watch for:** Lots of major sevenths and dominant sevenths. Also notice the D7<sup>b</sup>9 in measure 16, the E+7 in bar 24, (a 7th chord that requires a sharpened 5<sup>th</sup>) and the C major 7th in measures 10 and 26. A C minor triad with a major 7<sup>th</sup>: C, E<sup>b</sup>, G, B).

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of 32 measures, divided into four systems of eight measures each. The chords and notes are as follows:

- Measure (1): GMaj7
- Measure (2): B<sup>ø</sup>7, E7
- Measure (3): Am7
- Measure (4): C<sup>♯</sup>7, F<sup>♯</sup>7
- Measure (5): GMaj7
- Measure (6): CMaj7
- Measure (7): B7
- Measure (8): E7
- Measure (9): Am9
- Measure (10): C-Maj7 (boxed)
- Measure (11): GMaj7
- Measure (12): F<sup>♯</sup>7, B7
- Measure (13): Em7
- Measure (14): A7
- Measure (15): Am7
- Measure (16): D9, D7<sup>b</sup>9 (boxed)
- Measure (17): GMaj7
- Measure (18): B<sup>ø</sup>7, E7
- Measure (19): Am7
- Measure (20): C<sup>♯</sup>7, F<sup>♯</sup>7
- Measure (21): GMaj7
- Measure (22): CMaj7
- Measure (23): B7
- Measure (24): E+7 (boxed), E7
- Measure (25): Am7
- Measure (26): C-Maj7 (boxed)
- Measure (27): GMaj7
- Measure (28): B<sup>ø</sup>7, E7
- Measure (29): Am7
- Measure (30): D9
- Measure (31): D7<sup>b</sup>9, G
- Measure (32): G

**"Come Rain or Come Shine,"** Key signature: F, time signature: 4/4, form: 32 bar ABCD.

**What to watch for:** This great old Harold Arlen standard is the most complex of the three tunes presented. Many non-chord tones are cleverly woven throughout the melody. The chord progression includes a number of dominant sevenths, major sevenths, 9th extensions, and diminished chords. Finally, notice the smooth movement of the ascending bassline in measures 25 through 28 (D F F# G A Bb.) Note how the line gives a strong sense of forward momentum and intensity that builds to the end of the tune. In case you've forgotten, the D/F# in measure 26 is a slash chord discussed earlier, indicating a D chord with the third F# in the bass.

The musical score for "Come Rain or Come Shine" is presented in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (F major/D minor). The melody is written in treble clef, and the chord progression is indicated above the staff. The score is divided into four systems, each containing four measures. The chord progression is as follows:

- Measure 1: FMaj7
- Measure 2: Em7
- Measure 3: A7
- Measure 4: Dm7
- Measure 5: E<sup>b</sup>9
- Measure 6: Dm7
- Measure 7: G7
- Measure 8: C9
- Measure 9: C7<sup>b</sup>9
- Measure 10: F7
- Measure 11: Cm7
- Measure 12: F7
- Measure 13: B<sup>b</sup>m7
- Measure 14: Fm7
- Measure 15: B<sup>b</sup>m7
- Measure 16: A<sup>b</sup>7
- Measure 17: Gm7
- Measure 18: C7
- Measure 19: Fm6
- Measure 20: E<sup>b</sup>m6
- Measure 21: A<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 22: D+7
- Measure 23: G7
- Measure 24: C7
- Measure 25: C7<sup>b</sup>9
- Measure 26: FMaj7
- Measure 27: Em7
- Measure 28: A7
- Measure 29: Dm7
- Measure 30: E<sup>b</sup>9
- Measure 31: Dm7
- Measure 32: F#m7
- Measure 33: B7
- Measure 34: A7
- Measure 35: Em7
- Measure 36: E<sup>b</sup>9
- Measure 37: D7
- Measure 38: Em7
- Measure 39: F<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 40: D/F#
- Measure 41: G
- Measure 42: Am7
- Measure 43: B<sup>b</sup>Maj7
- Measure 44: A7
- Measure 45: Dm7
- Measure 46: G7
- Measure 47: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 48: A7
- Measure 49: Dm7
- Measure 50: G7
- Measure 51: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 52: A7
- Measure 53: Dm7
- Measure 54: G7
- Measure 55: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 56: A7
- Measure 57: Dm7
- Measure 58: G7
- Measure 59: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 60: A7
- Measure 61: Dm7
- Measure 62: G7
- Measure 63: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 64: A7
- Measure 65: Dm7
- Measure 66: G7
- Measure 67: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 68: A7
- Measure 69: Dm7
- Measure 70: G7
- Measure 71: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 72: A7
- Measure 73: Dm7
- Measure 74: G7
- Measure 75: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 76: A7
- Measure 77: Dm7
- Measure 78: G7
- Measure 79: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 80: A7
- Measure 81: Dm7
- Measure 82: G7
- Measure 83: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 84: A7
- Measure 85: Dm7
- Measure 86: G7
- Measure 87: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 88: A7
- Measure 89: Dm7
- Measure 90: G7
- Measure 91: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 92: A7
- Measure 93: Dm7
- Measure 94: G7
- Measure 95: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 96: A7
- Measure 97: Dm7
- Measure 98: G7
- Measure 99: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 100: A7
- Measure 101: Dm7
- Measure 102: G7
- Measure 103: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 104: A7
- Measure 105: Dm7
- Measure 106: G7
- Measure 107: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 108: A7
- Measure 109: Dm7
- Measure 110: G7
- Measure 111: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 112: A7
- Measure 113: Dm7
- Measure 114: G7
- Measure 115: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 116: A7
- Measure 117: Dm7
- Measure 118: G7
- Measure 119: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 120: A7
- Measure 121: Dm7
- Measure 122: G7
- Measure 123: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 124: A7
- Measure 125: Dm7
- Measure 126: G7
- Measure 127: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 128: A7
- Measure 129: Dm7
- Measure 130: G7
- Measure 131: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 132: A7
- Measure 133: Dm7
- Measure 134: G7
- Measure 135: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 136: A7
- Measure 137: Dm7
- Measure 138: G7
- Measure 139: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 140: A7
- Measure 141: Dm7
- Measure 142: G7
- Measure 143: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 144: A7
- Measure 145: Dm7
- Measure 146: G7
- Measure 147: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 148: A7
- Measure 149: Dm7
- Measure 150: G7
- Measure 151: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 152: A7
- Measure 153: Dm7
- Measure 154: G7
- Measure 155: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 156: A7
- Measure 157: Dm7
- Measure 158: G7
- Measure 159: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 160: A7
- Measure 161: Dm7
- Measure 162: G7
- Measure 163: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 164: A7
- Measure 165: Dm7
- Measure 166: G7
- Measure 167: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 168: A7
- Measure 169: Dm7
- Measure 170: G7
- Measure 171: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 172: A7
- Measure 173: Dm7
- Measure 174: G7
- Measure 175: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 176: A7
- Measure 177: Dm7
- Measure 178: G7
- Measure 179: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 180: A7
- Measure 181: Dm7
- Measure 182: G7
- Measure 183: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 184: A7
- Measure 185: Dm7
- Measure 186: G7
- Measure 187: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 188: A7
- Measure 189: Dm7
- Measure 190: G7
- Measure 191: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 192: A7
- Measure 193: Dm7
- Measure 194: G7
- Measure 195: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 196: A7
- Measure 197: Dm7
- Measure 198: G7
- Measure 199: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 200: A7
- Measure 201: Dm7
- Measure 202: G7
- Measure 203: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 204: A7
- Measure 205: Dm7
- Measure 206: G7
- Measure 207: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 208: A7
- Measure 209: Dm7
- Measure 210: G7
- Measure 211: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 212: A7
- Measure 213: Dm7
- Measure 214: G7
- Measure 215: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 216: A7
- Measure 217: Dm7
- Measure 218: G7
- Measure 219: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 220: A7
- Measure 221: Dm7
- Measure 222: G7
- Measure 223: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 224: A7
- Measure 225: Dm7
- Measure 226: G7
- Measure 227: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 228: A7
- Measure 229: Dm7
- Measure 230: G7
- Measure 231: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 232: A7
- Measure 233: Dm7
- Measure 234: G7
- Measure 235: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 236: A7
- Measure 237: Dm7
- Measure 238: G7
- Measure 239: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 240: A7
- Measure 241: Dm7
- Measure 242: G7
- Measure 243: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 244: A7
- Measure 245: Dm7
- Measure 246: G7
- Measure 247: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 248: A7
- Measure 249: Dm7
- Measure 250: G7
- Measure 251: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 252: A7
- Measure 253: Dm7
- Measure 254: G7
- Measure 255: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 256: A7
- Measure 257: Dm7
- Measure 258: G7
- Measure 259: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 260: A7
- Measure 261: Dm7
- Measure 262: G7
- Measure 263: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 264: A7
- Measure 265: Dm7
- Measure 266: G7
- Measure 267: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 268: A7
- Measure 269: Dm7
- Measure 270: G7
- Measure 271: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 272: A7
- Measure 273: Dm7
- Measure 274: G7
- Measure 275: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 276: A7
- Measure 277: Dm7
- Measure 278: G7
- Measure 279: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 280: A7
- Measure 281: Dm7
- Measure 282: G7
- Measure 283: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 284: A7
- Measure 285: Dm7
- Measure 286: G7
- Measure 287: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 288: A7
- Measure 289: Dm7
- Measure 290: G7
- Measure 291: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 292: A7
- Measure 293: Dm7
- Measure 294: G7
- Measure 295: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 296: A7
- Measure 297: Dm7
- Measure 298: G7
- Measure 299: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 300: A7
- Measure 301: Dm7
- Measure 302: G7
- Measure 303: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 304: A7
- Measure 305: Dm7
- Measure 306: G7
- Measure 307: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 308: A7
- Measure 309: Dm7
- Measure 310: G7
- Measure 311: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 312: A7
- Measure 313: Dm7
- Measure 314: G7
- Measure 315: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 316: A7
- Measure 317: Dm7
- Measure 318: G7
- Measure 319: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 320: A7
- Measure 321: Dm7
- Measure 322: G7
- Measure 323: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 324: A7
- Measure 325: Dm7
- Measure 326: G7
- Measure 327: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 328: A7
- Measure 329: Dm7
- Measure 330: G7
- Measure 331: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 332: A7
- Measure 333: Dm7
- Measure 334: G7
- Measure 335: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 336: A7
- Measure 337: Dm7
- Measure 338: G7
- Measure 339: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 340: A7
- Measure 341: Dm7
- Measure 342: G7
- Measure 343: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 344: A7
- Measure 345: Dm7
- Measure 346: G7
- Measure 347: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 348: A7
- Measure 349: Dm7
- Measure 350: G7
- Measure 351: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 352: A7
- Measure 353: Dm7
- Measure 354: G7
- Measure 355: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 356: A7
- Measure 357: Dm7
- Measure 358: G7
- Measure 359: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 360: A7
- Measure 361: Dm7
- Measure 362: G7
- Measure 363: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 364: A7
- Measure 365: Dm7
- Measure 366: G7
- Measure 367: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 368: A7
- Measure 369: Dm7
- Measure 370: G7
- Measure 371: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 372: A7
- Measure 373: Dm7
- Measure 374: G7
- Measure 375: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 376: A7
- Measure 377: Dm7
- Measure 378: G7
- Measure 379: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 380: A7
- Measure 381: Dm7
- Measure 382: G7
- Measure 383: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 384: A7
- Measure 385: Dm7
- Measure 386: G7
- Measure 387: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 388: A7
- Measure 389: Dm7
- Measure 390: G7
- Measure 391: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 392: A7
- Measure 393: Dm7
- Measure 394: G7
- Measure 395: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 396: A7
- Measure 397: Dm7
- Measure 398: G7
- Measure 399: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 400: A7
- Measure 401: Dm7
- Measure 402: G7
- Measure 403: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 404: A7
- Measure 405: Dm7
- Measure 406: G7
- Measure 407: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 408: A7
- Measure 409: Dm7
- Measure 410: G7
- Measure 411: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 412: A7
- Measure 413: Dm7
- Measure 414: G7
- Measure 415: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 416: A7
- Measure 417: Dm7
- Measure 418: G7
- Measure 419: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 420: A7
- Measure 421: Dm7
- Measure 422: G7
- Measure 423: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 424: A7
- Measure 425: Dm7
- Measure 426: G7
- Measure 427: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 428: A7
- Measure 429: Dm7
- Measure 430: G7
- Measure 431: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 432: A7
- Measure 433: Dm7
- Measure 434: G7
- Measure 435: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 436: A7
- Measure 437: Dm7
- Measure 438: G7
- Measure 439: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 440: A7
- Measure 441: Dm7
- Measure 442: G7
- Measure 443: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 444: A7
- Measure 445: Dm7
- Measure 446: G7
- Measure 447: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 448: A7
- Measure 449: Dm7
- Measure 450: G7
- Measure 451: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 452: A7
- Measure 453: Dm7
- Measure 454: G7
- Measure 455: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 456: A7
- Measure 457: Dm7
- Measure 458: G7
- Measure 459: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 460: A7
- Measure 461: Dm7
- Measure 462: G7
- Measure 463: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 464: A7
- Measure 465: Dm7
- Measure 466: G7
- Measure 467: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 468: A7
- Measure 469: Dm7
- Measure 470: G7
- Measure 471: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 472: A7
- Measure 473: Dm7
- Measure 474: G7
- Measure 475: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 476: A7
- Measure 477: Dm7
- Measure 478: G7
- Measure 479: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 480: A7
- Measure 481: Dm7
- Measure 482: G7
- Measure 483: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 484: A7
- Measure 485: Dm7
- Measure 486: G7
- Measure 487: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 488: A7
- Measure 489: Dm7
- Measure 490: G7
- Measure 491: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 492: A7
- Measure 493: Dm7
- Measure 494: G7
- Measure 495: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 496: A7
- Measure 497: Dm7
- Measure 498: G7
- Measure 499: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 500: A7
- Measure 501: Dm7
- Measure 502: G7
- Measure 503: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 504: A7
- Measure 505: Dm7
- Measure 506: G7
- Measure 507: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 508: A7
- Measure 509: Dm7
- Measure 510: G7
- Measure 511: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 512: A7
- Measure 513: Dm7
- Measure 514: G7
- Measure 515: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 516: A7
- Measure 517: Dm7
- Measure 518: G7
- Measure 519: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 520: A7
- Measure 521: Dm7
- Measure 522: G7
- Measure 523: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 524: A7
- Measure 525: Dm7
- Measure 526: G7
- Measure 527: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 528: A7
- Measure 529: Dm7
- Measure 530: G7
- Measure 531: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 532: A7
- Measure 533: Dm7
- Measure 534: G7
- Measure 535: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 536: A7
- Measure 537: Dm7
- Measure 538: G7
- Measure 539: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 540: A7
- Measure 541: Dm7
- Measure 542: G7
- Measure 543: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 544: A7
- Measure 545: Dm7
- Measure 546: G7
- Measure 547: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 548: A7
- Measure 549: Dm7
- Measure 550: G7
- Measure 551: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 552: A7
- Measure 553: Dm7
- Measure 554: G7
- Measure 555: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 556: A7
- Measure 557: Dm7
- Measure 558: G7
- Measure 559: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 560: A7
- Measure 561: Dm7
- Measure 562: G7
- Measure 563: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 564: A7
- Measure 565: Dm7
- Measure 566: G7
- Measure 567: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 568: A7
- Measure 569: Dm7
- Measure 570: G7
- Measure 571: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 572: A7
- Measure 573: Dm7
- Measure 574: G7
- Measure 575: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 576: A7
- Measure 577: Dm7
- Measure 578: G7
- Measure 579: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 580: A7
- Measure 581: Dm7
- Measure 582: G7
- Measure 583: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 584: A7
- Measure 585: Dm7
- Measure 586: G7
- Measure 587: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 588: A7
- Measure 589: Dm7
- Measure 590: G7
- Measure 591: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 592: A7
- Measure 593: Dm7
- Measure 594: G7
- Measure 595: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 596: A7
- Measure 597: Dm7
- Measure 598: G7
- Measure 599: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 600: A7
- Measure 601: Dm7
- Measure 602: G7
- Measure 603: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 604: A7
- Measure 605: Dm7
- Measure 606: G7
- Measure 607: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 608: A7
- Measure 609: Dm7
- Measure 610: G7
- Measure 611: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 612: A7
- Measure 613: Dm7
- Measure 614: G7
- Measure 615: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 616: A7
- Measure 617: Dm7
- Measure 618: G7
- Measure 619: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 620: A7
- Measure 621: Dm7
- Measure 622: G7
- Measure 623: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 624: A7
- Measure 625: Dm7
- Measure 626: G7
- Measure 627: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 628: A7
- Measure 629: Dm7
- Measure 630: G7
- Measure 631: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 632: A7
- Measure 633: Dm7
- Measure 634: G7
- Measure 635: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 636: A7
- Measure 637: Dm7
- Measure 638: G7
- Measure 639: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 640: A7
- Measure 641: Dm7
- Measure 642: G7
- Measure 643: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 644: A7
- Measure 645: Dm7
- Measure 646: G7
- Measure 647: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 648: A7
- Measure 649: Dm7
- Measure 650: G7
- Measure 651: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 652: A7
- Measure 653: Dm7
- Measure 654: G7
- Measure 655: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 656: A7
- Measure 657: Dm7
- Measure 658: G7
- Measure 659: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 660: A7
- Measure 661: Dm7
- Measure 662: G7
- Measure 663: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 664: A7
- Measure 665: Dm7
- Measure 666: G7
- Measure 667: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 668: A7
- Measure 669: Dm7
- Measure 670: G7
- Measure 671: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 672: A7
- Measure 673: Dm7
- Measure 674: G7
- Measure 675: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 676: A7
- Measure 677: Dm7
- Measure 678: G7
- Measure 679: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 680: A7
- Measure 681: Dm7
- Measure 682: G7
- Measure 683: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 684: A7
- Measure 685: Dm7
- Measure 686: G7
- Measure 687: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 688: A7
- Measure 689: Dm7
- Measure 690: G7
- Measure 691: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 692: A7
- Measure 693: Dm7
- Measure 694: G7
- Measure 695: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 696: A7
- Measure 697: Dm7
- Measure 698: G7
- Measure 699: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 700: A7
- Measure 701: Dm7
- Measure 702: G7
- Measure 703: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 704: A7
- Measure 705: Dm7
- Measure 706: G7
- Measure 707: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 708: A7
- Measure 709: Dm7
- Measure 710: G7
- Measure 711: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 712: A7
- Measure 713: Dm7
- Measure 714: G7
- Measure 715: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 716: A7
- Measure 717: Dm7
- Measure 718: G7
- Measure 719: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 720: A7
- Measure 721: Dm7
- Measure 722: G7
- Measure 723: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 724: A7
- Measure 725: Dm7
- Measure 726: G7
- Measure 727: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 728: A7
- Measure 729: Dm7
- Measure 730: G7
- Measure 731: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 732: A7
- Measure 733: Dm7
- Measure 734: G7
- Measure 735: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 736: A7
- Measure 737: Dm7
- Measure 738: G7
- Measure 739: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 740: A7
- Measure 741: Dm7
- Measure 742: G7
- Measure 743: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 744: A7
- Measure 745: Dm7
- Measure 746: G7
- Measure 747: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 748: A7
- Measure 749: Dm7
- Measure 750: G7
- Measure 751: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 752: A7
- Measure 753: Dm7
- Measure 754: G7
- Measure 755: E<sup>o</sup>7
- Measure 756: A7



## Moving Forward from Here

We've come a long way in this column. Now it's up to you to continue to study, improve your keyboard skills, and further your understanding of the language of music.

Though a great deal of information has been presented, we've only scratched the surface on the subject of theory and harmony. However, there are dozens of great books on the market that go into much greater depth than what we've been able to do here. You can also find a wide selection of songbooks, artist folios, sheet music, and fake books, online and at most large music shops. This is a great way to analyze the music of many major recording artists, composers, and rock and jazz performers. Don't overlook the opportunity.

If you've followed this column from the onset, you've certainly taken a major step towards better understanding the language

of music. Be sure to go back and review anything you're still unsure of and continue to improve your keyboard skills with daily practice.

As you continue to expand your skills and knowledge, make a conscious effort to listen to as many different types of music as possible. With so much great music out there, avoid getting trapped in just one genre, thereby limiting your understanding and appreciation of so many other styles. As you widen the scope of your listening habits, make it a point to always listen analytically, and do your best to apply what you learn.

Your ultimate goal should be continual growth, not only as a fine drummer, but as a *total musician* with an above average understanding of the music you're required to perform. The more you know about the complete musical picture, the better drummer you're apt to become. Good luck.

Understanding  
The Language Of Music

A Drummer's Guide To Theory And Harmony

CD INCLUDED

By Ron Spagnardi

Includes:  
Major Scales • Basic Chord Structure • Inversions  
Diatonic Harmony • Chord Voicings, Extensions, And Progressions



# Rhythm Vocabulary Development: Filling in the Spaces in 5/4

By Michael Packer

A useful way to conceptualize rhythm is to think of it as space. In the context of drumming, each note fills a specific space within the time signature. For instance, a quarter note in 4/4 fills the space of one beat. Within that space, you can incorporate a few or many notes. Understanding how to fill these spaces enhances your rhythmic vocabulary, gives you freedom and enables more creative expression.

Below are several examples of rhythmic combinations that fill the space of a quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes) and a dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes). Understand, these represent several examples but not the entire list of rhythms that you can use.

The following examples illustrate rhythmic combinations that fill the space of a quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes) and a dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes) in 5/4 time. Each example is numbered 1 through 40.

- 1. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 2. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 3. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 4. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 5. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 6. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 7. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 8. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 9. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 10. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 11. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 12. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 13. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 14. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 15. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 16. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 17. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 18. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 19. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 20. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 21. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 22. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 23. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 24. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 25. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 26. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 27. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 28. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 29. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 30. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 31. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 32. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 33. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 34. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 35. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 36. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 37. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 38. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 39. Quarter note (two 8<sup>th</sup> notes).
- 40. Dotted quarter note (three 8<sup>th</sup> notes).





## Developing Your Rhythmic Vocabulary in 5/4

To navigate the unique challenges of playing in “odd” meters (in this case 5/4) this method encourages expanding your rhythmic vocabulary by experimenting with various note groupings, fills and grooves. This is a structured approach that allows for exploration and discovery and helps you become more comfortable playing in 5/4.

### Understanding the Groupings

First, consider the rhythmic structure: two quarter notes followed by two dotted quarter notes, or 2, 2, 3, 3. This grouping provides a framework for exploring rhythmic possibilities. By experimenting with different ways to fill the space of a quarter note (two 8th notes) or a dotted quarter note (three 8th notes), you can cultivate a diverse range of rhythmic ideas. Remember, the options are limitless—there are hundreds of possible combinations to explore.

### Creating a Melody

Once you have internalized the grouping structure, select specific rhythms to fill each space. Think of the resulting rhythm as a melody. It’s crucial to practice this melody until it becomes second nature, as it will serve as the foundation for your further explorations.

### Developing a Sample Groove

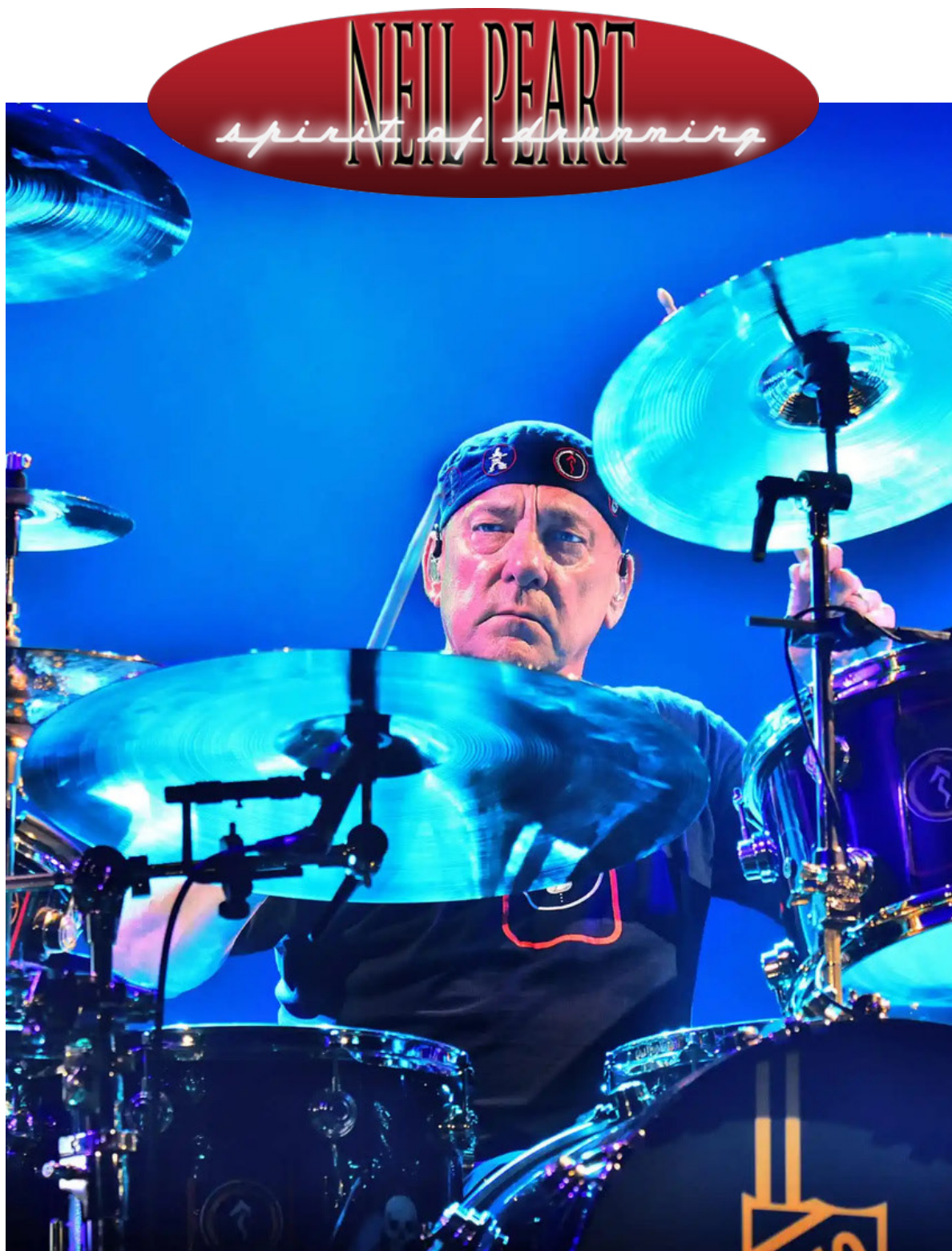
Use this melodic rhythm to orchestrate a groove on the drum set. I have provided a sample groove for you below. The idea is to translate the melody into a coherent groove, while allowing room for creativity. As you become more comfortable with the groove, begin to embellish it to explore new rhythmic ideas.

Moving beyond the groove, consider how you can orchestrate the melody around the drum set as a soloistic fill. Experiment with orchestrating the rhythm across different drums and cymbals, creating a melodic fill. The sample fills below are just the beginning; as you master them, it's essential to create your own variations. This exploration and discovery are crucial for developing your unique vocabulary.

[illegible]

While structured examples provide a starting point, the ultimate goal is to develop your own voice. Continuously challenge yourself by creating and testing new rhythms, grooves, and fills. As you do so, you'll develop a versatile rhythmic vocabulary that will enhance your musical expression and adaptability. Embrace each exploration and watch your confidence in playing 5/4 flourish. In future editions, we'll focus on other "odd" meters.





Are you a young drummer looking to take your talent to the next level? The Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship could be your chance to do just that. This annual scholarship is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of drummers, encouraging them to push their boundaries and grow as both musicians and individuals. Modern Drummer will start accepting applications for the next Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming award on March 1, 2025. All submissions can be sent to [www.moderndrummer.com.neil-peart-spirit-of-drumming-scholarship/](http://www.moderndrummer.com.neil-peart-spirit-of-drumming-scholarship/)

# The 2025 Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship Award

By Mark Griffith

Neil Peart's legacy, artistry, inspiration, and the impact that his drumming will forever have, is what the Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship is all about. His wonderfully constructed drum parts, his lyrics, and his commitment to drumming will always inspire us and represent a touchstone that drummers recognize and aspire towards. Neil left us Rush recordings, educational products, books, and interviews that will help each of us find our own way in drumming and in life. He leaves behind the memories of some of the most iconic drum solos, drum parts, and drum sets ever to be played. Like his drum heroes before him, Neil's drumming impacted us all and inspired us to find our own spirit in drumming. Neil's lyrics and drumming voice inside of Rush's music will always hold a special place in our hearts.

In honor of Neil's life, legacy, and the lineage of great drumming, the Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship was created and is being presented by David Frangioni, Modern Drummer, Carrie Nuttall-Peart, Olivia Peart, Rob Silverman, Dennis Wolfe, and the Universal Music Group. The scholarship honors the legendary Neil Peart by inspiring and nurturing a young drummer with the goal of developing the next generation of drumming talent. The Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship has previously been awarded to Maxx Rinkus and Aimee Peckham, two exceptional young drummers whose talent and dedication embody Neil's spirit.

2025's scholarship recipient will receive one year of private drum lessons with *Modern Drummer* educational innovator Rob Silverman. Rob remembers Neil in this way, "It was Neil's ability to compose drum parts that develop throughout a song, drumming is not just keeping a beat. It's being a part of and developing the excitement while telling the story of a song. That's what I think is the strength of Neil's drumming. Neil's body of work is so vast that it took me a lifetime to absorb it. I think it's going to take future generations their own lifetimes to absorb the entirety and depth of the Rush catalog."

Rob also shared with us some of the things that he had worked on with the past winners of the scholarship. "With Maxx Rinkus, we did some stuff from my five instructional books, and we worked on odd time signatures and some double bass beats and fills. We talked a lot about Neil Peart's drum set and his percussion instruments. We also talked about all the extracurricular stuff about Neil. It wasn't just straightforward *how to play the drums*."

Rob continued, "Aimee Peckham studied with me for over a year, we did a lot of snare drum reading from my books and from Wilcoxon. We learned a few Rush songs like 'YYZ,' 'Spirit of the Radio,' and 'Tom Sawyer,' from beginning to end. There was also a newer Rush tune called 'Turn the Page' that I didn't know, so Aimee and I transcribed and learned it together during our lessons. I also helped Amy get set up with her own personal recording system at her drums. She got an interface for her laptop, and I helped her out with microphone selection. We also did a few piano lessons. All in all, we worked on stuff that

I thought she should know, and then I also had her create her own curriculum."

When *Modern Drummer* asked about Rob's own favorite Rush songs, he was enthusiastic, "Strangely enough, my favorite Rush tunes come from the very early stuff, *Farewell to Kings*, *Permanent Waves*, as well as *Moving Pictures* and *Signals*. Of course, I love side two of *2112*, then there are songs like "Countdown," which is not one of the most popular Rush songs, but it's a personal favorite. I just love the way it makes me feel, it brings me back to a specific time in my life. "Losing It" is a sad song that I love. That song gives me a certain feeling that none of the others do. The song "Marathon" (from *Power Windows*) is another favorite of mine. But there are just so many great songs and so much great drumming! Neil's concert tom fills are one of my favorite things about his drumming, I was always fascinated by his 6, 8, 10, and 12" concert toms. I've always had some version of those on my kits. The way that Neil played odd time signatures has been a lifelong fascination, and his double bass flurries within the songs are something that I've taken from him. I have also worn out the signature Neil Peart ride cymbal beat, to this day



I probably play that in every song that I can squeeze it into. The Professor (as Neil was sometimes called) was always this wiser than his years wizard that I looked up to, and to me he'll always be a superhero."

The scholarship winner will also win a *Rush 50* Super Deluxe Edition box set. *Rush 50* is a wide-ranging 50-track super deluxe anthology that encompasses the entirety of the band's long and storied career. The release is bookended with the first ever reissue of their debut 1973 single and a live recording of the last song they ever performed together as a band at their final concert in 2015. Of the new *Rush 50* box set Dennis Wolfe (also a drummer, and Neil Peart fanatic) of Universal Music says, "If you are a Rush or a Neil fan, this is something you are going to want in your collection because it's just that good. The producer of the box, Jeff Fura, is a diehard Rush fan, he's been the "Rush guy" for many years and was the guy behind the Rush 40th anniversary editions. He's deep into the Rush camp, he's a proper Rush nerd (as you need to be to do this stuff,) and he knows what Rush fans want, because he's one of them. Jeff has ingratiated himself to the world of Rush. Geddy and Alex take a very protective



stance on all things that they do, and everything that bears their name has their blessing. Nothing happens without them. The new set is a monument to their career, and what a monumental career it was. The set celebrates 50 years of Rush doing what they did at a level that no one else has done. The Super Deluxe set is stunning, it's big and it's heavy, it's a wonder to behold, just like Rush. The lithograph's that Hugh Syme created are amazing, as is the graphic novel and the second book with liner notes by David Fricke. So, it's not *only* about the music, if you are into the aesthetic of Rush, there is a lot of exciting stuff there for you too. But there are also lots of rare unreleased tracks. It's just stunning!" The set will be available to fans in five distinct configurations: the Super Deluxe Edition, the Rush Store Exclusive Super Deluxe Edition, the 7-LP Deluxe Edition, the 4-CD Deluxe Edition, and the Digital Edition.

About the Neil Peart Scholarship Dennis Wolfe had this to say, "The entries have run the complete range of talent, production value, and Rush-aficionado-ship. All those things are considered, but the person who is chosen doesn't necessarily need to have the best lighting and the best audio. We're looking for a combination of raw talent and raw potential, there's a real commitment here to seeing who would benefit the most from this scholarship. If you're already a really good drummer, and you have a lot of resources at your disposal, maybe you're not going to be the person who benefits the most from this. This is a scholarship it's not an award, we're trying to find someone who wants to be a better drummer and someone that would benefit the most from winning this thing. We want to find who, on the other side of winning this, would come out of it with their life being changed. For any drummers that find themselves within the criteria of the scholarship, I encourage you to go for it. Don't think because you're not the flashiest or the fastest that you can't win the scholarship. Again, it's not an award for the highest achiever, it's a scholarship for the person who would benefit the most from it."

Dennis continued, "Neil was a towering figure, his impact on not only the craft of drumming, but on the power of what a drummer can be in a band, can't be overstated. He showed us how a drummer could push the boundaries and propel drums

and drumming as the engine of a band. Neil Peart augmented and amplified the sonic soundscape for the listener, and in Neil's case, he was also Rush's lyricist. Neil was a thinking man's drummer, a thinking man's lyricist, he was very well read, very intellectual, and very cerebral. His impact and influence will transcend generations, it already has. Certainly, there are drummer's who have taken it to the next level, but when it comes to this kind of drumming within the construct of a band, no one did it like Neil, and nobody did it like Rush. They changed the world."

Publisher and CEO of *Modern Drummer* David Frangioni remembers Neil in this way, "The impact that Neil Peart has had on my life, career, and drumming, is much like the impact that he has had on the entire world: undeniable, huge, impactful, and inspirational. I will always remember the first time I heard about Neil's playing from a drummer a few years older than me at the time. He had discovered Rush on 2112 and told me, 'Wait until you hear this drummer, Neil Peart.' It was the first time I heard about Neil, and it turned out to be only the beginning."

David recalls, "By the time *Moving Pictures* was released, I was a die-hard Rush fan, trying to learn every beat of every bar in every song. A lifelong mission had begun! I had the privilege of seeing Neil perform many times and every time I was blown away, inspired, and driven to try to play even 1/10<sup>th</sup> of what I just witnessed in person. I could go on for hours but suffice to say that along the way *Modern Drummer* and Neil collaborated many times and on very high levels. It's an honor to work with Neil's wife Carrie and his daughter Olivia to present the Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship. The impact of Neil that will live on forever and inspire generations of future drummers as only Neil Peart can."

The winner of the Neil Peart Spirit of Drumming Scholarship will also receive a *Modern Drummer* All Access Subscription and *Modern Drummer* merchandise. This scholarship is a tribute to Neil Peart's enduring legacy of inspiring and educating countless drummers worldwide. Contestants can apply here:

<https://woobox.com/oh783b>



# David Garibaldi's Drums and Cymbals

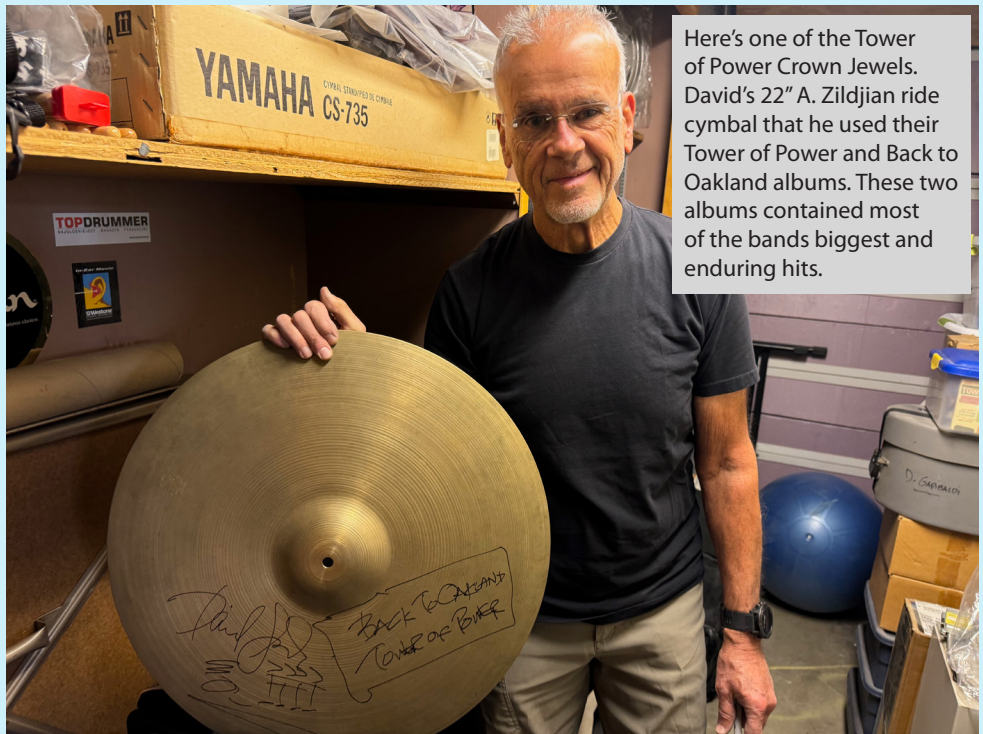
By Donn Bennett

Since David Garibaldi retired from Tower of Power, (but certainly not from drumming), he's still writing, teaching, recording, performing, pushing his own limits, and exploring new styles of music.

David's career with Tower of Power spanned 55 years. He left a legacy of groundbreaking work that stretched, reshaped, and expanded the definition of funk and soul drumming, while inspiring generations of drummers and entertaining legions of fans.

Over the course of this amazing career, David accumulated an astounding collection of drum gear. He kept almost every piece of drum gear that he's ever owned starting with his very first drum set. David maintains extremely high standards for everything he does, including the instruments he plays. Every item in this collection is truly stellar!

David and I have talked about his collection many times. As much as he loved these drums, he knew he couldn't keep them all. He couldn't stand having them just sitting in storage. Ultimately, he wanted to put them in the hands of drummers and fans who could play and enjoy them.



Here's one of the Tower of Power Crown Jewels. David's 22" A. Zildjian ride cymbal that he used their Tower of Power and Back to Oakland albums. These two albums contained most of the bands biggest and enduring hits.

He knew he had a lot of gear, but there was so much stuff, spanning so many years, that it was impossible to remember everything he had. It was overwhelming. It wasn't until he retired from Tower of Power that he finally had time to sort through his expansive collection and figure out exactly what he'd accumulated. When he asked if I could help with the project, I gladly agreed.



David Garibaldi's Yamaha Tour Custom drum set. This set maple shelled set in Black Licorice stain finish was David's "East Coast set". It was stored on the east coast for Tower of Power shows in the eastern U.S. 22x16 bass drum 16x15 and 13x9 mounted toms. 14x3.5 David Garibaldi Signature model brass snare drum, Spaun 13x3 Side snare.

When I met him meet him at his Tower of Power storage facility in southern California last October, we dug through a staggering number of cymbals, snares, sets, and accessories. Every case produced a Tower of Power treasure and Dave was right there to give me the backstory on almost every piece.

Nothing makes me happier than digging through old flight cases in a dusty warehouse. It makes me feel like a drum archeologist! After pulling out a few sentimental pieces and anything he'd need for his future musical projects, we loaded everything on a truck and sent it to my facility in Seattle, WA.

We've spent the last several months inventorying, cleaning, photographing, and documenting this massive collection. By the time you see

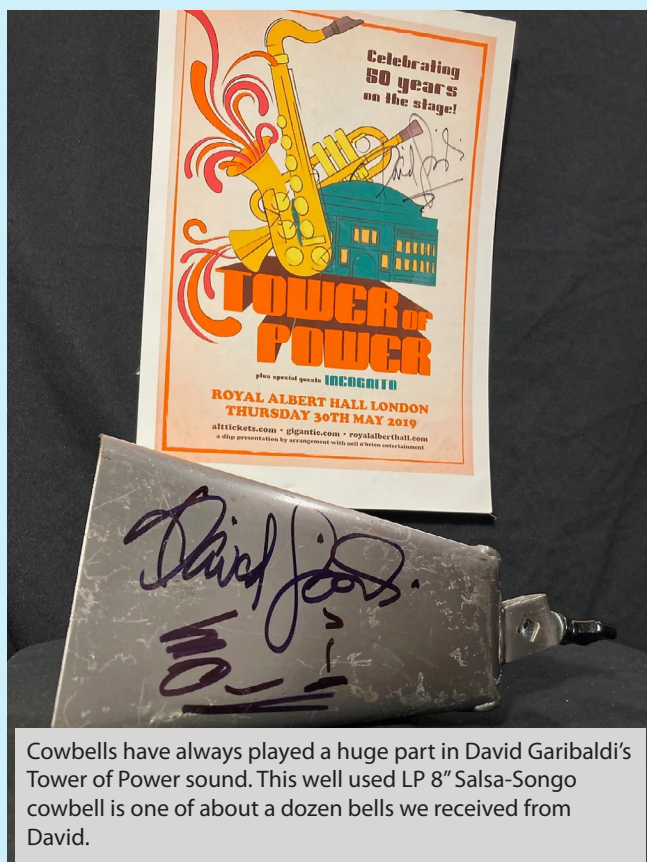


this article everything should be up on our website and available to purchase. I'm so fortunate to be given the opportunity to help put these amazing instruments into the hands of people who can love them as much as David Garibaldi has.

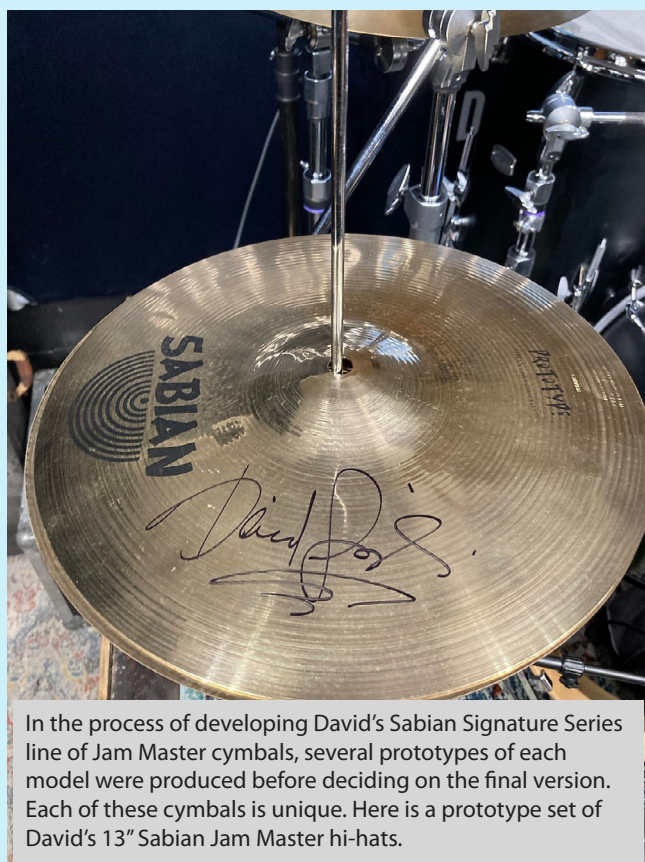
David works very closely with the drum and cymbal companies he endorses. His exacting standards inspired them to the highest levels of musicality and craftsmanship. The instruments they collaborated on demonstrate David's passion for precision and excellence. His signature model Yamaha drums and Sabian cymbals have always been top sellers and remain in extreme high demand. Here's a look at just a few of the hundreds of items you can finally get your hands on.



This is the very first prototype of the Yamaha David Garibaldi Signature Model snare drum. Notice the "000" serial number. The thick black plastic extender seen under the throw off was eventually removed on the final production version.



Cowbells have always played a huge part in David Garibaldi's Tower of Power sound. This well used LP 8" Salsa-Songo cowbell is one of about a dozen bells we received from David.



In the process of developing David's Sabian Signature Series line of Jam Master cymbals, several prototypes of each model were produced before deciding on the final version. Each of these cymbals is unique. Here is a prototype set of David's 13" Sabian Jam Master hi-hats.

*Modern Drummer* is spotlighting new recordings that have the drums at the center of their sound. These recordings might be drummer-led, or just include a high-quality, special, or unique drumming and musical performances from the drummer and/or musicians in the band. This column is not restricted to only recordings, we will also be spotlighting new books and DVD's that are being released. We encourage our readers to listen to the recordings that inspire them and keep looking for new musical avenues to explore. You'll never know what new music you might find inspiring! Listen and learn.

### McStine & Minnemann

///

Marco Minnemann drums  
Self-produced

These days so much of the best music comes from artists releasing their own music, on their own terms, and on their own labels. Multi-instrumentalist Randy McStine and drummer Marco Minnemann (also a multi-instrumentalist) are doing just that!!! *///* is their third release and their best. The musical comparisons to a less heavy Porcupine Tree are probably most appropriate, because McStine has worked with them (and Minnemann has also recorded with Steven Wilson) in the past, but McStine & Minnemann's accessible music stands strongly on its own. Polished, well-produced, extremely well-written, and featuring some outstanding instrumental performances, *///* is a GREAT recording. At times the music sounds like Pink Floyd ("Over the Bay,") and at other times they sound like The Police ("Tigress," "Your Own Decisions.") The obvious prog influences are always present ("Riding on Clouds," "Survive," "Crossing Wires,") but not overwhelming. Minnemann's groove is omnipresent on "Free," and his connection with McStine's basslines is strong. Randy McStine has a very pleasant voice, and the compositions that this collaboration create are world class. And while there are a lot of sections in most of these shorter tunes, it all feels natural and organic. For those of us who like our pop music a little proggy, and our prog music a little poppy, this will be your new favorite band, and *///* is the record for you!

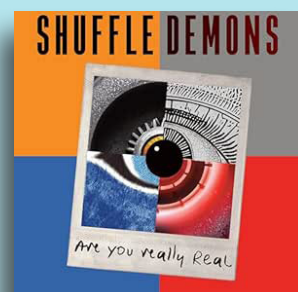


things along with taste and groove. The legendary sound and touch of Labarbera has never been associated with the ECM vibe, but as heard on "Trying to Recall" and "This Is New" he does it well, providing a bit more push and swing to the proceedings. Florian Hoefner really steps out and becomes the perfect support for Winstone, while Labarbera becomes the perfect musical instigator of the band. This is interesting music and a beautiful recording with a well-conceived concept. It provides a new context to hear the artistry of drummer Joe Labarbera, and that is something everyone should do!

### Shuffle Demons

*Are You Really Real*  
Stich Wynston drums  
Factor-Alma Records

After 40 years and 11 records, Canada's Shuffle Demons are at their creative height. Don't let the name of the band mislead you, they are much more than shuffles. The distinctive sound of three saxophones (Richard Underhill, Kelly Jefferson, and Matt Lagan) bass (Mike Downes,) and drums (with occasional vocals from co-founder Richard Underhill) makes the Shuffle Demons extremely unique. Co-founder and drummer Stich Wynston brings a strong sense of groove and a robust sense of humor to the band. I don't know if the Shuffle Demons are coming out of slightly similar bands such as Lenny Pickett's Borneo Horns or Joey Baron's Baron Down, or if they are just on the same musical page, but I figured I'd mention the comparison for those who haven't heard the Shuffle Demons. For those uninitiated, I'll suggest "Good Mourning," "Money is My Only Religion," "In the Air" and saxophonist Kelly Jefferson's "Nice Signal" as perfect introductions to the Shuffle Demons. Energetic, adventurous, uplifting, and entertaining, those are words that are often used to describe Canada's cultural ambassadors. I'll throw in funky, bombastic, and eclectic. Whatever your adjectives of choice are, the Shuffle Demons *Are You Really Real* brings all of it, and *much* more. It's always fun to be surprised. Congrats to leaders Stich Wynston and Richard Underhill, I can't wait to see what the next 40 years brings.



### Atlantic Jazz Collective Featuring Norma Winstone and Joe Labarbera

*Seascape*  
Joe Labarbera drums  
Alma Records

If you like the classic days of ECM records by Kenny Wheeler, Ralph Towner, and Steve Swallow you will love this record. English vocalist Norma Winstone is not "just another" jazz singer. She is a lyricist of the highest order, and an integral part of every band she's in. She often composes lyrics to songs by compositions by artists like John Taylor and Kenny Wheeler (as she does here) and did some absolute classic recordings in the 80s with many European jazz legends. The rest of the band (saxophonist Mike Murley, pianist Florian Hoefner, and bassist Jim Vivian) support the ECM vibe as well. But it is the legendary drummer Joe Labarbera who moves





## Sharel Cassity

### *Gratitude*

Lewis Nash drums  
Sunnyside Records

When putting together a record it's always good to lean on established musical relationships. Saxophonist Sharel Cassity grew up listening to Christian McBride's seminal record *Gettin' To It*, so why not reunite the same rhythm section from that record for her debut recording as a leader? It's no surprise that McBride, Lewis Nash, and pianist Cyrus Chestnut would lay down a beautiful musical carpet as they did 30 years ago. All that was left was for Sharel to compose some challenging music in tribute to her influences and mentors Jimmy Heath, Kenny Garrett, and Joshua Redman. And that is what she did. We don't hear as much from Lewis Nash as we used to (maybe that's because he now owns a jazz club in Phoenix, AZ, and is on the faculty of ASU.) But Lewis is one of the modern greats of jazz drumming. Listen to Nash's brushes on "Smile" and his gentle pulse that pushes "Gratitude" forward. His feel-good groove on "Suspect" should bring a smile to anyone's face and listen to what Nash's drumming pulls out of soloist's trombonist Michael Dease and trumpeter Terell Stafford. The subtle backbeat of "The Promise" is very nice, as is the funky "In the Spirit." Nash and McBride are a magical duo that anyone would be wise to hire for their record. They put the time in the same place, they inhale the music, and they exhale musicality. Some things just work, and Sharel Cassity's *Gratitude* is one of them.



## Courtney Cutchins

### *Grunge to Grace*

Obed Calvaire drums  
Daniel Sadownick percussion  
Laseryn Records

Here's an idea... Arrange Soundgarden's "Boot Camp," "The Day I Tried to Live," and Nirvana's "All Apologies" for a vocal fronted jazz quintet. Many might not accept that idea instantly. But that's the idea that jazz singer and Seattle native Courtney Cutchins had during a magical odyssey of self-discovery. On *Grunge to Grace*, Courtney augments the "grunge" with her own graceful compositions. To accomplish all of this, she needed just the right band, and she succeeded when she assembled pianist David Cook, guitarist Nir Felder, bassist Matt Clohesy, and drummer Obed Calvaire. The band cooks on Cutchins' "Passenger," "Illuminate," and on Soundgarden's "Boot Camp." But Nirvana's "All Apologies" has never sounded like this! Wow! Courtney's vocals pull the band through her interpretations, and the band rises to the occasion in creating a soundscape of "grungy jazz." Her song and beautiful lyrics of "Grunge to Grace" say it all. Throughout the entire record, the band lets the songs evolve organically, and allows everything to happen naturally. This is an ambitious record, and it succeeds. Courtney Cutchins owes no apologies to anyone.

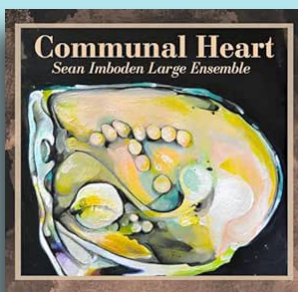


## Sean Imboden Large Ensemble

### *Communal Heart*

Cassius Goens drums  
Self-produced with the  
Indianapolis Jazz Foundation

Sean Imboden's Large Ensemble is a big band that is making their own musical path. Their music is not comprised of any of the standard big band repertoire. Their record *Communal Heart* consists of five original compositions that are masterfully arranged with lush woodwinds, stabbing brass, and a nimble rhythm section that grooves hard and shifts moods on a second's notice. This is dense music, and the rhythm section doesn't get in the way. However, they also don't lay back and passively let the music blossom. Saxophonist Sean Imboden has created and enlisted a crack rhythm section of guitarist Joel Tucker, pianist Chris Pitts, bassist Nick Tucker, and drummer Cassius Goens to guide his compositions and arrangements through the finish line. Listen to "Certified Organic," and "Portal Passage," I am supremely glad that there are big bands today that are expanding the lens of big band music like Imboden's ensemble does on these outstanding tracks. Challenging yet listenable, funky but not rigid, swinging yet not old and musty, well played yet not chops laden and intellectual... Imboden's music is simply indescribable, yet thoroughly enjoyable.

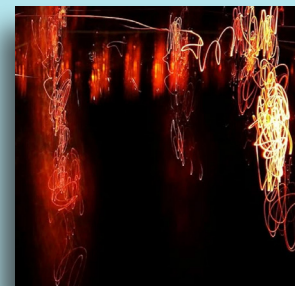


## Perceptions Trio

### *The Wicked Crew*

Paulo Almeida drums  
Pulse Records

With an instrumentation of saxophone, guitar, and drums the approach of the Perceptions Trio could be confusing. One might assume that Perceptions Trio is coming out of the classic Paul Motian Trio with Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano. I don't know if that is true, but with songs like "Ubarto," "Sombra," and "Lit Candles" that might seem like a safe assumption. Paying close attention to drummer Paulo Almeida's playing might support that thought even more. However, the fact that both guitarist Charley Rose and saxophonist Silvan Joray use a good deal of effects on their instruments makes this trio a little different. Furthermore, upon hearing compositions like "Radio Goose Bumps" and "The Wicked Crew" the Motian Trio comparison starts to falter. Those tunes seem downright Holdsworth-ian, and Paulo Almeida sounds fantastic in that context as well. The melodic soundscape of "Perceptions" is simply beautiful, as is the melodicism of "Peaceful Departure." With all these approaches, the Perceptions Trio is enjoyable, and their sound is flexible. Almeida covers the different musical approaches well, and the trio has a sound and a concept. The trio can "paint" with sound very well, at times I just find myself wanting a few more colors on their palette.



### Western Jazz Collective

*Dark Journey: The Music of Andrew Rathbun*

Keith Hall drums

Kevin "Bujo" Jones percussion

Origin Records



Saxophonist and composer Andrew Rathbun has a specific musical direction, and he accomplishes creating a nice set of music in that direction. However, describing that direction is difficult. Listening to the opener "Making No Sense" might offer the reader some help. Rathbun's music is highly composed, with large doses of improvisation, using both directional grooves and expansive soundscapes. Doses of electric piano and distorted guitar further push the music outside of the norm, as do the wordless vocals of Greg Jasperese. One thing is for certain, bassist John Hebert, drummer Keith Hall, and percussionist Kevin "Bujo" Jones create a rhythmic atmosphere that allows the soloists and the compositions to go anywhere and everywhere, and they do. Hall and Jones work together well, and Hebert finds the space between them to explore. The front line of trumpeter Scott Cowan, Rathbun, and guitarist Matt Landon fill up the space that the rhythm section leaves, the rhythm section creates a nice springboard for melodicism, and pianist Matthew Fries manages to intersperse important colors and directional signs upon the music. At the middle of it all is musical ringleader Andrew Rathbun who gently coerces some very nice music from the Western Jazz Collective.

the last song on this record says it all... "RnR's Demise (Has Been Greatly Exaggerated,)" YES, there are still great rockers out there creating amazing rock and roll music, it's just getting harder to find. But with Ricky Byrd singing, writing, and playing guitar on *NYC Made*, (along with some really good drumming from Holley, Comess, and Price,) you have found some of the really good stuff!

### Kaisa Maensivu: Kaisa's Machine

*Moving Parts*

Joe Peri drums

Greenleaf Music



Bassist and composer Kaisa Maensivu has put together a very nice "machine" (band.) The instrumentation of vibes, guitar, piano, bass, and drums creates a harmonically dense sound, which the bassist (and bandleader) holds together wonderfully. Drummer Joe Peri and bassist Maensivu play together well. Together they use a nice contrast of space and density in their accompaniment which works well with all the density of the many harmonic instruments. Check out their playing together on "Best Kept Secrets" which is a nice feature for vibraphonist Sasha Berliner. Peri takes a nice solo over a vamp on "Who's Asking?" The leader gets a very nice big and woody bass tone while keeping a focused pulse. This is a well-oiled machine and kudos to vibraphonist Sasha Berliner, guitarist Max Light, pianist Eden Ladin, all are very good and have found a voice in Maensivu's music.

### Ricky Byrd

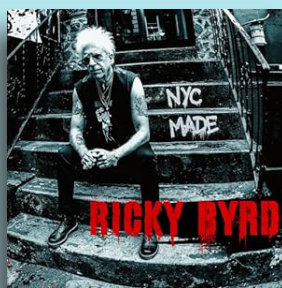
*NYC Made*

Steve Holley (5 tracks) Aaron

Comess (6 tracks) Thommy Price

(1 track) drums

Wicked Cool Records



Steven Van Zandt's Wicked Cool Records has been releasing great rock and roll with attitude for a while. Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Ricky Byrd's new record is yet another supremely strong release from the people at Wicked Cool. Byrd is a NY musical veteran who had fame as a member of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts. It MUST be mentioned that Byrd has great taste in drummers with the (criminally unknown) Steve Holley, Aaron Comess (of Spin Doctor fame,) and bad-ass NYC rocker Thommy Price taking turns manning the skins. Byrd's tunes are high quality rock and roll, with just a hint of danger, and a strong NYC vibe. "Anna Lee" has a wonderful street corner vibe, "Then Along Comes You" harkens of a strong Jersey Shore feeling, "(Ya Get) 1 Life" brings you back to the legendary Max's Kansas City club, and "Stay Grateful" feels like the Lower East Side of the 70s and 80s. Listen to Holley's legendary in the pocket backbeat on "Best of Times." Thommy Price's raucous groove (and the title of the song) on the next to

### Brad Goode Polytonal Big Band

*The Snake Charmer*

Paul Romaine drums

Origin Records



Don't let the "polytonal" name fool you, this is a nice and pretty traditional big band, with some extra-expressive soloing (that's part of the "polytonal" ingredient,) playing very nice and well-conceived charts. Most of the compositions and arrangements are by trumpeter Brad Goode and they run the gamut from inside and swingin' to slightly funky. Goode's arranging approach is where more of the polytonal aspect of the band enters, but it isn't as "out" as the moniker might imply. Goode has assembled a very capable band, with some nice soloists, but it is Goode who is the prime soloist. The rhythm section and drummer Paul Romaine play the charts very well, this sounds like a well-rehearsed and tight band. Romaine breaks thing up a bit on "The Snake Charmer," and plays some nice brushes on a few tunes. "Pentacles" is funkier, and Romaine drives this tune nicely. The drums *could* be too overbearing

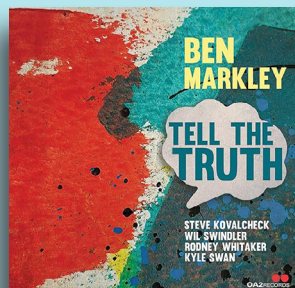


on a song like “Cabin in the Sky” but Romaine low-keys it to perfection. His light touched propulsion works well on “Hypnotic Suggestion” too. The arrangement of “I Can’t Forget About You” is simply beautiful. This is a nice big band, and a nice recording. Congrats to Goode for his arranging experimentation, although the casual listener might not hear it as experimentation (which is good.) And congrats to a rhythm section that supports the arrangements and the music perfectly.

### Ben Markley

*Tell The Truth*  
Kyle Swan drums  
OA2 Records

Pianist Ben Markley has collaborated with drummer Ari Hoenig, saxophonist Greg Osby, and arranged the music of Cedar Walton for a big band. But in the liner notes of this recording, he calls his most truthful recording. It’s a small group of swingin’ musicians playing a great set of Markley’s compositions. They don’t paint to far outside the lines, but that isn’t a bad thing. Guitarist Steve Kovalcheck and alto saxophonist Wil Swindler take care of the melodies, and the rhythm section of Markley, bassist Rodney Whitaker, and drummer Kyle Swan take care of business. “Snowy Range Blues,” and “It’s Spoken Spokane” (which includes a nice solo from Swan,) are the highlights. “Rimshot” is a nice closer that takes the listener on a joyful ride.



### Isaiah Collier & The Chosen Few

*The World in on Fire*  
Michael Shekwoaga Ode drums  
Division 81 Records

Hit play and LOOK OUT!!!!

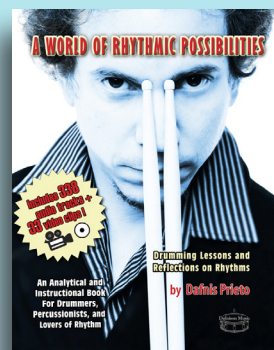
Tenor saxophonist Isaiah Collier explains, “This project is a sonic exploration, blending sounds, consciousness and activism to raise awareness about the pressing issues of our time.” Collier’s urgency is palpable on the opener “The Time is Now,” and that urgency is stoked throughout by the rolling, rumbling, and tumbling of drummer Michael Shekwoaga Ode, who (like the world) is also on fire! The rest of the Chosen Few consist of pianist Julian Davis Reid and bassist Jeremiah Hunt, and the band is simply throwing down. The opening track alone, is well worth the price of admission. But the Chose Few are just getting chosen. The interspersing of audio clips of news broadcasts is a nice touch that further drives home Collier’s deep concern for the times in which we are living. Ode keeps up his slash and burn drumming behind Collier on “Ahmaud Arbery” The  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Collier’s modal “The Hate You Give Is the Love You Lose,” and Ode’s drumming will remind you of Coltrane’s later aggressive takes on “My Favorite Things.” Then



the quartet takes it up (yet) another notch on “Crash,” which crescendos in a breathtaking drums and tenor duet (I’ll skip another easy Elvin and Coltrane reference.) The band is again in complete burnout mode on the title track “The World is on Fire.” The peaceful resolution of the closing track, “We Don’t Even Know Where We’re Heading” is an essential breath of fresh air. All I can say is WOW, there is a new sheriff in town and his name is Michael Shekwoaga Ode, and thankfully he has a found a musical foil in saxophonist Isaiah Collier. They are scary together; this entire record is on fire!!!

*What are the Odds: A Journey on Latin Rhythms & Meters for the Modern & Advanced Drummer*  
**Dafnis Prieto**  
Dafnison Music

In the introduction of his new (and third) book, Dafnis Prieto explains that *What are the Odds*, “Is a journey of rhythms and meters, and it is constructed over a collection of selected rhythms from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Brazil. Each chapter in the book focuses on the development of individual rhythms starting from the most basic variations, in their regular time signature (meter). This is followed by a fascinating trip of meters— expanding and contracting each of those rhythms’ shapes, challenging their own anatomies, creating a new rhythmic journey for each of them.” But this is much more than a book with a long list of Latin grooves. Dafnis walks us through each groove. His advice to start singing the main rhythmic-melodic phrase patterns is particularly good advice. His breaking down of longer and complex time signatures into pulse is another essential tool. Each of the 519 groove examples comes with an audio and video clip which is a great addition. Furthermore, the way that Dafnis walks us through each groove before he varies the time signature is very educational and essential. The notational style that Dafnis has chosen is even a step above the rest. I can’t imagine a better book for learning Latin Rhythms and how to apply them to modern music. The Guaguanco’ section alone has 82 examples. The included sections on Bembe’, Partido Alto, 6/8 Backbeat, Songo, Abakua’, Merengue, Colombia, are equally as thorough. For further listening I can also recommend any of Dafnis Prieto’s 10 recordings as a leader and his countless recordings as a side person.



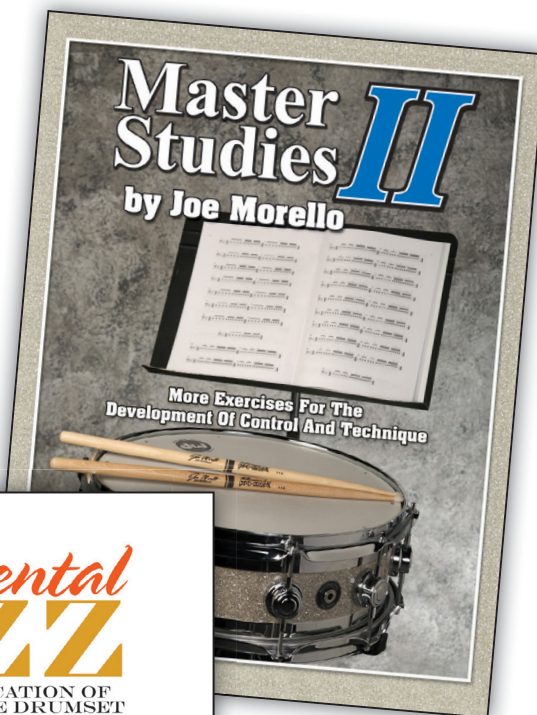
# **MODERN DRUMMER**<sup>®</sup>

## The Joe Morello Collection



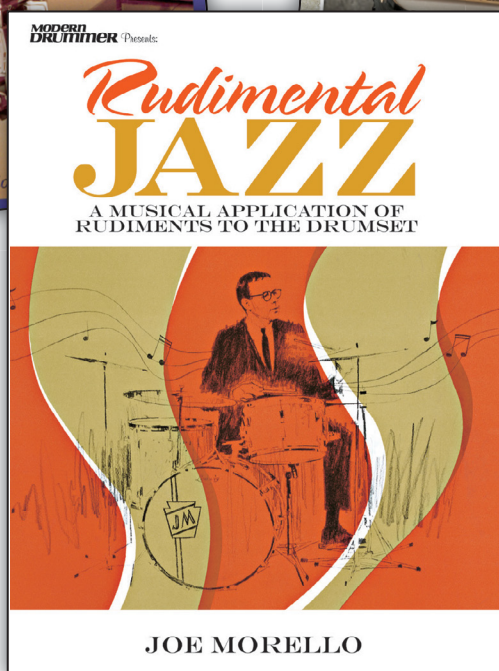
### Master Studies

This book focuses on these important aspects: accent studies, buzz-roll exercises, single and double-stroke patterns, control studies, flam patterns, dynamic development, endurance studies, and much more!



### Master Studies II

Like Master Studies, this is a workbook of material to use in developing the hands for drumming. Challenging exercises encourage students to learn slow, sensible and accurate practice techniques.



### Rudimental Jazz

The precursor to his two most widely used instructional books – Master Studies and Master Studies II – this book covers: techniques such as right and left hand grips, playing position, striking the snare drum & hi-hat and more; beginning exercises; drum beats; teacher's charts; graphic cutouts and more.

Available In Print and Digital Format

**BUY FROM YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC RETAILER**  
**CHECK OUT MORE AT [MODERNDRUMMER.COM](http://MODERNDRUMMER.COM)**



# Caleb Crosby's Kelsea Ballerini Touring Kit

Photos by Jason Mehler



**Drums:** Gretsch USA Custom in Satin Tangerine Metallic - 14x22 Kick, 9x13 Rack Tom, 16x16 and 16x18 Floor Toms, 6.5x14 2mm Copper Snare (main,) 8x14 Maple Matching (side,) 6.5x14 Bell Brass (spare.)

**Heads:** Remo - Controlled Sound Coated on all Snares/Clear Ambassador Snare Side, Vintage Coated Emperors on Tom Batter/Clear Diplomat on Resonant, Powerstroke P3 Clear on Kick Batter/Smooth White on Resonant.

**Cymbals:** Paiste - From L to R: 19" Masters Extra Thin Crash, 12" Stack Ring Versa Stack, 15" Formula 602 Modern Essentials Hats, 21" Big Beat Crash, 22" Traditional Light Ride, 19" Formula 602 Modern Essentials Crash, 18" Masters Dark Crash.

**Hardware:** Drum Workshop 9000 Pedals and Stands.

**Throne:** Roc-n-Soc throne with ButtKicker transducer.

**Percussion:** LP Mounted Brass Tambourine.

**Electronics:** Roland KT-10, BT-1, (3) V-Pad PDX-100.

**Drumsticks:** Vater - 5A Stretch Wood, Bamboo Splashsticks, T5 Soft Mallets.

**In-Ear Monitors:** Fir Audio Xe6.

**Accessories:** Big Fat Snare Drum Donut XL, Snareweight M80, Vater Felt Kick Beater.







# TOUR KIT RUNDOWN VIDEOS



## CHECK THEM OUT HERE



Andy Hurley - Fallout Boy

Billy Cobham - Billy Cobham Quartet

Brooks Wackerman - Avenged Sevenfold

Chad Sexton - 311

Charlie Benante - Pantera

Danny Carey - Tool

Danny Wagner - Greta Van Fleet

Jimmy Chamberlin - Smashing Pumpkins



Max Weinberg - Bruce Springsteen

Mickey "Cavs" Cavanagh - KGLW

Mike Portnoy - Winery Dogs

Mike Wengren - Disturbed

Mikkey Dee - Scorpions

Sarah Jones - Harry Styles

Zac Farro - Paramore

and many more!

More Videos at: <https://moderndrummer.com/videos>