Product Close-Up: Rustic Percussion, Klaw Drum Anchor & Wing Thing

MODERN DRUMMER

THE WORLD'S #1 DRUM COMMUNITY SINCE 1977

AUGUST 2025



Shakira's

BRENDAN BUCKLEY

Joe Chambers

Yamaha's

A Night In The Pocket



© 2025 Yamaha Corporation of America. All rights reserved.

jk
Drum Systems

LOCK IN.
ROCK OUT.

No More Drum Movement.
Period.
Always the same position



USED BY
METALLICA, SLIPKNOT & MORE.

amazon (US)

Dealers (EU)

@jkdrumsystems



SLIPKNOT



METALLICA

www.jkdrumsystems.com

CONTENTS

18 BRENDAN BUCKLEY
NOT JUST PLAYING PATTERNS WITH SHAKIRA
By Mark Griffith



Photo by Nicolas Gerádin

32 JOE CHAMBERS
A Life of Cross Rhythms
By Mark Griffith

40 YAMAHA'S A NIGHT IN THE POCKET
Celebrating Yamaha Drums, Yamaha Drummers, and The Pocket
By Jason Mehler and David Frangioni

LESSONS

68 BASICS
Your Drumming Persona
By Chris Lesso

58 TRANSCRIPTION
Yes "Heart of the Sunrise" from *Fragile*, drummer Bill Bruford
Transcription by Marc Atkinson

80 ROCK AND JAZZ CLINIC
Rhythmic Vocabulary Development:
By Michael Packer

69 ROCK PERSPECTIVES
Progressive Drumming Essentials: Switching Gears with Double Bass Drums
By Aaron Edgar

72 JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP
Master Studies II: Triplet Variations
By Joe Morello

76 TEACHERS' FORUM
The New Breed: 39 Systems Pt. 2
By Gary Chester

EQUIPMENT

12 NEW AND NOTABLE
New products from Roland, Waves, LP, and Gon Bops

14 PRODUCT CLOSE UP
Reviews of New Equipment from Rustic Percussion, Klaw Drum Anchor, and Wing Thing

DEPARTMENTS

6 EDITOR'S OVERVIEW
Drums Is Life, Life Is Drums
By Mark Griffith

7 KIT OF THE MONTH
Small But Mighty

8 JAZZ INSIGHTS
Recognizing Your Muse
By Peter Erskine

82 COLLECTOR'S CORNER
Alex Van Halen Signature Snare Drums
By Donn Bennett

88 EYE CANDY
Mike McDermott's Joan Jett Touring Kit

84 OUT NOW
New Releases Featuring the Drumming of: Zac Farro, Todd Sucherman, Ra Kalam Bob Moses, Pat Petrillo, Tina Raymond, Steve Potts, Alix Goffic, Herlin Riley, Cyril Atef, Jon Grandcamp, Paul Van Wageningen, Derek Rolando, John Santos, Michael Spiro, Chris Nickolls, Will Fry, Allan Mednard, Manuel Pasquinelli, Nasheet Waits, Matt Wilson, and a book by Micha Fromm.

BONE
• DRUMS • est. 2005 •

The world's only TRUE Carbon Fiber drum.
Using aerospace technology, we deliver the ultimate in precision, power, and durability.

The TRUE CARBON snare drum is a powerhouse unlike any other drum you have experienced. Boasting a commanding sound and stunning look, TRUE Carbon drums consistently deliver a precise and unique performance.

FEATURES:
- ***Explosive articulation and sensitive response***
- ***Ultra-stable shell for easy and consistent tuning***
- ***Extraordinary dynamic range***
- ***Extreme durability***

STANDARD SIZES:
- ***14" x 3.5" / 5.5" / 6.5" / 8"***

STANDARD FINISHES:
- ***Twill / Plain / Wide spread / Forged***

TWILL Carbon look



www.bonedrum.com
Explore our new website and learn more about TRUE CARBON and our full range of products.

AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Drums is Life, Life is Drums.

By Mark Griffith



As a musician and a drummer, I feel that drumming (and music) can help improve the world. *Yes, I truly believe that!!!* I believe that if more people were taught to enjoy music (and play drums) the world would be a *far better* place. Music teaches us empathy, problem solving, history, commitment, improvisation, faith, self-confidence, humility, how to make mistakes (and fix them,) patience, and about the MANY different people and cultures of our world. The lessons of music and drumming can be applied to anything that life offers us, good and bad. I often tell people that, *"Drums is Life, and Life is Drums."* However, this is not just a trite mantra about my lifelong commitment to drumming. It is my explanation of how music and drumming has helped me learn about life, and what life has taught me about drumming.

Those lessons are universal and are never needed more than when we face natural and manmade disasters and tragedy. Whether it's wildfires, pandemics, floods, earthquakes, mass shootings, hurricanes, or horrific accidents; it's happening far too often! But even in these catastrophic events, the lessons of music (and drumming) can help us find solutions and solace.

With music, I encourage people to remember and study the past. The history of music and drumming is filled with legends, important music, and lessons that deserve to be remembered. We should learn from music and drumming history; we can't forget it. The *history* of music and drumming will bring us into the *future* of music and drumming. Secondly, important music (and drumming) should linger and last. Don't be so quick to move on to "the next thing." Allow great music (and drumming) to stay with you for a while, commit it to your ears, your minds, your heart, and in your soul. Thirdly, music enriches your life and the lives of others. Whether we are professional, weekend-warrior, or amateur musicians, we play drums (and music) to enrich the lives of others *and* ourselves. Lastly, music teaches us about ourselves. Through music we learn and better ourselves, and then we share our improved selves for the betterment of others.

With natural and manmade disaster and tragedy, we must remember what has happened, and we must learn from our history and mistakes. Secondly, people's lives and tragic situations are not "fixed" when our attention (or the news cycle) has moved on to the "next thing." Recovery takes a very long time. Thirdly, music should help raise the spirits and money for those in times of need. Lastly, when you help others, you are also learning about and improving yourself.

Let us take the lessons from drums and music and apply them to even the most difficult parts of life. In turn, let's use drums and music to make the world a better place!

Drums is Life, Life is Drums,



Mark Griffith

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 Kluft**

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 Northup

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.

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

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

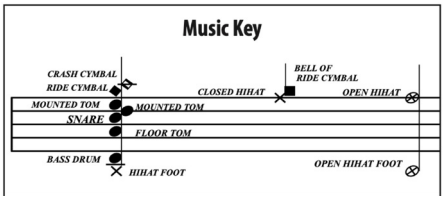
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, 1279 W. Palmetto Park Rd PO Box 276064 Boca Raton, FL 33427.

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

Subscribe today at moderndrummer.com/subscribe

MODERN DRUMMER ONLINE: www.moderndrummer.com



Small But Mighty

This month's Kit of the Month comes to us from Marco Segoviano. His drums are Pearl Midtown Series with a 10" rack tom and a 13" floor tom. His bass drum is 16" and his snare is a Mapex MPX Steel 10 x 5.5. His set is equipped entirely with Mapex hardware. Marco's cymbals are Meinl Classic Custom Dark's with an 8" Bell, 8" Splash, 13" Hi-hats, 16" Trash Crash, and an 18" China. Marco uses Evans heads on top, his 10" and 13" toms each get an EC2, the 16" bass drum gets an EMAD Clear, and his resonant heads are all Remo Emperor's. His snare head is an Evans Onyx Black.

Marco removed the wrap from his drums, added some custom stripes, and sealed the shells (inside and out) with several coats of varnish. He states, "Despite being a small set, I have managed to get a very good sound by using high quality heads on the top and bottom and removing the wrap on the drums to get more resonance."











Recognizing Your Muse

By Peter Erskine

I've been keeping notes regarding this very column and what I should write about for my readers. Out of the myriad of disparate thoughts I jotted down, a common theme seems to be revealing itself to me, let's call it, "Recognizing Your Muse." I tend to refer to my Muse in the feminine but to each their own. One's muse may reveal themself in familiar or unexpected ways and form. It is in our best interest to learn to listen to their advice. It is my experience that the muse is the gateway to our higher self. What does this have to do with the practicing of paradiddles? Read on.

Before I go any further, kindly allow me to make mention of column theme #1 as curated in my notes: I called this, "The Swimming Lesson." On the morning of my flight to Europe marking the beginning of this two-week tour in Montenegro and India, I stopped by my daughter's home where her son (my grandson) was to take a swimming lesson. "This will be cute and fun to watch." Little did I know that this swimming instructor would change my perception of how things could and should be taught, regardless of topic matter. Any drum teacher can attest to the challenges of working with young students, where the kid's ability to concentrate will rank right up there with dexterity issues plus lack of musical vocabulary. Kids are all over the map. And we've always taken that as a given, something to be taught and talked through, like a hot knife cutting through a cold stick of butter. I think it's a common approach for teachers to drum through the noise (or inattention and distraction.) The swimming instructor had an approach that was fundamentally different and, dare I say, unique. The swimming instructor made the lesson ALL ABOUT THE OTHER. Completely. The success of the lesson did not reflect at all upon her perception levels of teaching successfully, it had everything to do with our grandson. She was so tuned-into him, and she responded to his every action or anxiety with constant and loving encouragement. She was not teaching down to him (kids at any age can smell patronizing patter instantly.) They were equals experiencing a journey together (only, one was more equal than the other, to paraphrase George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.)



What was the connection between this remarkable woman and a drummer finding their inspiration? She became my uninvited or unintentional muse. Most good teachers know that instruction is a two-way channel. Teachers learn from their students. Teachers can and should also learn from every-day examples of smartness in action. Teaching our students to do the same will help them to develop awareness in general. All to say: I takes my hints when I sees them.

One of my monthly muses is *Modern Drummer* editor Mark Griffith. Sure, he provides suggestions and corrections to my writing. But that monthly letter from him, asking, "Where's next month's column?" provides all the inspiration I need. The late great Patrick Williams once told me that his greatest inspiration was a deadline. This is a

common perception and appreciation by creative persons. One can sit around waiting for lightning to strike to come up with an artistic gem, but an 8 a.m. due date tomorrow works wonders.

So, here I am in Mumbai, India, inspired by the sights and sounds and smells of India, a place I have never visited in-person, only in musical dreams and time spent listening to tablas, ragas, and sitars. Suddenly, my day off reverie was interrupted by the urgent emailing of interview questions from a local journalist. I sat myself down, and the rest of this column magically appeared! My thanks to Fali R. Singara for permission to use his questions; it turned out that he only wanted me to see these questions in advance of our video interview the following day, so I feel free to quote my written replies in full. As in improvisation, I winged my very different replies on-camera.



Q: You've worked in big bands, combos, orchestras, and even award-winning film scores. You're known as prolific musician, author and educator. What drives that amazing creativity?

A: I guess that, because I am a drummer, it feels best when my hands and feet are always moving. The truth is that I was born and grew up during an amazing moment in history, both musically and geographically / geopolitically. So I was exposed to the liberal ideologies of universal music and the United Nations, meaning I grew up believing that all things were possible. As such, all MUSIC was possible, and I did my best to listen to and learn how to play as many styles as possible. Since this was a habit that began young, it has driven me throughout my life. The short answer is that I like for music to sound good.

Q: You started off really young. I was amazed to learn you were playing the drums on national television at age seven. Tell us about your music journey— how did it begin? Growing up, who were the individuals who inspired you?

A: My first inspiration was the American drummer, Art Blakey. THEN came the Beatles. THEN came Stan Kenton. THEN came John Coltrane. THEN came Ravi Shankar. THEN came Miles Davis. But VERY first were my parents who exposed me to music and found me my first teacher. His name was John Civera. HIS drummer of inspiration was Sol Gubin. Look him up.



Q: You've played with some of the most iconic ensembles in jazz history. Weather Report was one of them - Joe Zawinul. Wayne Shorter. Jaco Pastorius. You recorded five albums with them, including the Grammy-winning 8:30. *What was the most challenging part of playing in that band?*

A: The biggest challenge playing in Weather Report was for me to learn to become a true improvising musician, not just a timekeeping or beat-playing drummer. It was also a challenge to remain humble while keeping up with chest-thumping alpha male music masters. In particular, Joe Zawinul and Jaco Pastorius; they truly believed that they were the answer to music's problem. Wayne's presence was a safe harbor in that sense, but he remained invisible much of the time when we toured. So, I was a bit like a child wandering around the forest. I did my best and learned a lot.

Q: As a performer, you've also worked with classical music orchestras like the LA Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony, and even premiered works by Mark-Anthony Turnage.

Turnage also composed a concerto for you— Erskine. How does your mind-set shift when you're in a classical or cinematic setting?

A: To be honest, it is all about balance and tone. The SOUND determines how everything will flow. So, if I am playing the drums with an orchestra, I must listen to how the totality of the music sounds. If it sounds good, then I'm making the correct musical choices. Simple!

Q: You've worked with everyone from Diana Krall and Joni Mitchell to Steely Dan and Kate Bush. With pianist John Taylor and bassist Palle Danielsson you composed and made four fabulous albums for ECM in the 1990s. How do you adapt your playing to such different musical worlds?

A: It's all about loving music and paying attention to the sound. Again, simple if you allow your ears and not your hands to direct your choices.

Q: Let's talk about your recent reunion with Randy Brecker. We've got this amazing concert that's happening here at the NCPA, Mumbai in India. You two are performing together again after more than 20 years. What's that been like? What's the most interesting thing Randy does on stage while performing with you?

A: Wow, I am going to talk about tone again. For me, Randy has one of the more identifiable sounds on his instrument. And he too, grew up listening to bebop and rock and indeed, helped to define what jazz-rock would become thanks to his pioneering work in Blood, Sweat & Tears, and his own band Dreams (and, eventually, the Brecker Brothers,) all the while being a world class jazz and studio musician. I grew up listening to and idolizing Randy. I enjoy every note he plays.

Q: When you're not creating, you're also known as a prolific educator. You teach at USC's Thornton School of Music and mentor young musicians. What drives that side of you? What's your best piece of advice to emerging musicians?

A: Well, I retired recently from teaching at the university. But mentoring is in my blood. It's part of the jazz ethos, "paying it forward" and spreading the information that we were given by jazz masters when we were young.

Q: You've said that "the drums are an instrument of listening." What does that mean to you now, after all these years?

A: The same thing that it has always meant, only more so now. Music over-amplification is ruining the potential magic that can be created between a musician and their audience. And it won't help anyone if the drums are too loud! I was lucky to have a professor when I was very young who taught me about tone.

Q: What's the one song you wish you'd played on?

A: Hmmm … if I had played on it, then it would not have been that one (special) song! I'm happy to listen to other drummers. Sorry, I am unable to answer this question properly … I am no fun at parties. But I can say that the new album I just made, to be titled *Peregrine*, is the album I have always wanted to play on.

Q: How do you feel music has helped different cultures understand each other better?

A: Let's think about the early 1960s: many of the Top 10 most popular songs in America were recorded in the UK, or France, or Germany, Australia, Japan, Sweden … and then, thanks to Ravi Shankar and The Beatles, the sitar and tabla were everywhere in popular culture. These were the same years when the United Nations brought hope to the world and kept a fledgling nuclear pie fight from destroying the world. The result, in America at least, was an embracing of the world's cultures intertwined with the peace and love movement of the time. It felt like there truly



was hope for a better tomorrow.

Now, we have the technology to do unbelievable things (and I love technology,) but these devices seem to have had a paradoxical effect on our consciousness. I'm afraid that we're turning more inward than outward. We need another Ravi Shankar and George Harrison moment (even if George was not a very good sitar player!) Anyway, JAZZ has always been an international language because the "standard" of jazz is defined in great measure by a musician being able to navigate and master the "standards" or basic musical forms and songs intrinsic to jazz.



This combo is a very good representation of jazz's universal magnetism: saxophonist Yaacov Mayman was born and raised in Russia; pianist Otmaro Ruiz was born and raised in Venezuela; and bassist Richie Goods was born and raised in Pittsburgh. Randy was born and raised in Philadelphia, me in New Jersey less than 60 miles away, and Randy and I both studied at the same summer music camp and university. Our audience will hear all of us speaking the same musical language.

And now, here I am seated at the desk in my Mumbai hotel room, gazing out the window at sights heretofore unknown to me. And in the hotel, the smells throughout this place all seem other-worldly in the best sense. Heavenly fragrances. Combined with the humidity that seeps into every corner of wherever you are. It's a heavy voyage. Can fragrance be a muse?

MUSic is my muse. She is divine in her wisdom, generous by her gifts and loving to those who listen. And I love her.



Check out Peter's drummer profile page, and get a copy of his Legends book at moderndrummer.com



NEW & NOTABLE

THE ROLAND MOOD PAN



Roland has introduced the Mood Pan, a unique electronic hand percussion instrument that encourages anyone to discover the restorative power of music. Inspired by acoustic handpans, Mood Pan features tranquil tones and a simple design requiring no previous musical skills. Along with providing immersive audio for the onboard sounds, its built-in 2.1 speaker system can also play soothing background music and stream Bluetooth audio from mobile devices.

Mood Pan is made for mindful people and modern musicians seeking a versatile and expressive new instrument. It blends the soulful resonance of acoustic handpans with multiple sound variations and other flexible features made possible with Roland's advanced percussion technology. While many musical instruments require learning and skill development, Mood Pan can be enjoyed by everyone, with no experience or special technique necessary.

The electronic design of Mood Pan offers many benefits over traditional handpans. Users can explore different instruments and tunings, enhance sounds with onboard effects, and silence the onboard speaker by plugging in headphones for quiet solo sessions.

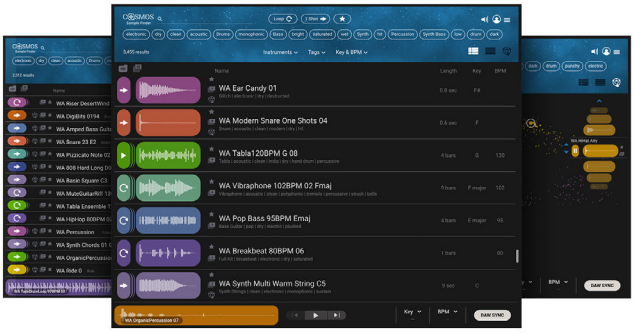
Mood Pan can be placed on the user's lap or a tabletop. The instrument is played with finger taps, and its nine pads can be assigned to different musical scales, making it impossible to hit a wrong note. It's also possible to tap the sides with the palms to create percussive sounds and resonant tonalities, mute sounds with a touch, and use a special control pad to add expressive colors to certain tones.

Selectable sounds include handpan and other acoustic percussion such as tongue drum, gamelan, crystal bowl, and singing bowl. There's also a sitar voice, orchestral strings, synth pad tones, and four user locations with selectable sound variations.

Mood Pan offers environmental music and nature sounds, along with four modes to play soft soundtracks for mornings, evenings, relaxing, and yoga sessions. It also doubles as a high-quality Bluetooth speaker for streaming music from a smartphone or tablet.

The Mood Pan Plus app is the perfect partner to extend the Mood Pan experience. Users can adjust the onboard sounds, choose different environmental sounds and effects, and fine-tune the pad sensitivity. The app also includes additional sounds for loading into Mood Pan's four onboard user locations. The Mood Pan is available for USD $659.99.

Waves announces V16 update to COSMOS Sample Finder



Waves Audio, a global leader in professional audio signal processing technologies and plugins, is excited to announce a V16 update to COSMOS Sample Finder, its AI-powered sample manager. Musicians and producers know that a well-organized sample collection is key to creativity. Searching for misplaced or misnamed samples in cluttered folders can be frustrating and time-consuming. Waves' COSMOS Sample Finder eliminates this issue by automatically consolidating all one-shots and loops into a single, easy-to-search location. Using AI-powered categorization and tagging, COSMOS ensures that the perfect sample is always within reach. This latest V16 update brings significant improvements, enhancing workflow efficiency and DAW integration.

Key new features include:

- **DAW Plugin & Sync**: COSMOS now functions as an insert plugin within DAWs (as well as a standalone app).

- **Sample Auditioning:** Preview samples in context, adjusted to session BPM and key.

- **Smart Organization**: Auto-grouping of sonically identical audio files for streamlined management.

- **Optimized Scan Times**: Cloud-based processing significantly reduces scanning duration.

- **CPU Optimization**: Adjustable performance settings tailored to user preferences.

- **Refreshed User Interface**: A sleek, updated design for an improved user experience.

Additional features include: The COSMOS Sample Finder offers AI-powered sample categorization, efficiently organizing collections by instrument, key, BPM, and tags. It supports multiple formats, including WAV, AIF, OGG, and FLAC files, ensuring compatibility with various sample types. Users can choose between using COSMOS as a standalone application or as a DAW-integrated plugin, adapting it to their preferred

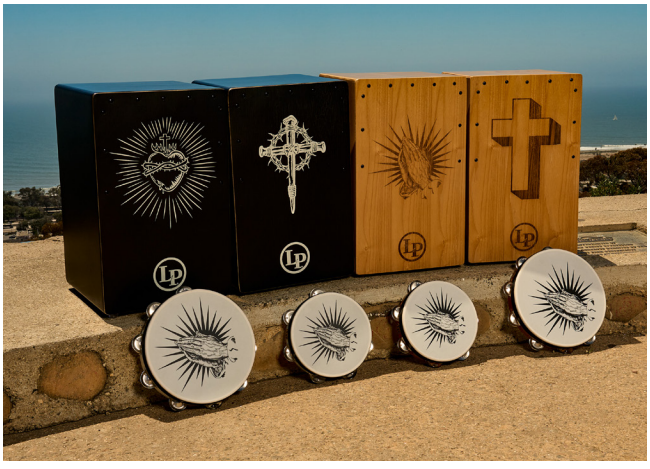
workflow. The tool also includes over 2,500 royalty-free samples, providing immediate creative inspiration.

Additionally, COSMOS offers both waveform and list views, allowing users to preview samples visually or access detailed descriptions. The unique COSMOS Cluster View presents related one-shots in intuitive clusters, making it easier to audition and select the right sounds. Multiple search options provide flexibility in finding samples by instrument, tags, key, BPM, or specific search terms. Users can explore broad categories, refine their selections, and even let COSMOS group identical audio files to eliminate duplicates.

Furthermore, the DAW sync feature allows users to audition samples within their song, adjusting them to match the session's BPM and key. Additionally, COSMOS integrates perfectly with Waves' CR8 Creative Sampler, enabling effortless sample loading within Waves CR8 Creative Sampler for an optimized workflow.

With the updated version of the COSMOS Sample Finder, Waves Audio is revolutionizing sample organization, transforming sample management into an intuitive, frictionless experience, keeping creativity flowing without interruption. Whether used as a standalone application or integrated within a DAW, COSMOS V16 offers the smartest, fastest, and most efficient way to manage all your samples, eliminating the need to waste precious time searching through multiple disorganized folders.

Latin Percussion Praise Tambourines and Cajons



The new **LP Praise Tambourines** have a mahogany shell, stainless steel jingles, synthetic heads, and are available in a natural or white finish. The eight sets of jingles on the 10" tambourine and six sets on the 8" are perfect for bright, rhythmic accents. The durable synthetic heads are decorated with a praying hands graphic. Easy to use by young and old, the LP Praise Tambourines will enhance any worship experience.

During worship sessions, a cajon can help lead the church as the pulse of worship. There are four new **LP Praise Cajons**: The **Cross Cajon**, the **Praying Hands Cajon**, the **Thorny Cross Cajon,** and the **Thorny Heart Cajon**. All the cajons measure H19", W11-¾", D11-¾", feature two internal snare wires for crisper slaps, and an integrated bass port for enhanced projection during live performances.

The Cross and Praying Hands cajons feature a natural wood finish and a white nema body and soundboard, providing a bright, punchy, and focused sound with minimal overtones. The Thorny Cross and Thorny Heart cajons, both finished in black, feature an MDF body with a meranti soundboard, producing a full, warm, and resonant sound.

The LP Praise Tambourines and Cajons have been designed and built to help create the perfect backdrop for worship. Rhythm is not just about keeping time; it is about expressing emotion.

Gon Bops Introduces Two New Percussion Accessories



Gon Bops is proud to announce the release of two innovative new accessories designed to elevate the playing experience for today's percussionists: the Cajon Pedal and Universal Metal Conga Risers – Set of 3.

Developed with both performance and practicality in mind, the **Gon Bops Cajon Pedal** transforms a cajon into a dynamic bass drum alternative. It includes a full foot pedal, chain-driven drive shaft, soft beater, and Velcro cajon mount for secure attachment. This pedal offers responsive, quiet operation—perfect for acoustic or hybrid percussion setups.

"This is an exceptionally responsive and smooth cajon pedal which feels great to play," says Rich Mangicaro, Gon Bops Product Specialist. "It's sturdily built for a lifetime of playing enjoyment!"

Also now available is the **Universal Metal Conga Risers – Set of 3**, designed to raise any standard conga ½ inch (15mm) off the ground to enhance bass resonance when playing seated. Made from durable metal and featuring rubber pads for secure grip, these discreet, compact risers offer an easy tonal upgrade without altering the player's setup.

RUSTIC PERCUSSION'S PADAUK TEMPLE BLOCKS: A TRUE PASSION FOR QUALITY

By Brian Hill

Rustic Percussion was founded in 2018 by Percussionist-Drummer, Ryan Langford, in an effort to make high quality, craftsmanship worthy, percussion instruments. As well as playing these instruments on the job, Ryan is truly a wood craftsman! Rustic Percussion's various instruments can also be found in the percussion sections of major orchestras as well as many other professional applications around the world.

Modern Drummer received a set of five Rustic Percussion Padauk wood temple blocks to knock around and see what we thought. So, that's exactly what we did: We knocked them around to see how far we could push them.

Rustic Percussion uses Padauk wood instead of other popular woods, such as birch, for the playing surface because of its rich, warm, and earthy timbre and tone. I found the following paragraph on their website which does a great job of explaining their use of padauk.

"The padauk playing surface on the Rustic Percussion Temple Blocks offer a sound quality that traditional, full birch temple blocks cannot replicate. Padauk is a tone-wood that features a long and straight grain structure allowing for unmatched resonance, articulation, and sound production at all dynamic levels. It also gives each hand-made set a beautifully unique, one-of-a-kind look. Each block is mounted on a solid maple support bar and is attached with small rubber washers allowing for optimal vibration and a full sound. Ideally played with a medium/soft rubber mallet, Rustic Percussions' Padauk Temple Blocks are perfect for any chamber, concert, or orchestral setting."

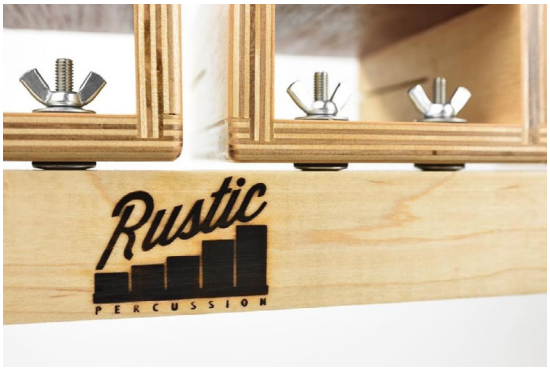
In examining the craftsmanship involved with this arrangement of wood blocks, I realized, (from my own background in wood working) that Ryan really knows how to work wood with a very high degree of craftsmanship! All the joints are expertly done and solid, which is something I always look for. Everything is well sanded and nicely finished to bring out the natural grain of the wood.

Mounting this pentatonic set was extremely easy and fast. A heavy-duty V clamp was snuggly secured to a hard maple support rail and can be attached to almost any stand. The individual blocks are securely isolated from the mounting rail for maximum resonance.

The sound was totally rich and resonant. I compared them to a century old Chinese set of pentatonic temple blocks and found the Rustic Percussion set to be totally on par with this trend setting, and historic sound. A set of Vic Firth M 412 mallets accompanied the set because it is recommended to use a medium / soft rubber mallet to bring out the best sound and tones, but you know that we had to try other implements to see how they sounded as well. I ended up trying these temple blocks out in a drum set setting (as I have with others over the years,) and really liked them for obvious uses as well as a "pitched" wood block selection alternative. Without trying to "kill" them, I found basic drumsticks worked fine here for a crisp and articulate sound. Different implements, different timbres.

Rustic Percussion also designs and builds Log Drums, which, much like their Temple Blocks, are the only log drums made with a Padauk playing surface and are paired with a nine-ply Baltic Birch resonating chamber. Other Rustic Percussion offerings include a White Ash Slapstick with oversized Walnut

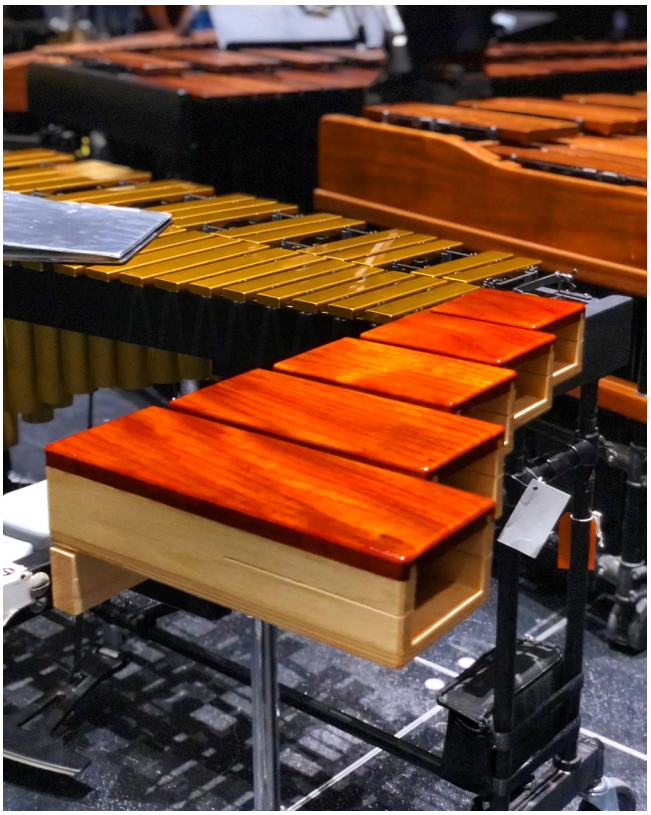




handles to ensure a nice sold grip without the fear of pinching your fingers. Rustic Percussion also makes Rebonds Planks. They are a set of five pitched Purple Heart planks that are perfect for compositions like Iannis Xenakis' "Rebonds B" and other contemporary percussion literature. These are nice instruments because Purple Heart is an incredibly dense and strong tone wood.

Overall, Rustic Percussion's Padauk Temple Blocks and all the Rustic Percussion instruments are extremely well-made wooden musical percussion instruments that will fit in almost anywhere music is performed. How ever you choose to use them, you'll sound great. I found on-line pricing around $450.00. Check'em out at **rusticpercussion.com**









KLAW DRUM ANCHOR: SLIP IT, GRIP IT, RIP IT!

By Brian Hill



Adam Stone of Klaw sent *Modern Drummer* a Klaw kick drum anchor, to try out. Klaw was designed out of necessity to help keep creeping kick drums from slipping away during play. As per Adam: "The days of cinder blocks and special rugs are finally in the rear-view. And wouldn't you know it, the BIG solution to the ever-pervasive problem of drum creep weighs almost nothing and fits in your hand!" So, let's try it out and see if it creeps or not!

Klaw is smaller than a deck of cards and made of a non-abrasive material and has a series of forward leaning mini spikes on the bottom to grip into the gig rug. It's easy to slip under a drum and slip it right off when you're finished using it. It comes in a nice cardboard carrying box with a protective sleeve to place over the spikes for easy transport.

How to use Klaw. "1. Slip It. Slide Klaw under the front of the kick drum. 2. Grip it. Adjust the drum's legs so that the whole weight of the drum is resting on Klaw. 3. Rip It. Forget about drum creep and let it rip!" Sounds easy enough.

So, I did. I tried it out for about 30 minutes and no drum creep! Solid as a rock. Well, I was going over it all and thought that the kick drum I was using had really good leg spurs and that maybe, they were really the whole show and that Klaw was only giving me a little bit extra. I decided to remove the kick drum legs from the equation and see if Klaw would stand on its own.

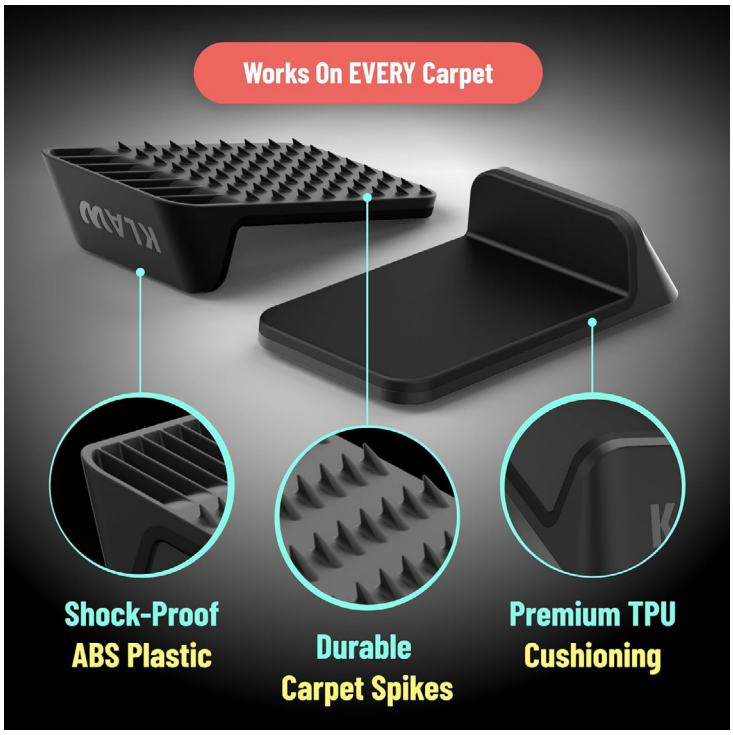
After a 30-minute workout (and some natural lateral wobbling of the drum), there was no creeping or other movement! I even stood up and tried pushing the drum forward. Nothing! No forward movement. It works!

One of the things that I really appreciated about how Klaw works is that it aligns with conventional thinking that a drum should be free to resonate. The front hoop rests on Klaw while the rear hoop is only resting on the pedal. That keeps the entire shell off the ground (except for the drums legs) in a position to freely resonate while being firmly anchored to the rug. It doesn't seem like it will damage the drum hoop with any type of paint rash either. This small little solution fits in my hand and totally does the trick. "Don't underestimate this little monster!" For you heavy kickers, you'll like Klaw a lot!

Now you may not need Klaw in every situation. However, for the cost and the size, and what it can do, it certainly should be in every working drummer's gig bag for those "I didn't see that coming" scenarios. It also will come in handy if you are using a vintage style kick drum or anything else you have that might want to creep away.

All in all, Klaw is very effective and super easy to use. I found some on-line pricing of about $30.00; it seems like a "no-brainer" to me. Do yourself a favor and scoop one up at **klawdrum.com**, and forget about drum creep, and let it rip!





MORGENSTEIN TOOL - WING THING

By Jason Mehler

Among the many dilemmas that a drummer or drum tech faces during the chaos of playing live shows, few are as maddening as the dreaded stubborn wing nut. Whether too tight, too loose, out of reach, or just plain evil, a stubborn wing nut can wreck both your hands, and your day, leaving you to question your career choices.

Leave it to a seasoned pro like Rod Morgenstein (Dixie Dregs, Winger, and more) and his friend and co-founder Jim Mooradian



to come up with the perfect solution. If you've ever seen one of Rod's drum set ups over the years, you can bet he's been in more wing nut battles than a talk show host from the 90's.

In 2023, Morgenstein Tool introduced the Wing Thing: A simple tool built to deliver maximum leverage against unruly wing nuts. For this month's Product Close-Up, I will hunt down some wing nuts with the Wing Thing!

Design and Build

The Wing Thing is crafted in the USA of hard-anodized 6061 aluminum, typically used in aerospace, weapons systems, and other high-performance applications that require lightweight, corrosive-resistant material with maximum strength. The tool weighs approximately 3.75 oz and is 10 inches in length. It has two precision cut holes on each end, sized to fit around standard drum wing nuts. The anodized coating gives the tool a flat black color and smooth texture.

First Impression

Prior to receiving my own Wing Thing for testing, I encountered the tool being used in the wild. I met up with Mike Wengren's drum tech Dave Nester at a recent tour stop with Disturbed. Dave faces the brutal task of setting up and tearing down two full drum kits for Mike every show. It's a sea of hardware and an absurd number of wing nuts. At his tech station, I noticed not one, but two Wing Things laid out on the table. When I asked about them, Dave lit up. He was more than happy to demo the tool and praised how much it's saved his hands and reduced setup time, given the number of wing nuts he encounters. I was impressed.

Home Test

When I received the Wing Thing, I immediately tested it out on a few old hand-me-down cymbal stands, whose wing nut issues span generations. One stand in particular is a Frankenstein mishmash of orphaned components held together by rust and old duct tape residue. The Wing Thing handled all of those stands with ease. I was able to loosen the most stubborn wing nuts with minimal effort, and the nuts that refused to tighten in the past were no match for the Wing Thing. I sat at my drum kit, using the tool to adjust stands that are normally too far from a playing position to reach. The 10-inch length of the tool allowed me to find a comfortable cymbal position without having to get up and walk around the drum kit.

Road Test

Eager to give the Wing Thing a go at a real-world scenario, I hit the road this past weekend to catch up with Nic Collins at a show with his band, Better Strangers. His setup might not be as massive as Mike Wengren's, but there is still no shortage of hardware to wrestle with. With the Wing Thing in my back pocket, I headed backstage, weaving through a forest of hardware stands. Nic has his own routine teardown routine: he removes only the stand bases and boom extensions, packing everything neatly into soft cases. I offered to lend a hand, and he gladly accepted. I grabbed the Wing Thing from my back pocket and went to work, loosening at least 30 wing nuts of various sizes, some of which would've been knuckle-busters without the tool. The breakdown flew by… and dare I say, it was *almost* fun.

Conclusion

The Wing Thing had already earned my respect after seeing Dave Nester work it into what's easily one of the most elaborate drum setups of the year. After putting it to the test myself, I can vouch for its quality and usefulness. Heck, the thing even sounds cool when you strike it like a "YYZ" triangle. I might mount it to my kit somehow! I would encourage you to order one for yourself or give it a try at your local drum shop. The Wing Thing retails for $59.00. Check it out at https://morgensteintool.com/



BRENDAN BUCKLEY,

NOT JUST PLAYING PATTERNS WITH SHAKIRA



Brendan Buckley is one of those drummers who has created a long career by playing with big name artists around the world, and lesser name artists regionally, yet you might not even know his name. You are just as likely to see Brendan in stadiums with Shakira as you are in smaller venues with local acts. His career started with Elsten Torres and the band Fulano de Tal. He has played with artists such as Damien Rice, Tegan & Sara, and Miley Cyrus, and he has held the gig with international sensation Shakira for over 27 years. He toured with Morrissey for the past 3 years, played in Perry Farrell's solo band, and worked with several Asian superstars including Jeff Chang, JJ Lin, and Leehom Wang. Brendan brings to every gig exactly what the music needs, and his devotion to authenticity in playing South American, Caribbean, and Arabic musical and drumming styles is amazing. As he says, "I'm not just playing patterns."

From his involvement in the Miami music scene earlier in his career, he brings a deep knowledge of Latin music and drumming to the table. And as a longtime Los Angeles resident, he has joined the rotation of first call LA drummers. We discussed his early life growing up as a drummer in New Jersey, the decisions surrounding him becoming a professional musician, the life-changing experience of going to the University of Miami's Frost School of Music and navigating through a career in music while holding prestigious gigs with Shakira and others.



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

MD: How did being a drummer from New Jersey influence your career choice and path?

BB: I am a very proud Jerseyite. I'm from Mount Arlington, which is a small town on Lake Hopatcong. I grew up there, and my parents still live in the same house where I grew up. I love it there, and I go back a couple times a year to visit.

I've always loved music. When I was a kid, I took piano lessons and played trumpet in the school band. In the mid 80's, I was super fascinated with MTV. I watched music videos all the time. I started going to a lot of concerts in both clubs and stadiums. I went everywhere that I could hear live music. I saw concerts almost every weekend, and I fell in love with music and particularly the drums. At the age of 13, I started playing the drums. There was a drum set in the back corner of the band room at my middle school, and no one was using it. During breaks, I would just fiddle around on it. When I was 14, I bought a used Pearl Export drum set from my classmate's older brother, and I started practicing in my parents' garage. Throughout my formative years, all I would do was practice, go to see live shows, watch MTV, and play in the school band. I formed a little garage rock band, and at a certain point I asked my band director (Darryl Bott) to recommend a drum teacher. He invited his friend Tommy Igoe to come and teach at my high school, and I started studying with him when I was 15. That changed my trajectory. Tommy was a great teacher for me because he was very challenging. After our first lesson he said, "Next week I want you to come back with three things: a book of manuscript paper, I want you to buy some kind of metronome (preferably a drum machine that we can use to practice), and I want you to get a subscription to *Modern Drummer* because I want you to be in touch with the drum community and what's going on currently and historically". The fact that you and I are doing a *Modern Drummer* interview today is a full-circle moment for me. I continued to study with Tommy throughout high school, and it was fantastic. When I graduated from high school, I went down to study at the University of Miami: Frost School of Music.

I've always loved music. When I was a kid, I took piano lessons and played trumpet in the school band. In the mid 80's, I was super fascinated with MTV. I watched music videos all the time. I started going to a lot of concerts in both clubs and stadiums. I went everywhere that I could hear live music.



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

MD: What kind of things did you study with Tommy?

BB: We did a lot of rudimental stuff. He has a routine called The Lifetime Warm-Up which is a series of rudiments that you go through. You add a new rudiment every week if you can handle it. He directed our percussion ensemble and the marching band drum line, so I joined those. He taught me jazz so I could play in the big band. We listened to a lot of Buddy Rich and Nick Ceroli and did a bunch of reading and big band playing. We also worked on bass drum syncopation stuff. He had me playing rock beats with all the different variations of bass drum patterns. This was between the ages of 15 to 18. We started adding a little bit of jazz-fusion, some Latin music, and things like that.

MD: Did you go to the University of Miami right out of high school?

BB: When I was 17, I started checking out all sorts of music schools. I applied to a half-dozen music programs, and I wound up choosing the University of Miami: Frost School of Music. I moved down there when I was 18, and that began my second chapter in studying music. That was a whole different world. I was surrounded by all these different teachers, influences, and cultures. More than anything, the student body is one of the best things about going to a music school. Of course, it's the teachers, the bands, the curriculum. But it's also about learning from the other students your own age. You're all learning together and sharing music with one another. I learned so much from my peers when I was there. It was like a giant laboratory for me. I still stay in touch with many of the people that I went to school with. It was awesome.

MD: What were the discussions like with your parents when you told them that you wanted to go to college as a music major?

BB: What a great question! My parents are both music lovers, but they had no interest in me becoming a musician. They liked me having hobbies. They liked that I played the drums, they liked that I studied piano, and things like that. But they also liked that I played baseball and other sports. All these things were hobbies. My mother is Korean, and she had a vision of me becoming a doctor, lawyer, or an engineer. I was good at academics, and I got good grades, so I was on that path. When I was 17, I had a discussion with my parents. I explained to them that I envisioned the next few years of my life as me going to a college, taking a whole bunch of courses, and trying to get A's. However, while taking those courses, all I was gonna be thinking about was 'where can I practice the drums?' That was going

to be my obsession whichever school I went to. I knew this was going to happen. Therefore, knowing that this was going to happen, maybe I could go someplace where my goal was actually *to practice the drums*. To my parents' credit, although they had no idea what I was talking about, they said, "OK, give it a shot for one year." They encouraged me to find a college where I could go and practice the drums. I applied to all these music schools, and I went to Miami. After one year, I came back and said, "I really like this, can I try it for one more year?" So we tried one more year, and then one more year, until I graduated. For my mother, this was very hard to understand, but she saw that I was serious, so she supported it. It was hard for them at the beginning because I was living on saltines and making 25 bucks a gig. They were concerned. I'm sure they thought, "What's going to happen to our poor child? He's made a bad life choice." However, I was happy, so they stuck with me, and I really thank them for that. They had faith in me.



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

MD: What would you tell other young drummers who are faced with those decisions today?

BB: I would tell them that you only have one life to live, and you should pursue your passions and your interests. That's important. However, keep in mind that it's very difficult. Whatever you choose is going to be a difficult road.

MD: Especially in the arts.

BB: Yes. You must be prepared for the difficult road. If you're willing to take that road, and all you want to do is play drums, that's great. I'm glad you've figured that out. But you NEED to realize that it's gonna be very hard. It's not a fair road, and it's not a steady road. If you can come to grips with that, and that's OK with you, then you'll be all right. The other thing I would say is to avoid incurring lots of debt along the way. That's the big problem when people talk about music schools. You study music at college, and you come out with $100,000 of debt, and you're playing $25 gigs for the next 10 years. You're never going to pay off your debt. So, if you want to travel and go to a conservatory and study music, go ahead do these things, but do them without incurring lots of student loans or credit card debt. If you're thinking "I'm just going to put all this on a credit card and pay it off later," you're going to be slave to that debt for the rest of your life.

After our first lesson he (Tommy Igoe) said, "Next week I want you to come back with three things: a book of manuscript paper, I want you to buy some kind of metronome (preferably a drum machine that we can use to practice), and I want you to get a subscription to Modern Drummer because I want you to be in touch with the drum community and what's going on currently and historically".

MD: What did Tommy tell you when you were 17 and asking him these questions?

BB: I had no idea after studying with him for 2 1/2 years if I was good or not. So, I asked him after one lesson. I didn't want to put him on the spot, but I said, 'I am interested in studying music and becoming a professional drummer. Do you think I have what it takes? Please be honest with me. If I don't think I have what it takes, just tell me right now. I can take it.' He laughed and said, "Do I think you *could* be a drummer? Yes. Do I think you *should* pursue a career in music? No." He continued, "I'm saying that to your face now, so you don't pursue a career in music and then get mad at me when it's difficult. Yes, you *could* be a drummer. No, I don't think you *should* be a drummer. But if you *still* want to pursue a drumming career after me telling you that, then go for it!" His father was a great jazz drummer named Sonny Igoe, and even his father told him not to become a drummer. Tommy told his father, "No way dad, I'm doing it," and he did it. It's almost like you need someone to say, "Please don't do this," and you try anyway, which is much better than having a bunch of people puff you up with "*you're perfect, you're amazing, you're the all-star,*" and then finding out that it's A LOT harder than you thought.

MD: When you got to college, what were your first impressions?

BB: My first impression was, "Holy cow! How did all these other drummers get so good so young?" I was around guys my own age that already sounded like Jack DeJohnette, and I was still barely understanding Art Blakey. I remember everyone was listening to Jon Christensen (the drummer from the European Keith Jarrett quartet) and I couldn't even find beat one. Everyone at school that was my own age sounded like they had been playing for 12 years longer than me. It was crazy. But it lit a fire under my ass. I knew that I really had to catch up because I was way further behind than I had initially thought. It was proven to me that I needed to practice, so I started practicing four to five hours on weekdays, and 13 hours day on the weekends. For my entire first year of college, I had no life. I didn't see a movie, I didn't watch a TV show, I didn't do anything! I just went to school and practiced. The summer after my freshman year, I spent the whole summer practicing every


Photo by Chris Cornejo

day, all day long. I made a long list of things I had to work on every day. And I practiced for 12 hours a day all summer because I felt like I was so far behind my drumming peers at school. I think that was a good experience for me.

...you only have one life to live, and you should pursue your passions and your interests. That's important. However, keep in mind that it's very difficult. Whatever you choose is going to be a difficult road.

MD: What type of stuff were you practicing during that summer?

BB: I needed to learn how to play in more of a small group jazz setting, as opposed to big band jazz. I came there with more of the big band style of Buddy Rich, but I needed to learn how to play more bebop and slightly freer avant-garde jazz styles that I was not hip to at the time. I was starting to learn about more of the fusion drummers and listening to those types of bands. I was practicing a lot of reading, a lot of chart reading, and developing the chops to play the drum set at different volumes. I was getting into David Garibaldi and all the ghost note accents and syncopations. I was listening to a lot of Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Dave Weckl. I was just trying to decipher what was going on because when those guys played it sounded like another language, and I didn't know how they were executing that stuff. I was transcribing a lot of Philly Joe Jones at the time and trying to learn how to play his phrasing because I was super into him. I was starting to dabble in Tony Williams and Elvin Jones and watching how they were (kind of) breaking the rules of jazz playing when they were playing so freely. And on top of all that, because I was going to school in Miami, I was trying to learn a lot of Latin and world rhythms. I (incorrectly) thought that if I knew a Bossa Nova, a Samba, and maybe a Mambo, I knew enough. At school, I realized that every country had dozens of rhythms that you could learn, and there were dozens of countries. I would play with friends from Venezuela, and they would show me some rhythms, and I could barely find beat one. Then I would talk to my friends from the Dominican Republic, and they would show me something else. My friends from Cuba and Brazil were showing me cool things and I became absolutely fascinated with all the different rhythms from all their countries, and how to learn them first on hand percussion, and then how to adapt them to the drum set.

MD: That sounds like quite a summer. What music were you listening to?

BB: When I was younger and in high school, I loved *everything* from the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the Police, and Led Zeppelin. I liked The Beatles, I listened to a lot of heavy metal and punk rock music. I liked The Cure, grunge music, and I was into Alex Van Halen.

At college, it was a whole other world. Anything with Steve Gadd, especially *Breaking Away* by Al Jarreau. But honestly, anything Steve Gadd plays on is a masterpiece to me. I saw James Taylor play live once with Carlos Vega, and the band was so good that I went home a fan. Their *Live* album with Carlos Vega is a ridiculous record. It is a master class in tasteful drumming, sound, feel, and taste. The drumming on that record was everything that I wanted to be. I was a gigantic Bill Stewart fan and I love those first two John Scofield records that

he played on. I saw Brian Blade play with the Joshua Redman Quartet, and his drumming made me jump out of my chair. I can't think of many jazz drummers that make me jump up and scream, but his drumming did that to me. He's so passionate and good-spirited. I'll listen to anything Brian Blade plays on. There are three Chick Corea acoustic records with Brian and Christian McBride, and I especially love the second one. The musicianship is so high, and the communication is so elevated. In the end, he's not even *playing* the drums, he's *dancing* on the drums. Tony Williams on Miles Davis *Four and More* is one of the boldest statements of drumming I've ever heard in my life. His drumming on that album is so inspirational. Dennis Chambers on John Scofield's *Blue Matter* and *Loud Jazz* is just incredible! I loved Vinnie Colaiuta's drumming on Sting's *Ten Summoners Tales.* And Omar Hakim's drumming on Sting's *Dream of the Blue Turtles* was big for me.

...you need someone to say, "Please don't do this," and you try anyway, which is much better than having a bunch of people puff you up with "you're perfect, you're amazing, you're the all-star," and then finding out that it's A LOT harder than you thought.

Omar was a major influence on me. Think about it, he played with David Bowie, Weather Report, Chic, Madonna, and Sting. I always wondered how he was juggling all those genres? I actually bumped into Omar a couple years ago. He and I were just hanging out backstage at a gig, and I was trying not to fanboy him. About an hour into our conversation, I broke down and admitted, 'Dude, I'm actually a huge fan. I had your VHS tapes, I tried to sit like you, I tried to move my arms like you. I wanted to be you.' He was very nice about it.

MD: Did you have previous exposure to Latin-American and Caribbean rhythms before getting to college?

BB: Yes, Tommy gave me a crash course. To his credit, he tried to squeeze in as much as he could before I went to college. But being a 17-year-old kid, you can only learn so much in one year. Then, when I moved to Miami, I was hanging out with the people that actually grew up playing those styles of music. They would show me that "*this* is how we do it where we grew up, and *this* is how we play that style of music." That is a whole other thing. They had a different swing and a different way of interpreting certain subdivisions that was fantastic.

MD: And more authentic.

BB: Absolutely! On top of all that, I was also studying orchestral percussion. That meant lots of timpani, marimba, and a ton of "simple" things. We spent a lot of time learning how to play the triangle, and the tambourine, how to play crash cymbals, and all these different techniques that orchestral guys use. I was into it. I wasn't one of those *"I'm a drum set player"* guys. I really wanted to learn the right way to play a triangle and the right way to play crash cymbals. There were fantastic orchestral percussionists at U.M. that would blow my mind with four-mallet marimba stuff and xylophone passages.

MD: What was your major? Were you a percussion major, a jazz drum set major, or a music education major?

BB: I managed to carve my own way through the music program



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

by double-majoring in music education and jazz performance. I think they invented that major for me because I got into the school as a music education major, but they saw that I wanted to take a lot of the jazz courses. I don't know if the University of Miami is still this way, but at the time, if you became friends with the professors and the Dean of music, every semester they would ask what you wanted to work on next semester. And if they could squeeze it into your curriculum, they would do it. Towards the end of every semester, I would go in with a list of courses that I wanted to take the next semester, and they would say, "As long as you do *this, this, and this*, then you can take those other classes." That was how I was able to study orchestration, big band arranging, and jazz theory.

I wasn't one of those "I'm a drum set player" guys. I really wanted to learn the right way to play a triangle and the right way to play crash cymbals.

MD: Who were your teachers there?

BB: U.M. had a lot of great teachers. My first teacher was Steve Bagby, who was a fantastic jazz drummer and a super hip dude. He was great for me because he really taught me to chill out.



Photo by Paul Davies

He was one of those teachers that would put on a record, and we'd just listen to music. I would be asking him to show me some exercises, and he'd say, "Relax, we're going to listen to some music today." At the time, I really needed a person like that in my life. I had another drum set teacher named Steven Rucker who is still a good friend. He was very well-organized and logical about studying. He'd say, "This semester we're going to work on A, B, and C. Next semester is D, E, and F." He had a full curriculum for all four years, and he was great for that. There were so many other teachers there that really helped me out too. There were orchestral percussion teachers like Ney Rosauro, Harry Hawthorne, and Scott Deal. And then there were all the graduate students and upperclassmen. If you were not a jerk, they would take you under their wing and say, "Check out this record," and "Let me show you this cool thing I'm doing with my high hat." It was a great environment to learn if you were open to it.

MD: What was the stuff that you learned from your peers at school?

BB: Mostly, just checking out new (to me) music. There were only so many CD's I could buy in one year, and there was always some guy who had the coolest music that I'd never heard before. At school, friends hipped me to a lot of world music, drummers from Africa, drummers from Bulgaria. There would be a CD that someone would tell me to check out, and my mind would explode. That was the biggest thing. There was always a style of music, a time signature, or an approach that I had never heard before. Even with music from the past, someone would say, "If you like this guy, do you know this guy?" Tracking drumming and music backwards through the history of drumming was always a learning experience. Another thing was learning about the *timeline of drummers*, and who influenced who. That was very important, and that came from my peers.

MD: When you were at school, what did you see as your post college career path?

BB: I had no plan. I was kind of living month to month. I knew what I needed to work on, but the main thing I thought about was that I must play all the time. Every day I *needed* to be practicing, rehearsing, jamming, performing, or going out and watching my friends play. I knew I needed to be doing that all the time. That was my mindset. I had to have sticks in my hands,

be listening to music, or be going to see a great drummer play, every day! Through that obsession, by the time I was a junior at school, I was already working seven nights a week in Miami. I'd study all day long and I would do different kinds of gigs at night. I was doing cover band gigs, jazz quartets, backing up singer-songwriters. That was my transition into being a professional. It wasn't like I went to school for four years, then I graduated, then I started to learn how to be a professional drummer. From the time I was a freshman, I had started performing at night, started making connections, and started learning what worked on a gig, what didn't work on a gig, how to get hired, and how to get fired. I was learning all that while I was a student. By the time school was over, I had extra time to work. It wasn't like, "Oh, I have to start working." It was, "Oh, now I have even more time to rehearse, jam, see other drummers play gigs, and do recordings." It was a good transition for me.

My career began by working with my classmates at different gigs around town. By the time you're done with school, hopefully you've made enough of an impression on the local music scene that you get calls for bigger gigs and/or sub work. If you have impressed the elder statesman drummers in town to cover for them and not fall flat on your face… then they'll think of you in the future when they have three shows on a Friday, and they can't do them all. That is the professional network of drumming. Having other drummers who are busy think of you when they need someone to fill in for them; that is almost everything. I still get work through professional drummer friends of mine who call me up to say, "I've got a conflict. Are you available the first week of September to cover for me?" In return, you can do the same thing for someone else. It just gets passed around. There's a drum brotherhood, a large circle of people that are all trying to keep everyone working.

MD: There are no "little gigs," but what was the first gig that came your way that *felt* like a "big gig"?

BB: That's a great question. Back in the day, if I had a gig at Barnes and Noble on a Saturday afternoon, I felt like, 'This is going to be *the one* that makes it for me.' I was so excited to play with anyone. But when I graduated from school, I was working with a singer-songwriter named Elsten Torres and his band Fulano de Tal. They were signed to BMG, so immediately after college I had a record deal, and we recorded an album. We started touring right away, and like every musician knows, being in an original band can be a slog. We didn't just become Guns 'n' Roses overnight. We toured and slept in the back of our van. But we were happy just writing, rehearsing, performing, and opening for other artists. It was so much fun.

This was the mid 90's, so indie rock was at its peak, and I was seeing so many great bands and meeting cool drummers all around the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Mexico. I also had one foot in the recording scene in Miami. I knew a lot of great engineers and producers that would bring me into different projects to play one song on this album and three songs on that album. I was slowly learning how to *not sound terrible* on recordings. I mean… I could play the drums, I could play to a click track, but somehow, I would listen back and still sound like garbage. I had to learn how to sound *good* under microphones and learn how to groove a little better to a click. Just "playing to a metronome" is not grooving. I had to *learn* how to do that. Back then, I would nail the click, and I'd still sound super terrible, so I had to learn how to make it groove. I also had to learn which snare tunings and cymbal sounds worked in different environments.

I (incorrectly) thought that if I knew a Bossa Nova, a Samba, and maybe a Mambo, I knew enough. At school, I realized that every country had dozens of rhythms that you could learn, and there were dozens of countries. I would play with friends from Venezuela, and they would show me some rhythms, and I could barely find beat one.

About a year after I graduated, I was at a recording studio and the producer got a phone call that they were looking for a new rhythm section for Julio Iglesias. The producer asked me if I would want to audition and I said, "Absolutely!!!" Other than Fulano de Tal, that was the first big gig I got offered. I auditioned and got the gig and started touring with him and his Miami all-star band of great players. I was filling in for a drummer named Lee Levin, who was one of my favorite drummers in Miami, so I was subbing for a local drum legend. I had to learn how to use samplers, triggers, sequences. I was using in-ear monitors for the first time. There was a big crew, and I knew that I could learn a lot. I did that gig for about six months and then I got a call to record an album for Shakira. I did her album *Dónde Están Los Ladrones*, and that became the gig that I have been doing ever since.

MD: Since you have had many Latin music gigs like Fulano de Tal, Julio Iglesias, and Shakira, how deeply have you gotten into learning Latin music?

BB: Living in Miami helped a lot because I had so many friends that were from the Caribbean, South America, and Central America. My musical friends would invite me to be part of their


Photo by Paul Davies

groups. You would think it would be the opposite. "*Get this Irish Korean drummer from New Jersey away from us! He is the furthest thing from what we need.*" But surprisingly, they would invite me to jam with them. They would tell me, "Play this rhythm. This works for this song," and they would sing or show me a rhythm that I would imitate. That was how it started. Many times, I couldn't even pronounce the name of whatever I was playing. But they would sing something, and I would just play it, and keep doing that. I would try to remember where beat one was while I was playing, and that's how I learned.

MD: I'm sure how that's how they learned in their cultures as well.

BB: That evolved into *what to do if someone changes the pattern and* learning different rhythmic variations. It wasn't like I just went and read a bunch of drum books. It was more like survival, and *what do I need to play to make it through this gig?* That is actually a much better way to learn because everything is a lot more appropriate.

If you just learn Latin rhythms from a book, you don't know what works and what tends to piss off the conga player because you're playing his part. Playing with percussionists is a great experience in "how to be empathetic to what's going on around you." You become conscious of not stepping on anyone's toes. Music is subjective, and everyone has an opinion. You might learn a rhythm that works with one guy on one night, and the next night you play with another guy, and he hates that rhythm and likes it better when you play *this*. You're learning that vocabulary is a very fluid, open, and flexible thing. You learn to be sensitive. For example, one guy might like quarter notes, another guy likes eighth notes. This guy likes subdivisions, and that guy likes downbeats. This guy likes low sounds, and that guy likes high sounds. You start to learn that it's not cut and dry, it's not black or white. It's whatever works for the situation with those people on that night. There's a lot of trial and error, so you've got to have the opportunity to try… and make errors.

MD: So how did you land the Shakira gig?

BB: I was slowly building relationships with different producers and engineers at the various recording studios in Miami, and one friend of mine was an engineer at Gloria and Emilio Estefan's Crescent Moon studio. He called me up one day and said, "There's a singer from South America coming in and she wants a rock drummer on her next record, so I thought of you." I went in and set up. It was just me, the engineer, and the producer. They played me a demo of a song, and an hour later a girl walked in and said, "Hi, nice to meet

Tracking drumming and music backwards through the history of drumming was always a learning experience. Another thing was learning about the timeline of drummers, and who influenced who. That was very important, and that came from my peers.

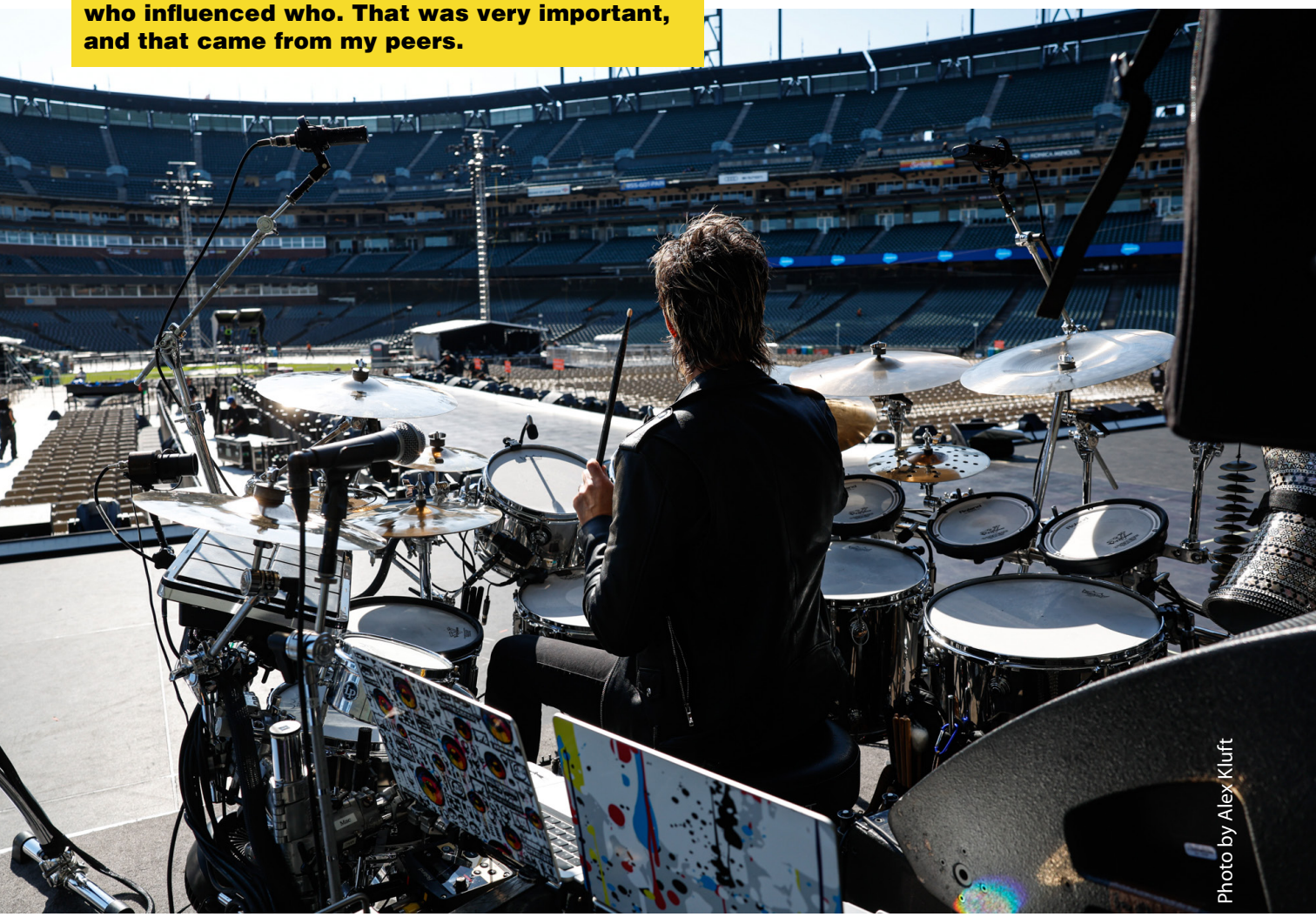
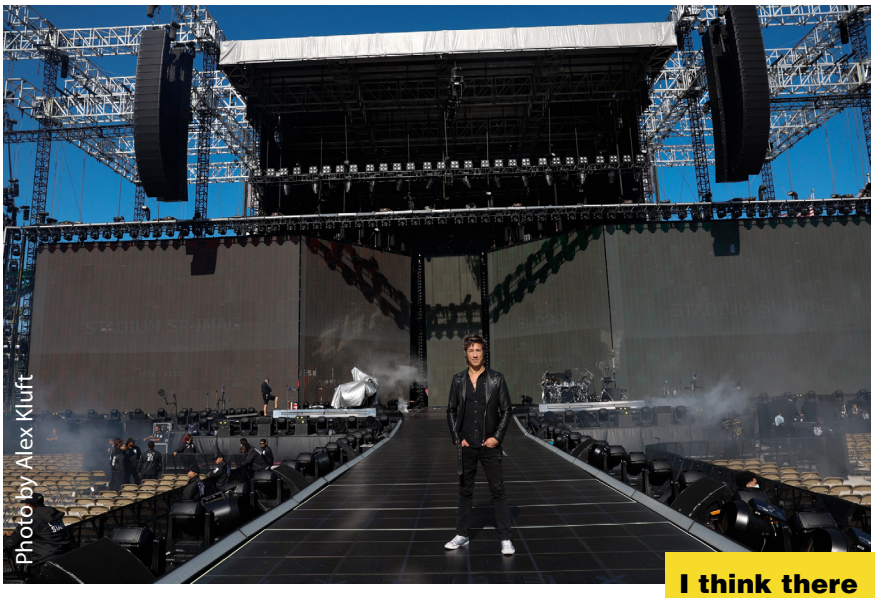


Photo by Alex Kluft

you, did you learn the song?" They asked for my opinions on a few parts, and we played it down two times. They said it was great, and asked if I wanted to come back and do another one tomorrow? That was Shakira. She already had one hit album in South America at that point. I wasn't super familiar with her music, but some of my friends had her first record. I came back the next day and we did another song; I came back the next day we did another song and came back the next day for another song. It was a great experience. I think everyone was having a lot of fun and it was going in a direction that everyone liked. They were trying to capture this kind of Latin-rock-pop-hybrid thing. The engineer's name was Sebastian Krys, and the producer was Luis Fernando Ochoa. I really enjoyed working with both of them. Shakira was great too. She had cool songs, and she really wanted rock drumming on her songs. She would say, "I want this one to sound like Led Zeppelin, this one should sound like Radiohead, this one should sound like Blur, and this one has a Rolling Stones vibe." She had certain approaches that she wanted, and I was into all that music anyway. When the album came out, since I had played drums on the record, they asked if I would like to play some live shows with them too. I agreed, and that became the nucleus of the band that she still has today.


Photo by Alex Kluft

MD: How do you learn tunes?

BB: I have different ways of learning tunes depending on the amount of time I'm given. My preference is to schedule some time to sit down with headphones and a stack of blank paper to listen and chart out the music. My charts are fairly extensive. They look like big band charts with bar numbers, tempos, all the stops, hits, dynamics, accents, and everything. I write out the beats for the different sections of the song, and if I think the fills are very signature, I'll write out the actual fills going into each section. Step two is to take the music and the charts to the drum set. I read the charts down while playing along with the music with some headphones. My next step is playing along with the music without the charts. Next, I play the entire tune with just a metronome without listening to the music. If I can still play the tune correctly top to bottom with only the BPM, and without looking at the chart or listening to the song, I'm pretty much ready to go. If not, I go one step back to see what's happening and check my problem spots. Then I go back again and try to play the tune from memory with only the metronome. Once I can play the song from top to bottom with just the BPM, I feel like I have it in my body. But I'll usually go one step further. If I'm going to perform live with this artist, I like to go to YouTube and check out live versions of the song. I'll make notes of how the live versions are different. 'Do they play it faster live? Do they double that guitar solo? Do they do all these crazy accents in the third verse?' Then I go back and write all those things down in my charts. So, I'll have two versions on the same chart. I'll have the studio version, and I'll have my notes for the live versions. It's all right there, so then when we rehearse for the first time, I have the studio version in my body and mind, and I know what they do live in case they want to do that instead. That way I'm never caught off guard. That's my learning process in a nutshell.

MD: How did you go about fusing Latin, rock, and dance music drumming for Shakira's music?

BB: I think there are certain consistent through-lines in my playing. I always focus on the time, the groove, the accuracy, and being authentic to the styles. Those are things I try to keep constant. I don't want to sound like a chameleon, I want there to be a consistent *through line* in my playing. The things I change are sonics. Maybe certain sounds work better for certain styles. Those are things that I can change while keeping a consistency going on in my approach. It's essential to know authentic approaches for each style. If you're going to play rock, what does rock sound like? And what does rock *really* feel like? If I'm going to be playing disco, I don't want to play it like a rock drummer. If I'm playing EDM four-on-the-floor music, I don't want to play it like a rock drummer. I'll still have the same feel, the same approach, and the same musicality, but I'll try to authentically give the music and the arrangement what it asks for. Those are things I think about. And a lot of that comes from knowing styles, knowing tunings, and knowing the sonics of each style of music. It's the same thing with Latin music. I don't play Latin music like Led Zeppelin or AC/DC. I play it like Latin music.

I think there are certain consistent through-lines in my playing. I always focus on the time, the groove, the accuracy, and being authentic to the styles. Those are things I try to keep constant. I don't want to sound like a chameleon, I want there to be a consistent through line in my playing.

MD: How much percussion is on your drum set, and how many percussionists are in the band with you?

BB: In the early years of Shakira's band, I was just playing a rock drum set with a cowbell and a timbale. At that time, we had a percussionist who had his own "enormo-rig." Over the years, I have added more percussion elements. And for the two most recent tours, we didn't use an extra percussionist. Currently, it's just me. I play (almost) everything. Our Cuban violinist covers a

few odds and ends. But really it all depends on the songs and the setlist.

If I could just show up with a kick, snare, and hi hat, I would do that. However, I need to add things depending on the songs. For some songs, I might need to hit electronic triggers. For some songs, I need to play a doumbek or a cajon. For a couple songs, I need to play bongos. Because of those needs, I start adding instruments, and it starts looking like Guitar Center up there. But it's all because of what is asked of me from Shakira and the musical director Tim. If they want me to play a certain instrument on a song, I just juggle whatever is feasible based on how many limbs I have and how much can I cover. My drum/percussion rig changes for every tour.

My goal is to be A+ on every percussion instrument, but if that's not possible, I just try to be suitable. Sometimes, I get together with a few talented percussionist buddies for some "refresher lessons" to keep me up to date on how to play more authentically.

MD: As a drum set player, how do you approach playing hand drums?

BB: Yes, I am a drum set player, but at the University of Miami we all played hand drums. It was part of the school's curriculum.

I enjoy being hip to salsa music. It is important to me to not just play patterns. I even took salsa dance lessons. I wanted to make sure I knew how to play the cowbell parts and feel the music. You can learn patterns, but you're not really learning the music.

I think that is unique to that school. Every drummer that goes to U.M. must learn how to play African, Cuban, and Brazilian hand drums, and we had to learn how to play all the orchestral instruments as well. You got that vast array of approaches at school. After graduation, it was up to you how much you wanted to continue playing percussion. Some guys might think, "I'm done with that, I'm going back to my four-piece drum set." Other guys continued playing percussion.

Something that was very interesting about going to University of Miami was, by having drum set players and hand drummers mixed in the same class, we always jammed together. It is a lot easier to have a drum set player and a conga player on a gig, then to have two drum sets on stage. Playing percussion was a great way for drummers to play together. For one gig, another guy could be the percussionist and you could be the drummer, and you could swap for the next gig. We did that a lot at the U.M. It was very common. You can be a drum set player that also plays orchestral and hand percussion; then you add electronics and programming, and it becomes this universal approach to playing drums.

MD: Talk about playing with percussionists, the do's, and the do not's.

BB: There are different approaches, and you learn by trying different things. Some work better, and some don't. I love the counterpoint of two musicians playing together. For example, in the case of two drum set players, if the other drummer is playing a straight four-on-the-floor groove, I often won't play the same beat because then it's just "two guys doing the same beat" and there's no counterpoint. In that example, I would immediately play around what the other drummer is playing. Maybe I'll do something on the offbeat, maybe I won't play kick or snare, maybe I'll only play the toms, maybe I'll play on the rims of the drums, maybe I'll turn my snares off, maybe I'll turn the beat upside down, maybe I'll displace it, whatever… There are so many things you can do to *not* double what the other person is playing. Sometimes doubling the other person can work, but (to me) that's not as interesting as having two musicians do two different things.

I think that opinion comes from the percussion world. In a salsa band, you have a guy who plays congas, that's his job. You have a guy who plays timbales, that's his job. You have a third guy playing bongos and cowbell, that's his job. The singers will play maracas and claves, that's their job. You put all that together and it sounds like a freight train. All the different parts and different frequencies playing different syncopations, that's what makes it funky. It's the same thing with Brazilian music. You've got the guy playing the surdo, a guy playing the pandeiro- tambourine, you've got a guy playing the tiny drum called the tambourim, you've got someone playing agogo bells, and you've got the guy playing the Brazilian snare drum called the caixa. You have all these people covering the different subdivisions and elements that make it so funky.



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

Of course, when you see Ringo Starr and Jim Keltner play together and they double each other, it sounds fantastic. But I normally prefer to do the "counterpoint thing" where one guy does one thing, and another guy does the opposite thing. Then it glues together into this beat that neither one of them could do

by themselves. The sum of the parts. I like that approach, and I've always tried to use it when I'm playing with percussionists or other drummers.

MD: How long have you been in Shakira's band?

BB: 27 Years.

MD: How has Shakira's gig evolved in those 27 years?

BB: It's evolved because it's grown in its appeal. When I started, she was a pop artist in South America, and she was really into singer-songwriter pop rock music. That was the approach. For that album, she only sang in Spanish. And the next album was half English; it was her crossover album. That was a big step going from Spanish pop rock music to becoming a crossover English-Spanish pop rock artist. Then she started adding more elements of Latin music, Arabic music, African music, dance music, reggae, ska, reggaeton, and all that stuff, and she became more of a "world artist." That's when we started playing in Africa, India, Lebanon, Egypt. We could play everywhere. She has always kept her Latin and her rock roots, but she is continuously adding new elements, styles, languages, countries, and genres. Now it has grown to be eight times what it was when I started.

MD: When Shakira incorporates a new musical element, let's say Arabic music, how do you learn to incorporate that authentically?

BB: That has happened. She'll do a new Arabic song and I will immediately go and start studying Arabic percussion like, doumbek, riq, different frame drums, tambouras, and things like that. I study the rhythms and instruments. How do you hold them? How do you play them correctly? What are the names (and variations) of the different rhythms? I listen to a lot of authentic players, percussion ensembles, different artists, and I kind of delve into the music. Then I listen to her song to see how much of it is an old school-folkloric vibe, and how much is more of a hybrid-pop version of that music. Chances are, it's going to be more of a modern pop approach with a little taste of traditional elements, so I don't have to go "full in," I can simply bring in a few stylistic elements. That's normally what I do. I did that with Arabic drumming, I did that with Andean folkloric drumming and South American drumming, and I did that with Spanish flamenco drumming. She'll come to me and say, "I would like to add this sound," and I'll say, "OK, give me a couple of days." I'll study and come back with (hopefully) all the necessary basics. I don't fool myself into thinking that the basics are enough. I just know that I'll have enough to start rehearsing. Then I work on it throughout the rehearsals, and hopefully it sounds top notch by the beginning of the tour.

MD: In the 27 years, what musical ingredients that she has brought you have been the most challenging?

BB: Nothing sticks out as being more challenging than another. I guess it's because I'm always a student and I'm always learning. For this tour, I'm playing salsa timbales on a song. I haven't done that in years. I moved from Miami to LA in 2004, and my timbale chops really went downhill. So, when I was asked to do that, I had to start shedding to get that up to par again. I turned to a buddy of mine named Richard Bravo for a timbale refresher course. He's one of my favorite Latin percussionists.

Several tours ago, I had to learn how to play a South American rope-tension barrel drum called a bombo leguero. That was fun. Learning how to play authentic cajon (not singer songwriter unplugged cajon,) and touring through Spain and getting into folkloric flamenco cajon was a fun challenge for me. Learning how to play Arabic instruments was a challenge. I don't fool myself; I'm never going to be the *Vinnie Colaiuta of the doumbek*. I just want to be able to hold my own and play them correctly. I remember a Shakira tour where I started learning tabla for one of her songs. But that's a 30-year journey! You don't learn tabla in a week. That probably would have been the hardest thing I'd ever done in my life. But fortunately, they hired a real guy to play tabla and I didn't have to do it.

If you do that, then you're really internalizing the music and you're not just learning patterns out of a book. You're learning the history and the songs of that genre of music, and that's important to me.



Photo by Chris Cornejo

MD: What musical approach appealed to you the most, causing you to really go down the rabbit hole?

BB: I liked learning all the different kinds of cumbias. In Colombia, they have a style of music called "vallenato" which is a coastal dance music that's a lot of fun to play. I enjoy being hip to salsa music. It is important to me to not just play patterns. I even took salsa dance lessons. I wanted to make sure I knew how to play the cowbell parts and feel the music. You can learn patterns, but you're not really learning the music. There are people who grew up listening to those songs. It's in their bodies. I don't think I'll ever get to their level, but I want to get close. Salsa music is not just something you study for a week. I have played

with a lot of Latin artists over the past 30 years. When I first step in, I always get the same funny look. I'm sure their wondering how this Irish-Korean drummer knows how to play some of these rhythms, or how he knows this particular salsa song from 1978? But if you really want to play a style of music, you need to learn the repertoire. I mean, if I were to do a rock cover gig in New Jersey, there are certain songs that I *must* know to play that gig too.

MD: I always refer to them as the "tribal language" of a style of music.

MD: Yes, in every style of music there are the standards. If you do piano trio jazz gigs, there's a certain group of songs you must learn to just be able to do that gig. When you sit in on a salsa gig, there are certain classic songs you need to know. It's important to learn the catalog of classics from any style of music. If you do that, then you're really internalizing the music and you're not just learning patterns out of a book. You're learning the history and the songs of that genre of music, and that's important to me.

MD: Why did you move to LA?

BB: I moved to LA in 2004 for several reasons. At the time, we had just done a Shakira tour, and half the band was from LA. So, I had these great friends that were fantastic players, and they were living in LA, and they would encourage me to come out to the west coast more often. Another reason was because I was very into recording, and all my favorite studio drummers were in LA, and they were all recording at studios in LA. I would buy these great sounding albums, and I would look at the credits: where was it recorded, by which drummers, and who was the engineer. And it was always a session guy from LA, in a studio in Hollywood. There was this tug that was telling me to move to LA and live in that water for a while. So I moved to Los Angeles on my 30th birthday.



Photo by Chris Cornejo

A lot of times, you just do a good job and allow your reputation to knock on doors for you. I'm not very good at asking for gigs. I'm always hoping that when I do a good job, somebody will think of me for the next one...

MD: What was it like to move from one musical scene to another mid-career?

BB: I think it was a good challenge and a good change for me. When I was living in Miami, I was trying to be a carbon copy of the LA drummers that I loved: Jeff Porcaro, Carlos Vega, Vinnie Colaiuta, JR Robinson, Matt Chamberlain, Abe Laboriel Jr., Josh Freese. Those were the guys that I was emulating in my Miami career. But I wanted to see if I could take my B minus Miami version to Los Angeles and actually play amongst those guys. When I moved there, I fortunately knew a bunch of musicians already, and that was important! I had a lot of friends who had a lot of friends who had a lot of friends. I went to many parties and jam sessions and watched a lot of other people play. I went to LA thinking I wouldn't have a gig for approximately two years and that's OK. But it was about two weeks before I started working. Then, it was just a roller coaster ride. That was my experience.

MD: I know you also did some gigs with Morrissey's band. How did that come about?

BB: I got a phone call from Morrissey's musical director. He said, "We're looking for a guy who can start playing with us, and your name came highly recommended. Would you like to join the band?" I said, "Sure, when's the audition?" And he said, "No audition. If you're free, we'd love for you to come down to the rehearsals." That's how it started, and I played in that band for three years. It was great because I was already a gigantic Smiths fan. I didn't want to admit that to anyone, but I already knew most of the songs. It was great band, fantastic music, and it was such a fun experience. I got that gig because, a couple years prior, I did a tour with a band called Tegan and Sara. The MD of that band is a very popular musical director in LA named Kris Pooley. He was the one who told the Morrissey camp to call me. Apparently, he said, "I worked with this guy on the Tegan and Sara tour, and he'd be a perfect choice for the Morrissey band." A lot of times, you just do a good job and allow your reputation to knock on doors for you. I'm not very good at asking for gigs. I'm always hoping that when I do a good job, somebody will think of me for the next one, or the next one, or the next one. LA is filled with amazing drummers, so you can't expect to get every gig. It's just not possible. You can only hope to be one of the twenty or so drummers that they think of for a gig.

MD: Did the three-year Morrissey gig interfere with Shakira's gig?

BB: No, she had taken several years off from touring. This is actually our first Shakira tour in seven years. She's a mother, and she is super successful, so she tours when she wants to. When I started with her in 1998, we worked constantly. Tour, rehearse, record, do TV shows, shoot music videos. It was a non-stop gig. Around 2011, she had so much success that she started to allow herself to take pauses. She would take a year off between tours,

If you make someone else's job easy, they will want you back, and if you make their job hard, they will never want to work with you again. The whole idea is to make other people's jobs easy.

which turned into a year and a half, which turned into two or three years, and then seven years off between tours. I've never tried to fool myself into thinking that the Shakira band is going to be the only thing I'm going to do for the rest of my life. I've always juggled many gigs, big and small, and I let my musician friends know that I'm interested in doing their coffee shop gigs, their three-song demos, big or short tours, whatever… I'm into it! And thankfully, I've been fortunate enough to do a lot of great things in between all those Shakira tours.

Like I was told years ago, a music career is tough, and longevity is even tougher. The best way to have longevity as a drummer is not to attach yourself to only one artist, because at any time that artist might decide to "go in another direction," take a break, or they might want a different flavor (of drummer,) or the artist might retire or lose popularity. Most things in life are not permanent.

MD: How have you dealt with those aspects of your career?

BB: The future is impossible to predict. All you can do is prepare. I don't like to waste money, and I'll consciously put some money away for the "lean times." If I have a high paying gig, I don't go out go out and buy couple of Lamborghinis. I put some of that money away for when I don't have as big of a gig. I think it's important to keep a fairly medium-to-low overhead and not spend above your means. And I also try to diversify what I do. I record drums both in professional studios, and at my own home studio. And I often do that while on the road too. If someone sends me an e-mail saying they need drums by next Friday while I am out on tour, I'll find a cool local studio, and go and track the drums and e-mail them my tracks to meet their due date. I like to teach also. I do seminars, in-person drum lessons, and Zoom lessons. I'm not beating down doors to become everyone's go-to educator, but I do love teaching. I make sure that, when I'm on a gig, I'm always thinking about what do I do when that gig ends, either during one of the tour breaks, or when the tour wraps up at the end; what am I going to do next? That doesn't mean that I call every single friend of mine to bother and pester them into hiring me. I just like being in the mix. It's nice to have a lot of friends, peer groups, and musician buddies that are doing the same thing as you. That camaraderie never hurts.

MD: I know you have done a Modern Drummer Rig Rundown But has anything changed in your set recently?

BB: I design a drum set for every gig. It's specific to the gig, and specific to the set list that I'm playing. The Morrissey kit was different than the Perry Farrell drum set, which is different from the Tegan and Sara set. They're all designed to play the songs in that set list. But they all start from the same place: kick, one rack tom, two floor toms, main snare drum, hi-hat, ride, two crashes, and maybe a side snare. Every drum set starts with that. Then I take away or add elements depending on what else I need. If you look at my current Shakira set, you'll see the same thing, and then you'll see that I started adding other elements including a second rack tom, a bunch of Roland pads, and a couple percussion instruments. It quickly starts to look like Neil Peart world, but it's not. It's basically a Bonham set up with additional sounds to hit for certain songs.

MD: What are some of the records that you have played on that best represent your playing?

BB: I produced an album for singer-songwriter named Michael Miller called *I Made You Up,* and whenever I listen to that, I'm really proud of the drum tones and the songs. I produced a record with a band called the Volumen Zero called *I Can See the Brite Spot from Here,* and we recorded 15 songs in one day because of their budget, and I'm pleasantly surprised with how good it came out. I was in a band in LA called Pedestrian, and we recorded an album called *Ghostly Life,* and I really like the drums tracks on that one. There are a bunch of Shakira hits like "Whenever, Wherever" and "Inevitable" that I played on, and it's still kind of fun when I hear them in a supermarket. I also played on a bunch of Asian pop records, and they came out pretty cool. It's all up on my website (the discography).

MD: How did you get into the Asian pop world?

BB: One of my dearest friends is Craig Macintyre, who plays drums for the Goo Goo Dolls. He recommended me to a Taiwanese artist named Leehom Wang for one of his Chinese New Year gigs in Las Vegas. Leehom's musical director called and asked if I would fly over and read down 2 1/2 hours of music-charts. I did the concert, and afterwards they were impressed with how easy the gig went, so they asked me to do a couple more events. They would randomly call me up to do a gig in Shanghai, a gig in Beijing, and a gig in Taipei. Each one went well, and the manager and the musical director told me that they managed a bunch of artists, and that they would like me to come over more often and play with some of their other artists. So, I started flying to Asia all the time to play with their different artists (JJ Lin, Jam Hsaio, David Tao, Jason Zhang.) It was so much fun! I got to learn more about Asian culture. I mean, I'm half Asian (Korean,) but I didn't know a whole lot about China, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam. I did those gigs from around 2009 to 2014, and then again in 2018-2019 with Jeff Chang.

Hopefully, when you do a good job, someone will ask if you'd like to do another one, and another, and another. If you make someone else's job easy, they will want you back, and if you make their job hard, they will never want to work with you again. The whole idea is to make other people's jobs easy.

For more information on Brendan Buckley go to

www.brendanbuckley.com



Photo by Nicolas Geradin

Joe Chambers: A Life of Cross Rhythms

By Mark Griffith

Drummer, vibraphonist, composer, bandleader, educator… Joe Chambers has done it all in his long career as a musician. Now he is talking about all of it in his new book *Cross Rhythms: An Introspective into the Life and Musicality of Joe Chambers* by Christian Schnorr and Joe Chambers. In the book, Joe talks about drumming, the Bembe' and his deep interest in Latin Music, the emancipation of rhythm, the Blues, his life and career, and much more. It is an excellent book, and is essential reading for any jazz drummer

Joe started out playing R&B in Philadelphia and touring with early rock and roll singer Bobby Lewis playing the hits "Tossin' and Turnin'" and "One Track Mind." From there, Joe landed in Washington DC., got a gig with the JFK Quintet and took everything he learned from their long residency at the Bohemian Caverns to New York City. Once in New York, he began playing with Eric Dolphy and became one of the most important and influential jazz drummers of the 60s.

Joe Chambers many recordings on Blue Note as a sideman began in 1964 with Freddie Hubbard. He proceeded to record with legendary recordings by Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Sam Rivers, Joe Henderson, Andrew Hill, and Bobby Hutcherson. However, his recordings with musical icons like Miles Davis and Charles Mingus, should not be overlooked. In the 70s, Max Roach brought Joe in to help form the groundbreaking M'Boom percussion ensemble. Chambers' later recordings with Archie Shepp, Don Friedman, David Murray, Lee Konitz, and Steve Grossman set a very high bar for creative drumming throughout the 70s and 80s. Joe Chambers has become a touchstone musician for forward-thinking musicians like Chick Corea, Charles Tolliver, Joe Zawinul, Miroslav Vitous, Stanley Cowell, and Kevin Hays to hire. In 1992, Joe's landmark recording called *The Colossal Saxophone Sessions* gathered 12 very different saxophonists to record separately and together with a rhythm section led by Chambers.

Throughout his career Joe Chambers has released 16 records as a bandleader. Since 1990, Chambers has taught at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. Most importantly, Joe Chambers helped pioneer the idea of breaking up the time within the jazz ride cymbal pattern and has become a world-class composer. That is where we started our conversation.



Photo by Jamie Moncrief

MD: I have always loved playing your tunes, how do you compose?

JC: I was a pianist before I was a drummer. Going way back to when I was in high school and in my first year at college, I practiced a lot on the piano. Early on, I spent time in some of the method books like Hanon, those were the books that taught you scales and some technique. But I was always into theory and harmony. Today, I would say that I play "arranger's piano," meaning that I have a minimal amount of skill, but I have enough skill to compose and arrange.

MD: I will have to disagree with you. I just got done listening to a record called *Double Exposure*. That record had you playing piano and vibes with Larry Young also playing piano and organ. And you are playing much more than "arranger's piano."

JC: I had some piano chops back then. Getting back to how I compose. When I was learning theory and composition, I spent a lot of time on tunes from the Great American Songbook. I studied compositions by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and that led into Duke Ellington. The thousands of songs in the Great American songbook that come from the Broadway shows are really an extension of what we call Classical Music, which is the European Art Music. For me, that is the foremost contribution and the continuation of harmony and musical theory. That is the history of composition that we learn in conservatories. The Great American songbook comes in at the turn of the 20th century. Of course, there are American composers like Aaron Copeland and Leonard Bernstein, but to me the Great American songbook is the continuation of European harmony and theory. Those songs that came from Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, were a big contribution to my composing. I learned a lot of those songs and they taught me a lot of theory, and that's how I started to compose music and develop my harmonic knowledge.

When I was recording in the 60's and all the way to today, I never have gotten a drum part. When I was playing with a big band, I told the people to give me the trumpet part. That would show me all the main hits and everything I needed to know. On those recordings that I did with Wayne Shorter, I told him to give me the lead sheet. I would learn the songs from the lead sheets at the piano because I was thoroughly engrossed by the compositions.

MD: What better to learn from than the compositions of Wayne Shorter. But what were a few of the standards that made a big impression on your compositional style?

JC: Billy Strayhorn's compositions were always an education. The standards like "Stella by Starlight" and "Alone Together" are very thorough songs. There's a lot of meat in those songs and many of the other standards that we all know and love. Then you get into the modern era composers, like Horace Silver, Benny Golson, and Oliver Nelson. Horace wrote a lot of changes, but he also wrote for the jukebox. When Miles composed, his pieces were some of the most durable compositions, but there was not a lot of information in them. A lot of his things were simple and simplified. He wrote for improvisation; he wrote to give the player space to interpret. Miles' songs were vehicles for improvisation. Charles Mingus was a great arranger and



Photo courtesy of Blue Note Records

composer; he didn't really want to play bass I'll tell you that as a fact. He wanted to compose and write.

MD: Since you brought up Mingus. You played on an interesting Mingus record called *Me, Myself, an Eye* in 1978. There were three drummers (you, Dannie Richmond, and Steve Gadd) plus two percussionists Ray Mantilla and Sammy Figueroa on a tune called "Three Worlds of Drums." What were those sessions like?

JC: That was done with a big orchestra too. One thing that I remember about it was that (from my memory) nobody played straight swing at any time, that was interesting. That concept could have worked very well with a section of percussion players like M'Boom. But with all those drum sets it got kind of muddy. Like I said, Mingus was really a composer, he wanted to write, compose, and arrange.

When I was learning theory and composition, I spent a lot of time on tunes from the Great American Songbook. I studied compositions by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and that led into Duke Ellington.

MD: Like he did on the earlier 1972 recording *Let My Children Hear Music*, and *Something Like a Bird*, which you also played on.

JC: Yes.

MD: Who were some of your favorite classical composers?

JC: They used to improvise in the Baroque period of classical music, maybe not like the way we do now, but they improvised with a figured bass. The figured bass is like the chord changes that we play now. Musicians write a bunch of changes today, but back then they had the figured bass. They started a lot of what we do now as jazz musicians in their own tradition, but here's an interesting point. All the pre-baroque, baroque, and early classical European musicians improvised. And most of the composers wrote in sections where the musicians could improvise. But Beethoven stopped the improvisation, he was thru composing everything. Beginning with Beethoven, everything that sounded like improvisation was written out. I like Beethoven, but if you get yourself a book of Bach Etudes, it's like a book of "Jazz 101." Those Etudes give you all the ii, V, I's that you hear in the Great American Songbook and Jazz. Then you get to Mahler, Debussy, Ravel, and the French Six which are, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre. Then we get to the modern era of Stravinsky and Bartok. Those are those are some of my favorite classical composers.

Those songs that came from Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, were a big contribution to my composing. I learned a lot of those songs and they taught me a lot of theory, and that's how I started to compose music and develop my harmonic knowledge.

MD: You came up on the jazz scene in Philadelphia in the 50s and 60s, and there were a lot of great drummers in Philly back then. What was that scene like?

JC: I left Philadelphia as soon as I got out of high school. I was still kind of young in the 50s, I wasn't doing anything but playing some R&B music. I did catch the drummer named D. Sharpe; he was very good.

MD: Did you get to hear Specs Wright?

JC: Oh yeah, but I was more interested in Philly Joe though. Max Roach was the model and the reason why we all played jazz drums. Let me clarify, Max could write music and he was composing for orchestras and choirs. The other cats couldn't do that, but the guy that I wanted to sound like when I was sitting behind the drum set was Philly Joe Jones. I always wanted to sound like Philly, but Elvin was the one who really opened the drums up in the modern era.

MD: When was the first time that you heard Elvin?

JC: I heard him on the Sonny Rollins trio record *Live at the Village Vanguard* in 1957. He had such a wide beat. I never say triplets, that's the western term, but Elvin had that Bembe' feeling and his wide beat was because of that Bembe' feeling. When I heard that, I stopped in my tracks.

But I had already heard Miles' band with Philly Joe and Red Garland, but what really made that band stand out was the bassist Paul Chambers. The way that they swung was so elastic, I haven't heard anything that topped that. They were the band that really grabbed me.

MD: There was a lot of space for Elvin to be Elvin in Sonny Rollins' trio. Miles' band left a little more space than the band that Max Roach and Clifford Brown led.

JC: Yes, you could say that. Max and Clifford's material was smoother and more danceable. Max and Clifford liked to play fast tempos, but when they got into a modern tempo, it didn't feel like Miles' band with Philly Joe, but it really had to do with the bassist. I think Max was actually more like a swing era drummer, except for his solos. That was the thing about Max, what he did as a soloist put the drums right up front.

MD: I asked Roy Haynes this once, and I'll ask you the same question. What is the difference between a swing era drummer and a modern jazz (or bebop) drummer?

JC: Drumming wise? One difference was the bass drum. Something that I could never get into, and to this day I still can't get into feathering quarter notes on the bass drum. However, I found something out from Louie Bellson. Louie told me that the reason they did that was because in the big bands no one could hear the bass player, because they didn't have amplifiers. That's why the drummers did that. The big bands were spread way out across the bandstand and the bass player didn't have any amplification so the drummer would have to play the quarter notes on the bass drum to keep things together.

MD: That's interesting, I can see that.

JC: I never could get with that. Of course, Roy Haynes freed up the bass drum and just started playing accents. Roy was right at the beginning of that. He was playing like that before Elvin, he was just not as demonstrative.

MD: Big Sid Catlett and Shadow Wilson were also playing like that before both Roy and Elvin, and they would be the first ones to tell you that.

JC: It all started when bass players like Jimmy Blanton started playing more bass "lines." That freed everyone to be more creative. The pianists didn't have to play stride bass and the drummers could drop bombs and play accents. That's when

everything opened up from the swing era.

MD: Your new book *Cross Rhythms*, written about your life and drumming, is a fascinating and easy read. How did the new book come about?

JC: I teach at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. And in 2013, a writer from Hamburg, Germany came to the US to do his doctorate at the University of Illinois, his name is Christian Schnorr. He called me to tell me that he wanted to do his doctoral dissertation on my recording career in New York. We spent about nine or ten days talking and doing interviews. I also had my brother talk to him about my early childhood and early development before he died. That became his PhD dissertation and we turned it into a semi-autobiography. That is what turned into the book *Cross-Rhythms: An Introspective into the Life and Musicality of Joe Chambers.*

All the pre-baroque, baroque, and early classical European musicians improvised. And most of the composers wrote in sections where the musicians could improvise. But Beethoven stopped the improvisation, he was thru composing everything.

MD: In the book, you briefly touch on drummer Pete LaRoca and his playing and solo on the Jackie Mclean tune "Minor Apprehension." That is a monumental solo in drumming history, can you tell me about Pete, that solo, and its importance?

JC: The way I see it, when you go down the line of the modern era drummers, it starts with Klook (Kenny Clark.) And here's the thing, Max and Art Blakey developed simultaneously, they developed what we know as the modern style of drumming and coordinated independence while Max was playing with Charlie Parker and Art was playing with the Billy Eckstine Big Band. A lot of people don't talk about that, but they were developing simultaneously.

MD: And you could throw Big Sid in there.

JC: Of course, then you go to Roy Haynes, and from there you go to Philly Joe. Then you get to Elvin Jones. Then people go directly from Elvin to Tony Williams. But between Elvin and Tony is Pete LaRoca. To me, Pete filled the gap between Elvin Jones, who was making his mark with Coltrane and Tony Williams with Miles.

...the guy that I wanted to sound like when I was sitting behind the drum set was Philly Joe Jones. I always wanted to sound like Philly, but Elvin was the one who really opened the drums up in the modern era.

MD: For those who don't know, Pete was the first drummer in Coltrane's quartet, he recorded with Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson, Paul Bley, Booker Little, and Charles Lloyd, and did an important recording with Jackie McLean. In 1959, on the recording *New Soil*, Pete played a solo that intentionally and freely drifted in and out of time, the solo was played in an approach which hadn't ever been recorded before.

JC: Pete's real name was Pete Sims, but he played timbales in Latin bands, that's why he changed his name to LaRoca. He had the Latin musical lineage and he brought that to the drum set. That's why I call him the missing link. He was doing all the modern and slick stuff before Tony Williams, that's why I place him in between Elvin and Tony. That solo that he took on "Minor Apprehension" is one of the most modern solos you'll ever hear. That was the first time that time got "suspended" and the time was implied. That was time in space and space in time. Pete was something. But the business got to him, he couldn't deal with it, so he became a lawyer. He couldn't sell himself to the music business, but that is the issue with drums, it has been an issue, and unfortunately it still is today.

MD: On your new records on Blue Note *Samba de Maracatu* and *Dance Kobina* you are playing a lot of Latin music. And in the new book you talk about a lot of the South American and Caribbean rhythms. When did you become aware and start to explore all the different cultures and traditions of Latin music?

JC: That music is in my blood, when I was growing up in Philly there was a strong Latin presence and Philadelphia had a Latin radio station and a popular DJ named Joe Loco. I was ten years old and listening to Joe Loco play Tito Puente and the music of the Mambo craze, the Mambo was popular, and everybody was trying to do the Mambo. I always liked that music, there's just something about it, it captured me. Ever since I was very little, I always wanted to play that music, but I didn't really learn how to do it until I got to New York. When I got to New York and started playing in M'Boom (Max Roach's percussion ensemble) I learned about the real clave' rhythms from Ray Mantilla and Steve Berrios who were also in the band.

The late Steve Berrios is a super important cat. He was Puerto Rican, but he could also play legitimate jazz drums. That's a real rarity. He was very well-versed in Cuban, Afro-Cuban, and traditional Latin music, but he could sit down and SWING! Steve and Ray showed me the right way to play to the Mambo and all that stuff.

MD: Steve Berrios has played drums on several of your own records, but did you ever get to play in an authentic Latin band?

JC: No, I was always playing in Latin-Jazz groups. I did get to play in Ray Mantilla's band. That band was called Space Station and it was like the Ft. Apache Band, but that's as close as I came.

MD: You mentioned how Elvin had that "Bembe' approach" in his drumming, does your ride cymbal approach come from your exposure to Latin music?

JC: To some degree, yeah. I always wanted my ride beat to sound like Philly Joe's, and (of course) I liked Elvin's swing, and I put the Latin thing somewhere in between. I just mixed it up. I didn't think about it. I like to have space; on the drums we play space. I like a wide space so I can give the bass player (and everybody else) a lot of room to play.

MD: The way that you break up that space between your hands and feet is very unique, can you explain how you came across your way of leaving and breaking up space with the ride cymbal?

JC: Well, that's a funny story. After I got out of high school, I went to the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music from 1960 to 61. Then I went on the road with an R&B singer named Bobby Lewis, he had a hit song called "Tossin' and Turnin." While I was playing with him, I landed in DC and stayed there. I lived in DC for three years and started playing with the JFK Quintet with Andrew

White, Walter Booker, Harry Killgo, and Ray Codrington. We had a gig playing six nights a week at the Bohemian Caverns, that was a hell of an experience. That was when they were doing jazz shows at the theaters, and I met everyone who came through town.

I left DC in 1963 and moved to New York. I was paying some dues and scuffling for a little while when I got a call from Freddie Hubbard. Freddie had heard me in DC, he wanted me to join his band, and he was playing a lot of fast stuff.

MD: What we would call "Max Roach tempos?"

JC: Yes, I never really liked to play those tempos, I did it, but I didn't wanna play that fast. Therefore, I would break it up, I would break up the time and break the cymbal pattern to imply the time. I was doing stuff like cutting the time in half and different metric stuff, when we heard it back on record I thought, "This sounds all right." Freddie and the rest of the guys in the band liked it too, that's how my broken ride cymbal playing came about.

MD: When you joined Freddie, were you replacing Clifford Jarvis?

JC: Yes, Clifford had been playing with Freddie, I liked the way Clifford played, but he was a little "out there."

MD: Did Freddie ask you to write for the band because you recorded "Mirrors" on the recording *Breaking Point* with him?

JC: I had been composing, I was always trying to write when I was in high school and at the Philadelphia Conservatory. Then when I was living in DC, I really started studying composition. I wrote "Mirrors" for a composition class. We were studying *mirror writing* which is a specific style of writing involving writing mirror images and the juxtaposing of themes. So, I wrote "Mirrors" in DC. When I moved to New York, one of the first jobs I had was with Eric Dolphy. He assembled a group consisting of himself, Freddie Hubbard, Richard Davis, Bobby Hutcherson, and me.

MD: That is the *Out to Lunch* band with you playing drums instead of Tony Williams.

JC: Yes, we did a concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Dolphy told me to come to the rehearsal and bring some music. It was no big deal, but there were no drummers writing music at the time except for Max Roach. When I came to the rehearsal, I brought "Mirrors." Dolphy and Freddie, both liked it, when they looked at it and saw the chords and the modulations



Photo by Jamie Moncrief

they probably thought, "Man this guy knows what he's doing." Duke Pearson was doing A&R for Blue Note at the time, and he probably thought the same thing when he looked at it. Nobody was writing music like that at the time. Tony Williams wasn't writing yet. That's how "Mirrors" got recorded for Freddie's record because he saw it for the first time at the rehearsal with Dolphy.

MD: Was Freddie's *Breaking Point* your first recording session?

JC: Yes.

MD: Where did that concept of mirror writing come from?

JC: That was a modern compositional technique. I had studied 20th century harmony and composition with a guy named Vincent Persichetti. Mirror writing was a concept that was used by people like Messiaen.

I was ten years old and listening to Joe Loco play Tito Puente and the music of the Mambo craze, the Mambo was popular, and everybody was trying to do the Mambo. I always liked that music, there's just something about it, it captured me.

MD: That's when you and musicians like Andrew Hill, Sam Rivers, Bobby Hutcherson, Herbie and Wayne, and Grachan Moncur III started (what I call) painting on the changes. How did that come about?

JC: I'll answer that by quoting Stanley Crouch. He was an interesting fellow and jazz historian. Stanley told me, "Back in those days we had the avant-garde, free jazz, and what they were calling the 'new thing.' The guys like Albert Ayler, John Tchicai, and Archie Shepp weren't the *real* avant-garde or even the new thing because they weren't playing changes." Stanley continued, "The cats on Blue Note like Andrew Hill, Bobby Hutcherson, Wayne Shorter, and Joe Chambers were the real avant-garde because they were still playing changes. They could play Blues, and they could swing, but they were just stretching it."

I never thought about it like that, but you could hear that in our playing. That's what you are referring to as "painting on the changes." But there was enough to go around back then. We were all *real* musicians. When (bassist) Richard Davis wasn't playing jazz, he was playing with the orchestra at Radio City Music Hall, when I wasn't doing the Blue Note stuff, I was busy playing with singers up in the Catskills.

It's all connected and related, especially if you play like Elvin with the wide three, then you're going to move right into that 12/8 feeling. The wide feeling of 6/8 or 12/8 is all connected to Latin music.

MD: That's when even Tony became enamored with avant-garde drummers. Miles had done a tour with Archie Shepp and Miles heard Beaver Harris in that band, and according to Billy Hart, Tony recommended Beaver to replace him with Miles.

JC: Tony also liked Milford Graves. I know what those guys were trying to do. But after coming up playing R&B, the one thing I learned about being a drummer was you gotta have a good beat. I always had that in me. In terms of jazz drumming, nothing was topping what Elvin was doing with Coltrane. What we were doing was out, and we made a lot of far out records, but it was always swinging.

MD: In the book you talk about the difference between pulse and time.

JC: That is a very important concept, there is a big difference between pulse and time. This is how I illustrate that. Time is a metronome; you don't play time. But take a rubber band and pull it, that is pulse. That is the base of the of the band. You pull the rubber band, and it stretches, but it's still connected, pulse is elastic, that's what we play, we play pulse.

MD: You talk about the Jimmy Giuffre record *Free Fall* in the book. There are no drums on that record, and I know that record because I used to practice with it. How did that band and *Free Fall* inspire your writing?

JC: Somehow, I got hooked up with him. The thing about that group is that they actually didn't need drums. The way they went about it was very interesting and that record was very interesting. That's a very important record they didn't need drums, they never played like they had a pulse, but the pulsation was always in the air. It's interesting that you used to practice with that record. The problem with them that trio was that it's hard to do that live, it's hard to connect live with people…

MD: People need drums.

JC: Absolutely, people need to feel the pulsation. But the writing and the concept of the Jimmy Giuffre trio was very interesting.

MD: How did their writing influence your writing?

JC: I was already studying Schoenberg, 12 tone technique, pointillism, and atonalism in school. They were using all of that in their compositions, I was studying it, and there they were using it, was all right in there.

MD: You were in vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson's working band for quite a while, how did his composing, and his vibraphone playing influence you, especially since you are also a vibraphonist?

JC: I met Bobby in 1962 while I was living in DC and working at the Caverns. He came to town with Jackie McLean, it was Jackie, Bobby, bassist Eddie Khan, and Tony Williams. There was no piano, that was the first time I saw a vibe player playing with full four mallets, because Bobby had to comp. When I came to New York, Bobby was already there, and when Eric Dolphy formed that group for the Brooklyn concert, we just gravitated to one another and started working and playing together.

MD: How did Bobby's approach influence your drum drumming and you're composing?

JC: As a matter of fact, I'm getting ready to do something playing some of his compositions. I'm playing vibes these days as much as I'm playing drums. With this new project I'm doing a bunch of his pieces, there is lot of meat in his tunes, good chords, and good harmonies. I'm trying to do tunes of Bobby's that have a Latin feeling, the 8/8 feeling.

MD: How do you feel the difference between 8/8, 12/8, and 4/4?

JC: It's all connected and related, especially if you play like Elvin with the wide three, then you're going to move right into that 12/8 feeling. The wide feeling of 6/8 or 12/8 is all connected to

Latin music. You can move very freely between 6, 8, and 12 in Latin music.

MD: I have nearly everything that you have recorded, and I have my favorites, but what are some records that you enjoy listening to your own playing?

JC: I enjoy my playing on Sam Rivers *Contours*, I like how everyone sounded on Chick Corea's first record *Tones for Joan's Bones*, and I like my playing on McCoy Tyner's *Tender Moments*.

MD: I always like your first record as a bandleader called *The Almoravid*, it combined a wonderful percussion section (with Omar Clay, David Friedman, Ray Mantilla, and Doug Hawthorne,) with a jazz group instrumentation, (with Woody Shaw, Harold Vick, George Cables, and Walter Booker) and the writing is very unique. It's like M'Boom meets Andrew Hill.

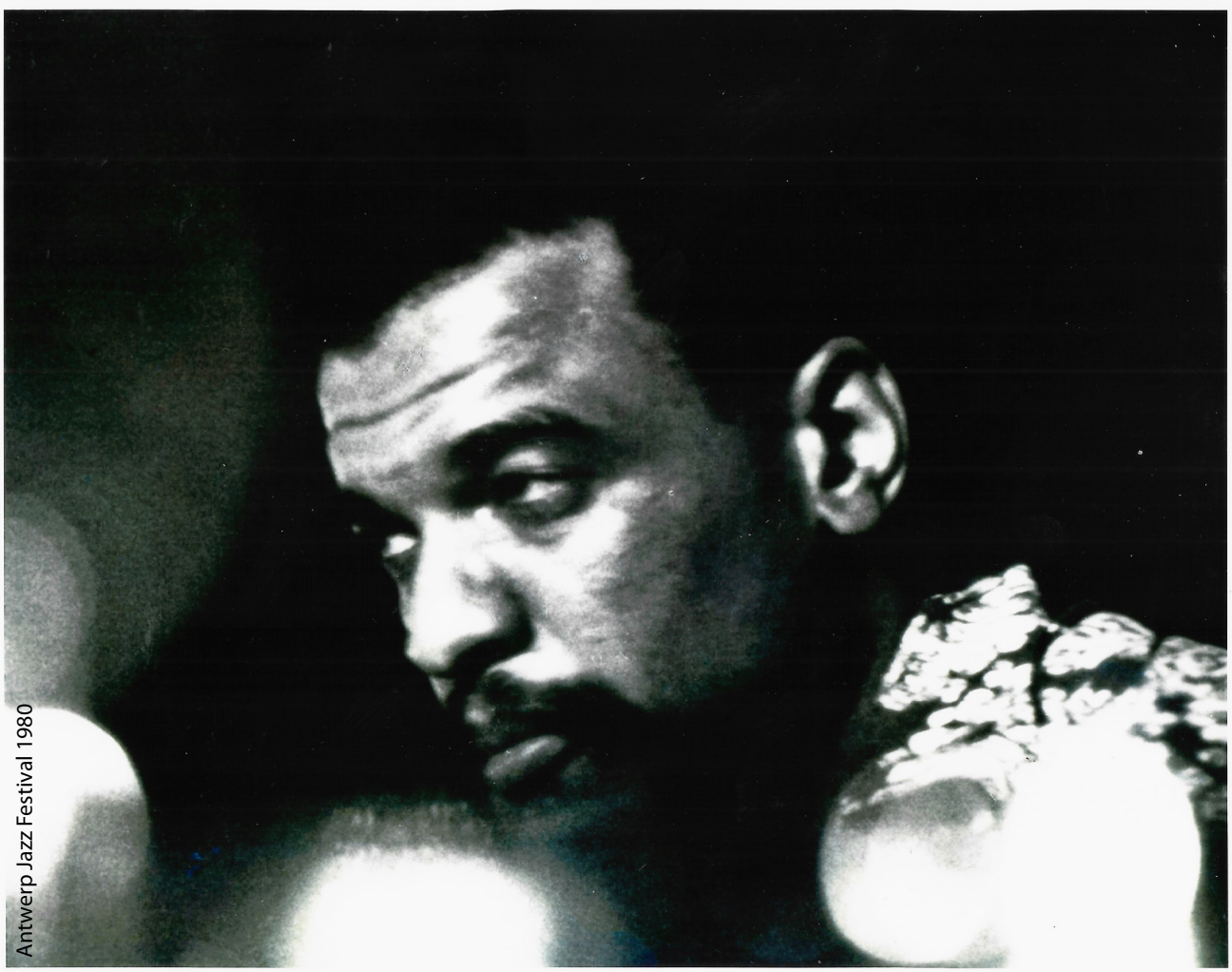
JC: I'm glad you like that, but to me it wasn't a good record. We didn't have enough time to prepare, and we didn't get into those rhythms properly. That's why I don't really like it. You can get into a lot of trouble talking about the Moors, the Middle Ages, and the combined Arab African invasion of Spain. That's what *The Almoravid* was about. I just like history and I wanted to write about how the Moors combined Arabs and Africans, but it was the Africans who were the muscle in their army. They made a movie in 1961 called *El Cid* about the Moors.

MD: I know you have done a lot of research into drum history, have you ever researched how the jazz ride cymbal beat came about?

JC: There a lot of theories about that. Papa Joe Jones told me that the drummers before him were playing a lot more than what you can tell from the records. They weren't allowed to play like they did on gigs on the records. But if you want to talk about jazz drumming in general you gotta start in New Orleans, everything comes out of New Orleans. In my opinion, most significantly the ride cymbal beat came from Papa Joe Jones because of the musicians in Kansas City, the Basie group, and the arrangements.

In the book, *Cross Rhythms*, I talk about the Blues a lot. That is one of the most ill-defined idioms of music around. The Blues are an African retention, the Blues modality, and those notes can be heard can be found all over Africa. The modality of it, has nothing to do with being sad, or sad songs. People need to understand that. Unfortunately, concerning music and drumming, there has been a lot of incorrect opinions stated as fact throughout the years.

MD: That's why it's important for people to read your book and listen to what you are saying about all the things we have been talking about in our conversation today. You are an important part of the lineage of jazz drumming and music history.



Antwerp Jazz Festival 1980

YAMAHA

A NIGHT IN THE POCKET

Bringing the Groove Home to Nashville

By Jason Mehler and David Frangioni

When Yamaha Drums throws a party, it's not just another industry showcase. It's a celebration of the very heart of drumming. On July 19, 2025, Yamaha hosted its second annual "A Night in the Pocket" event. An unforgettable evening that brought together a mix of Yamaha artists, from iconic veterans who've shaped generations of music, to the fresh faces making their mark across genres, studios, and stages.

Each drummer took the stage, not to showcase their soloing chops, but to celebrate what great drummers do best - serve the song and the groove. One by one they made their way to the stage to perform two recognizable songs of their choice with the house band, playing on either a Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Maple or a Yamaha Recording Custom drum kit.

Modern Drummer's David Frangioni, Jason Mehler, Felipe Laverde, and photographer Alex Kluft were there, catching up with the artists and organizers, and capturing the sights, sounds, and spirit of this standout event. What follows is a behind-the-scenes chat with the drummers, their stories, and the pulse of a night that reminded us all why we first picked up the sticks.

Yamaha Drums: Jeff Shipley, Matt Rudin, and Greg Crane

MD: *A Night in the Pocket* is an incredible event presented by a great collaborator and a legendary friend, Yamaha Drums. It's a pleasure to speak with the brain trust of Yamaha Drums, Jeff Shipley, Director of Drums and Percussion for Yamaha, Matt Rudin, Product Marketing Manager for Yamaha Drums, and Greg Crane, the Artist Relations Manager for Yamaha.

Modern Drummer is a huge fan of Yamaha Drums, and I'm not just saying that, I own two Yamaha Phoenix kits. As you may know, at *Modern Drummer*, we have a drum museum with over 60 iconic drum kits. We have a little bit of everything. But when people ask me what my favorite drums are, I say my Yamaha Phoenix because, no matter what style of music, that is my go-to kit.

We talked to all the incredible talent that make up the Yamaha *A Night in the Pocket* roster. They all play different Yamaha drums, and they have their favorites. Please fill us in and tell us about what's happening? What's the latest in the world of Yamaha Drums?



Photos by Alex Klott

MR: I can't divulge too much about what we're working on, but we have some exciting things in the works, especially in terms of electronics, and we're hoping folks will keep an eye out. We have some surprises in acoustic drums particularly when it comes to finishes, so stay tuned for next year's NAMM Show for that.

There's always a big R&D process for Yamaha. One of the things that I love about our brand is that we're always striving for perfection in crafting the instruments. We take our time with things, and we try to do it right.

MD: Absolutely, and with your currently available products, what's the latest and greatest?

MR: Tonight, we've got the artists playing on an Absolute Hybrid Maple and a Recording Custom. These are our professional-grade drum sets. They are beautiful sounding and very versatile for everything from the stage to the recording studio. It's really important to have a drum like that when you're doing an event like this. Each artist has their own unique style of playing, and tonight they have chosen a variety of different songs to perform. It's important to have a drum set that just works, no matter the player, the song, or the genre.

MD: Both kits really do sound awesome. Those two series, the Recording Custom and Absolute Hybrid Maple, are what drummers keep telling us are their go-to drums. How was *A Night in the Pocket* created? How did we get here tonight?

JS: It's an interesting story. Last year, about six weeks before the Music City Drum Show, Greg Crane said, "We should do, *THIS*." Matt said, "Why not do it in Nashville?" We all looked at each other and said "OK!" The first *A Night in the Pocket* was pulled together in six weeks. It was just about how we could give back to the community, to the fans of Yamaha, and to the fans of drumming and great music. We wanted to give back to them for what they've given us.

GC: It started with an email. We were obviously going to be part of the Music City Drum Show, and I said, *'Let's have a party! Let's take over a club and have artists come out and play!'* But we couldn't just do it at a low-level. We had to have our

biggest artists come out and play at an amazing venue. It just steamrolled from there. Like Jeff said, we only had six weeks to put it together. Luckily, we have an amazing team, and we made it work.

MD: With the fourteen incredible drummers that you put on the bill, it's one name after another, but I must ask about one of my favorites, David Garibaldi. He's been with Yamaha for such a long time and his work with Tower of Power has deeply impacted the entire drumming community, regardless of style. He's not Nashville based. How did you get David here tonight?

GC: I just reached out. Just like last year, I reached out to everybody. This is a perfect example of, '*If this is worth doing, it's worth overdoing*.' We decided this was what we wanted, so let's just ask. And everybody said yes.

JS: Let's be honest, we said we would stop at twelve drummers, but Greg can't count that well (laughs,) so we ended up with fourteen.

MR: Yeah, we sent out an invitation thinking that fifty percent of the people wouldn't be able to make it, but instead, *everybody* wanted to participate! We still have artists that can't wait until the next one.

GC: Our artist community is so tight, as you saw in the green room, everybody is talking, everybody is collaborating and sharing stories. So, with the invitation, once someone finds out that one person is going to be there, they want to be part of it too.

MR: We wanted to pay homage to Yamaha's *Groove Night,* the brainchild of Hagi (Takashi Hagiwara,) who was very instrumental in the legacy of Yamaha Drums. However, we did not want to replicate the format. Yes, we wanted to make sure that the sense of family and love for the community was there, but in a more relaxed setting, one that focused less on drumming chops and more on the joy of playing great music.

MD: That's great. The one thing I haven't heard yet tonight is a drum solo. This is a celebration of not just drumming, but music and community overall, and you guys just hit it out of the park! Jeff, Matt, Greg, and the entire Yamaha Team, thank you for tonight and for all you've been doing for the drumming community.

JS: Thank you, *Modern Drummer*!

Paul Leim

Chosen Songs: "Man, I Feel Like a Woman," Shania Twain; "Dreams," Fleetwood Mac. Chosen House Drums: Yamaha Absolute Maple Hybrid.

MD: Paul Leim is a one-of-a-kind, true legend, and it's great to see you.

PL: Thank you so very much. It's great to be here with all this incredible talent. I'm honored.

MD: What have you been up to lately? Are you still in the studio a lot, and still doing sessions?

PL: Yeah, I'm still doing sessions and playing with the TCB Band.



Paul Leim

I've been with the TCB band (the Elvis band,) for 20 years, and we tour Europe every January. One of the promoters from England asked if I had ever worked with Johnny Cash, and if I could also put together an original Cash band. I said yes (of course,) and I formed a group called the Tennessee Four. We have Johnny Cash's grandson, Thomas Gabriel on vocals, who sounds just like him. It's a fun project that is already sold out in Denmark for a February tour. Then we're doing a dual show in Germany with the TCB band. It's going to be a Presley and Cash birthday bash weekend. I am at a point in my career where I just do things that make me happy.

MD: After more than five hundred million records and all these years in Nashville studios. What is one session that you will never forget?

PL: Every time I'm asked this question, I come up with a different answer. There are so many. One great memory is when we did the music for the movie *Dirty Dancing,* and Patrick Swayze, who co-wrote "She's Like the Wind," came into the studio. He was such a great guy, and he was so excited to be there. But there are so many memorable moments, all the TV shows: *Dukes of Hazzard, Battlestar Galactica, The Fall Guy, Wonder Woman,* and more. They're all just great memories.

MD: Let's talk Yamaha. What Yamaha Drums are you playing right now?

PL: Tonight, I am playing Absolute Maple Hybrids. The set just sounds incredible. I normally use birch toms and maple kick drums. I've always played a 24-inch kick. I like lots of bottom end.

MD: Are the engineers cool with moving that much air?

PL: They love it. Of course, they need to adjust to accommodate for the larger drum, but they love it.

MD: What's your go-to snare drum?

PL: My own Paul Leim signature snare drum is my go-to. My 5.5x14" is usually the first one that I put down, unless we are doing an older piece that requires a different tone. In that case I will use the 6" model.

MD: How has Yamaha treated you?

PL: They take care of everything I need. I've been with Yamaha since 1983, so they've supported me for 42 years. Yamaha is just the finest musical company on planet earth, in my opinion. The attention to detail, and the way they bring the players to the people like they are doing tonight. They are an amazing company with a remarkable staff.

MD: We must come back and do a long form interview soon, because there is so much to talk about. But for now, have a great set tonight and we'll see you soon.

PL: Thank you.

Aaron Gillespie

Chosen Songs: "Bulls on Parade," Rage Against the Machine; "Friends in Low Places," Garth Brooks.

Chosen House Drums: Yamaha Recording Custom.

MD: Hi Aaron, after just performing at *A Night in the Pocket,* how



Aaron Gillespie

do you think it went?

AG: Good, it's great to be here! Lots of drums in a small room full of people on a Saturday night. This is living!

MD: And speaking of living, where are you living now?

AG: I live here in Nashville.

MD: What have you been up to?

AG: I've been in the same rock band for 23 years, called Underoath. I also write and produce country music, and other stuff as well, but I'm mainly writing and producing here in town.

MD: Who are you working with right now?

AG: I'm working with a country artist on the Big Machine label called Raelynn. I'm also working on a project for Hardy right now and his new label. I'm just chipping away.

MD: Are you producing Raelynn?

AG: Yes, I am, that's my "day job" as they say.

MD: Nice. Are you playing drums on the album as well?

AG: Yes.

MD: Do you have your own studio?

AG: Yes I do, it's in East Nashville, about fifteen minutes from where we are now.

MD: How long have you been with Yamaha Drums?

AG: I'm new. I'm their newest guy here tonight! I've been with Yamaha for about a year and a half.

MD: Why the switch to Yamaha?

AG: It was time. I grew up as a little kid reading *Modern Drummer* and watching videos of Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, and David Garibaldi. And I wanted to play the drums they play. I always thought that as a kid. So, when the opportunity popped up, it just happened.

MD: What Yamaha drums are you playing?

AG: I have two identical black Recording Custom kits. Each kit has a 24" Kick, 13" rack tom, 16" floor tom, and an 18" floor tom.

MD: What's the depth of the 24" kick drum?

AG: It has a depth of 14".

MD: It's pretty shallow.

AG: Yes, I like them shallow. There's something about the shallow depth. The air travels quicker. I feel like you get more low-end.

MD: What snares are you playing?

AG: I've always been a steel or brass snare guy, but lately I've been playing an aluminum Recording Custom a lot. It's 6.5x14, and I just love it.

MD: Aaron, thank you. We must catch up for a longer conversation soon, but in a quieter setting.

AG: Yes, where drums aren't bleeding into our ears (laughs.)

Lee Kelley

Chosen Songs: "Semi-Charmed Life," Third Eye Blind; "Smells Like Teen Spirit," Nirvana. Chosen House Drums: Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Maple.



Lee Kelley

MD: This is a hometown show for Lee Kelley, you've been in Nashville for about 30 years.

LK: Yeah, I moved here in 1997. I grew up around Charlotte, North Carolina, and felt it was time to try something new. The country movement happened in the 90s, so I came over here to Nashville, and I ended up sitting in on drums almost everywhere I went. It was really encouraging. Around that time, Eddie Bayers wrote a piece in *Modern Drummer's* "Ask a Pro" column about someone hearing him play and living in Nashville. Eddie opened it up for anyone to write to him, so, I put together a little tape and sent it to Eddie. He was nice enough to send back a note basically giving me permission to use him as a reference. He told me to make sure I had a day gig as well, but he said I was good enough to work here in Nashville.

MD: Wow, all from a *Modern Drummer* article. That's incredible. And you never looked back. What are you up to now?

LK: I've been playing with Hank Williams Jr. since 2019. We're in the middle of a bunch of dates. We're doing some on our own, and we're doing a handful of the *Rock the Country* traveling festival dates, headlined by Kid Rock and Nickelback.

MD: I'm going to have to come out and see the show. Sounds like a hell of a night.

LK: Please do!

MD: So, what Yamaha Drums are you playing and how long have you been with them?

LK: I started playing Yamaha again in 2016 and then signed on to the roster when I got the Hank Williams gig in 2019. With Hank, I use one of the newer Tour Custom kits, but with Yamaha wood hoops on top and bottom of the Toms. At home I have a Recording Custom kit set up and mic'd at my house. I also use an Absolute Hybrid Maple kit, if any other gigs come up.

MD: What sizes are you playing?

LK: With the Hank Williams Tour Custom kit, I'm playing 10" and 12" toms, a 16" floor tom on my hi-hat side, another 16" floor on my ride side, and two 22" bass drums.

MD: What are the depth of the bass drums?

LK: The Tour Custom bass drums have a 16" depth, and the Absolute Hybrid Maple bass drums are 18" deep.

MD: What's your go-to snare?

LK: My go-to snare with Yamaha is the Recording Custom Aluminum. I've got a Manu Katché Signature that I really love as well.

MD: That's a classic snare. Is the Aluminum a 6.5?

LK: Yes, always 6.5 for me.

MD: We'll catch up with you again soon, thanks for stopping by.

Donald Barrett

Chosen Songs: "All I Wanna Do," Sheryl Crow; "Basket Case," Green Day.
Chosen House Drums: Recording Custom.

MD: Donald, you slayed it up there!

DB: Thank you.

MD: What've you been doing lately?



Donald Barrett

DB: I've been busy in the studio. I spent about two years working with Lady Gaga on *Joker 2* and I am continuing with her by playing her Vegas residency.

MD: Tell us about that.

DB: It's fun, I started with Lady Gaga in 2019. The residency is called *Jazz & Piano*. It's a 35-piece orchestra and big band, old school. We're playing Great American Songbook tunes. It's an amazing show, and it's packed with 5,000 people every night.

MD: What was a moment, you'll never forget that.

DB: I was in Radio City Music Hall with Tony Bennett. We did three nights. It was his last show ever, he passed shortly after. Just to watch Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga and how much she loved him and to swing those songs with both of them was a dream come true, for sure.

MD: What's a moment from the Vegas residency that you'll never forget?

DB: Being in a studio every day whether you are on stage that day or not. She's a creative powerhouse. She's working on two records at the same time, and we're helping.

MD: How long have you been with Yamaha?

DB: I've been with Yamaha since 2006.

MD: What line of Yamaha drums do you play?

DB: I'm in love with the Maple Hybrid Absolute drums. I think it's one of the most versatile kits on the market. Wherever I go around the world, if that kit shows up, I know what I'm going to get.

MD: What sizes are you playing?

DB: My 10" rack tom is in the middle, and I have 14" and 16" floor toms to the right. To the left, I have a 12" rack tom, and I have two or three snares. I have two kicks, a 22" and a 20". The 22" is my main kick and the 20" is off to the side. I've got the 20" tuned like old school jazz, kind of the New York vibe. So, when I want to get jazzy, I can get that vibe in there. It's real dirty and gritty. Then I can just go right back to the meat and potatoes.

MD: You are playing three snares?

DB: Yeah, I have my main 14" snare tuned medium-high. I have a custom 10" Yamaha snare tuned really high. And I have another custom snare which is 5x14" that is tuned all the way down. That's my gush snare for ballads and stuff like that.

MD: I'm excited to do a Modern Drummer Tour Kit Rundown with you; that sounds like a cool rig.

DB: Thank you.

Elena Bonomo

Chosen Songs: "Come to my Window," Melissa Etheridge; "Ironic," Alanis Morissette. Chosen House Drums: Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Maple.

MD: You sounded great Elena.

EB: Thank you so much.

MD: What are you up to right now?

EB: At the moment, I'm playing for a Broadway show in New York called *SIX The Musical*. And it's a blast. It's about the six wives of



Elena Bonomo



Carolina Frangioni, Sully Erna, Paul Geary, David, Shannon Larkin

Henry the VIII. It's a pop-rock musical, with an all-female cast and band, and it's a lot of fun.

MD: Is it a show where the band is seen, or are you in the pit?

EB: We're on stage, and we're fully part of the show. We get to interact with the Queens, and we get to wear a fun costume. We are right there in it.

MD: What theater on Broadway is it playing in New York?

EB: We're at the Lena Horne Theater on 47th Street.

MD: How long have you been playing Broadway shows?

EB: I've been playing this particular show for about four years on Broadway, but I got into the theater scene within the last ten years. I started small, off Broadway, playing for local community theaters and subbed for other people. Eventually I made more connections, met more people, and a lot of mentorship and hard work helped to get me here.

MD: Where does that passion towards Broadway come from? What drew you into it?

EB: I've always loved it. I find it so amazing that you could be playing a show and hit so many styles of music within just one show. The fact that I can help drive the band and provide a beat that the actors dance to is so cool. It's amazing to see so many moving pieces, whether it's the actors, the lighting team, the sound team, the musicians, etc. - everybody is working together to create one big project. I find it really fascinating.

MD: It's imperative that you can read music for Broadway. When did you first start learning to read music?

EB: I started learning to read when I was a kid in elementary school. I started with piano because my grandmother used to play. I learned how to read music, and then I eventually started taking drum lessons. I played in the school concert band and the jazz band, so it all really just stemmed from there.

MD: Tonight is about Yamaha. How long have you been playing Yamaha Drums?

EB: I've been a Yamaha artist since 2017, but I've been playing Yamaha drums since I was a kid.

MD: What is it about Yamaha Drums that you love?

EB: I love Yamaha because the sound is always consistent, no matter what kit I play. Whether it's my own kit or a backline or a kit at a club. It always sounds beautiful, and if it doesn't for whatever reason, I can get it to sound beautiful just with some quick tuning. I also love that the hardware just always works, no matter what kit you have from different generations. I could pair my brand-new tom mount with a kit from the 80s and it will still work. I think that's really amazing.

MD: Which Yamaha drums do you use?

EB: I have an Absolute Maple Hybrid kit that I love. I also have a Tour Custom kit from the 80s that I use a lot for teaching and recording in my home studio.

MD: What sizes are the Absolute Maple Hybrid's?

EB: The Hybrid's are jazz dimensions, 18" kick, 10" rack tom, 14" floor tom, and a 5.5x14" snare. That kit works perfectly with my Yamaha Crosstown hardware. It's ultra-lightweight hardware that fits nicely in one bag, so I'll use that kit for gigging around town.

MD: What sizes are the Tour Customs?

EB: The Tour Customs have a 20" kick, 10" and 12" rack toms, and



Otis Brown III

14" floor. I have the matching Tour Custom snare, but I also really enjoy using the Recording Custom Aluminum snare.

MD: Again, you sounded great tonight. Thank you for joining us.

EB: Thank you for having me.

Otis Brown III

Chosen Songs: "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)," The Proclaimers; "You Gotta Be," Des'ree. Chosen House Drums: Yamaha Recording Custom.

MD: How did the Yamaha *A Night in the Pocket* event go from your perspective and with everything that went into it?

OB: It was so unbelievable. Just being in the room with icons of drumming like Paul Leim, Paul Bostaph, and David Garibaldi… Just being in that room, hearing everybody play their different interpretations of music, and different styles of playing our instrument, was beyond inspiring.

MD: What was your favorite moment during your performance?

OB: I love the songs "500 Miles" by The Proclaimers and "You Gotta Be" by Des'ree. The response from the crowd was amazing. Once "500 Miles" started, everybody recognized it and started singing along. The house band was great all night. They learned a lot of music. I love 90s R&B, so playing the Des'ree song was a lot of fun.

MD: What have you been up to?

OB: I'm playing a lot with a bunch of different people. Joe Lovano, a singer named Somi, and more. I just took a professorship at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, so I'll be teaching jazz drum set there. And in addition to touring, I'm working with a couple of dance companies at Lincoln Center and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in the fall.

MD: You also have a recent album on Blue Note Records.

OB: Yes, it's called *The Thought of You*, and it features Robert Glasper, Gretchen Parlato, some other amazing artists, and friends of mine. You can check that out wherever.

MD: We love it. How long have you been playing Yamaha Drums?

OB: I've been with Yamaha about 25 years.

MD: Which Yamaha drums do you like and play?

OB: I have an Oak Custom kit that I've had for a while. It is one of my favorite kits. I've got a couple of Maple Custom Absolutes as well. In the past year and a half, I got my first PHX kit. That's like the Rolls-Royce you keep in the garage unless it's a special occasion or something. So, I play my Oak's most of the time, and I love my Oak's.

MD: What are the sizes of the Oak Customs?

OB: I have 10", 12", 14", and 15" toms, with an 18" and 22" kick.

MD: What's your go-to snare?

OB: I have a few (of course) Yamaha snare drums. I use my Paul Leim snare a lot. I have two Paul Leim snare drums that I love. They're hard to get now, the brass series, metal snares.

MD: What is it about the Paul Leim Drum that everybody loves?

OB: It's an amazing drum. I love chrome over brass. I sat with

Paul Leim yesterday and I brought my drum from New Jersey for him to sign. He gave me some pointers on how to tune it, but it is a very versatile, all-encompassing drum. It's a shame they don't make it anymore; it's like a collector's item now. I have a quick *Modern Drummer* story to tell.

MD: Great! Let's hear it.

OB: My dad is a drummer, and he had all the old MD issues. This was before they came out in digital format. Growing up, I was so nerdy that I would take his magazines and make my own binder of the Rock and Jazz clinic articles. I have a binder now, I was telling Dave Garibaldi yesterday, he used to write all these articles, and I would pull them out and play these exercises. *Modern Drummer* was an invaluable resource for me growing up. What you do for us drummers is amazing, so thank you.

MD: Well, thank you. You are why we do what we do.

Shannon Larkin

Chosen Song: "Sabotage," Beastie Boys; "My Hero," Foo Fighters.
Chosen House Drums: Absolute Maple Hybrid.

MD: Shannon Larkin was signing autographs at the *Modern Drummer* booth today, and the line was around the show. We had to drag you out of the booth. It was amazing.

SL: It was amazing. I love drums so much. Particularly, I love Yamaha Drums. For them to bring me here for this event, and then to get to sign autographs at the *Modern Drummer* booth, was a dream come true.

MD: It was a dream come true for us and all the people that got your autograph and picture today too. How long have you played Yamaha drums?

SL: 22 years.

MD: And while you're playing Yamaha drums for 22 years with Godsmack and you're hitting hard, they always held up. They not only sounded great, but they also worked great.

SL: Yamaha has the best hardware ever. It's unbeatable. Yes, I'm a hard hitter, and I've had trouble in the past, but *not* with Yamaha hardware.

MD: The August 2023 *Modern Drummer* issue features you on the cover. What is the Yamaha kit in the cover photo?

SL: Yamaha made custom kits for Sully and me. Yamaha does not make acrylic kits, however, when Chad Smith was with Yamaha, he wanted an acrylic kit, so they sourced the acrylic shells specifically for Chad. So, years later, Sully and I do the double drum solo thing, and we wanted matching acrylic kits, so since Chad did it, we were able to do it as well. And those drums sounded great.

MD: What is your go-to Yamaha when you're not on the acrylics?

SL: The Oak Customs are my favorites, and they have a new model that has a phenolic center ply in the shell.

MD: What drums do you typically record with?

SL: The Oak's, the last three Godsmack records were made with my Oak Customs.

MD: What are your preferred sizes?



Shannon Larkin

SL: I like 10", 12", 14", 16". I like 18" for live, but it's a coffee table in the studio. In the studio I use double bass, but I use 22" and 24" kicks. I don't play standard metal bass drum patterns where you want the drums tuned identically. I use the 22" for triplets or leading into a roll.

MD: What type of snare do you like?

SL: I like wood snares, but my favorite snare to use in the studio is the Roy Haynes signature copper snare.

MD: And that's the drum we hear on the last few Godsmack records?

SL: Yep. A lot of them. We do use wood snare on some songs when we want more body. I also love the Mike Bordin brass snare. It's a monster and I used that on most of the tours.

MD: Thanks for sitting with us here at *A Night in the Pocket*.

SL: Thank you.

Tommy Igoe

Chosen Songs: "Two Princes," Spin Doctors; "Baby Got Back," Sir-Mix-A-Lot. Chosen House Drums: Recording Custom.

MD: Tommy, it's good to see you.

TI: Thanks for having me.

MD: So, what have you been up to?

TI: Well, I've been getting ready for this event and memorizing these tunes. But the biggest thing for me is that I moved to Las Vegas.

MD: Where were you before?

TI: San Francisco. And before San Francisco, I was in New York for over 40 years, born and raised.

MD: Big changes, why the move?

TI: Yeah, big changes. All business related. I'm a firm believer that I'm a businessman first, who plays music. I don't play music and then screw around with business. I'm keeping my eyes on my career, and I make moves for business reasons. I moved to Las Vegas for a couple of business reasons and a couple of quality-of-life reasons, and it has been fantastic. I've been out there for about a year and a half. I have a lot of friends out there. Steve Gadd moved out there, Ignacio Berroa is there, John Wackerman is there. There are a bunch of really amazing drummers in Vegas.

MD: If you don't mind sharing, what were the biggest business reasons that made you want to go to Vegas, and you were right?

TI: The biggest reason was the dollar value for real estate. How much you can buy for a certain amount of money. I was able to get a property that had all four sides of the property with no neighbors! For a drummer, that's a dream come true. When I got the property, I looked at the layout and the configuration. I was able to knock a couple of walls down and make one big, combined room for a studio space. And I was able to do that at a price point that blew away every other major housing market.

MD: So now you can do sessions in your home studio?

TI: Exactly. Everybody's a session player now. Everybody's a studio owner. Everybody records. So, for my business model, I built the room, tuned the room, spent the money to make the room sound professional because that's very important. In recording drums, you have to spend the money to tune



Tommy Igoe

the room for our instrument. I teach in that room and I'm ten minutes from the airport. Some people who come for lessons will fly in and stay almost an entire week in the area. They'll come over for five hours a day. I am really loving this particular mix of drumming versus education versus recording. That's why I moved to Vegas.

MD: You're a legendary educator as everyone knows. How many books have you written and have out right now?

TI: Four products that are officially available, but they're pushing me for a fifth. There may be more coming down the way.

MD: What are the books?

TI: Let's talk about the three main ones that are still at the top of the list right now. Because the first one was a beginner product released in 2001 that was called *Getting Started on Drums*. The video was literally me unboxing a beginner's kit.

MD: That was before unboxing was a thing.

TI: One Hundred Percent! Ahead of the curve again! Anyway, that's what that video was.

MD: And your three books?

TI: *Groove Essentials One* and *Groove Essentials Two*, and my technique book is called *Great Hands for a Lifetime*, which features a lifetime warm up, which has become a viral sensation that everybody plays everywhere.

MD: Will we see books four and five.

TI: Yeah, they are pushing me hard for it. No promises though. We'll see.

MD: How long have you been with Yamaha Drums?

TI: I'm coming up on 15 years, I think next year will be year 15 officially.

MD: And what line of Yamaha do you play?

TI: Quite a few. I have a Phoenix kit. That's my main kit. It's the hallmark kit that stays in the center of the studio and does not move. It's a 22" kick and a 20". 20's are really great, especially if you're doing any kind of loopy stuff, or anything where it's going to have to sound a little machine-like. 20" kicks tuned down, sound wonderful for that process. And as for toms, 10", 12", 14", 16".

MD: What is your go-to snare?

TI: I have a Yamaha Sensitive Series that never lets me down. And I have a student model stainless steel that also never lets me down. Both are 5x14. I don't like them too thick. I prefer them to be a little quick.

MD: What other Yamaha drums are you playing?

TI: Recording Customs will always be number one in my heart. My first drum set, which I bought in 1982 with my own money, was a white lacquer Recording Custom, because that's what Steve Gadd played.

MD: You went with white, but Gadd plays a black kit.

TI: And believe me, I heard about it when I came home. My dad said, "*What*? We play black drums in this house. What are you doing?" But I wanted to mix it up. Steve Gadd was, and is, my North Star. In a business full of landmines and trapdoors, you need a North Star to keep you centered. And Steve was always that for me. He still is. He's a wonderful human being. I love him and I'm proud of him. I still can't believe he is my friend.

MD: What do you love most about Yamaha?

TI: I was just talking about this before. No drama. A professional musician wants an instrument that doesn't fight you, especially when you have to move it. Those drummers, the drummers who are reading this, most of them don't have somebody to move their drums. They don't have a tour crew. If they're playing a gig, they're moving their drums themselves. They're putting them in cases and taking them out of cases. They're setting them up at the gig. They want something that doesn't break and something simple that you can depend on. That is highly important for people who *actually* gig. Simple, effective, and no drama.

MD: I love that reasoning, and congrats on Vegas. But you're in the wrong city for no drama…

TI: Right. But if you stay away from the strip, it's like a normal place.

Gorden Campbell

Chosen Songs: "Baby One More Time," Britney Spears; "Killing Me Softly," The Fugees.

Chosen House Drums: Absolute Hybrid Maple.

MD: What are you up to? What's the latest on Gorden Campbell?

GC: I'm playing a lot. I'm also producing. So, it's half and half. I'm producing some new records. Eric Darius is a smooth jazz artist I produce, and I'm playing drums on a lot of the records I'm producing too. I'm also doing the score for a Christmas movie. I also have my own album coming out called *Conversations Live.*

MD: When is that coming out?

GC: There's no release date yet, but it's a live video, like Snarky Puppy does, with a live audience at East West Studios in Hollywood. Eighty people in the audience, a live band, horns. I also do gigs with En Vogue and a band called Jazz Funk Soul, which is Jeff Lorber, Paul Jackson Jr, and Everette Harp.

MD: How long have you been with Yamaha?

GC: 18 years, I had to do the counting before I came to this show. I signed with Yamaha in 2007.

MD: What is it that you love about Yamaha drums?

GC: After watching Dave Weckl's *The Next Step*, I was stuck. I was in high school when that came out and I've been stuck on Yamaha ever since, but they really sound good. They're really musical and they fit in all different situations from TV, to rock, country, and hip-hop. I can use them in any style, and they work. They just fit musically with everything.

MD: What is your favorite series of Yamaha Drums?

GC: The go-to series for me is the Phoenix. There's nothing better.

MD: Those are some of my favorite drums of all time. I love my Phoenix kits. I have two. I heard Dave play the kit originally when they released it. And I know a lot of it had to do with his playing, but I didn't realize how much of it had to do with the kit as well.

GC: Nothing is missing. It's got the beefiness, it's got the tone, it's literally everything you could think of. If you could draw up your perfect drum set. To me, it's the Phoenix.



Gorden Campbell



Paul Bostaph

MD: What sizes do you use?

GC: Different configurations depending on the music. Most of the time it's 10", 12", 14", 16". Every once in a while, I'll have an 8", 10", 12", 14", 16". I also have an 18" floor tom, but I don't use it very much. I have a 20" kick, but I normally use my 22". In my studio I have that set up. It's 22", 10", 12", 14".

MD: What's the depth of the 22"?

GC: 18" depth.

MD: Oh, so very deep. What's your go-to snare?

GC: The Paul Leim snare. I have three go-to snares, but the Paul Leim is number one.

MD: He'll be happy to hear that.

GC: I've told him like ten times since we've been here. I'm probably getting on his nerves.

MD: What are your other two go-to snares?

GC: I have a 6x14" Absolute Hybrid Maple and an Aluminum Recording Custom that is a 6.5x14". That has worked well for a lot of records that I've done.

MD: I'm excited to see you play tonight.

GC: *Modern Drummer*, you've been there forever. Thank you.

Paul Bostaph

Chosen Songs: "Buddy Holly," Weezer; "Everlong," Foo Fighters. Chosen House Drums: Recording Custom.

MD: How are you, and what have you been up to?

PB: I'm good, Thank you. I've been on tour with Kerry King band. We have an album out. We're going through the first album cycle, going back to Europe in five days. I just finished up with Slayer for a three-show run in England, and we did the Black Sabbath *Back to the Beginning* concert. And (of course) I am playing at the Yamaha Night in the Pocket event.

MD: *Back to the Beginning*. What an iconic event. We've been covering it. And, of course, we've worked with so many of the artists that appeared, right up to Black Sabbath. Bill Ward is a *Modern Drummer* Hall of Fame recipient. Bring us into that moment.

PB: I'll start by saying this. When I was a little kid, I practiced to Black Sabbath albums in the garage. From that moment to today, if you would have told me that I was actually playing Black Sabbath and Ozzy's last show in Birmingham, England, I would have said, "No way!" It's really strange where roads take you if you keep playing and keep doing it. Words truly can't describe how I felt that day. If I said it was epic, that would still fall short of what it was.

MD: It sounds like a truly amazing experience. What were the sizes and the configuration that you used at the *Back to the Beginning* concert? Was that your standard kit or was that just a one-off kit?

PB: I play a Recording Custom. I have two of those. And I play the Absolute Maple Hybrid kit as well. Yes, it was my drum set at *Back to the Beginning*. It is the Absolute Maple Hybrid, and the sizes are 8", 10", 12", 14", 16", and 18".

MD: What do you play for kicks and snare?

PB: Both kicks are 18x 22", and the snare is a 5.5x14". It's a Recording Custom stainless-steel snare.

MD: How long have you been with Yamaha and why did you choose them?

PB: I've been with Yamaha since 2011 and what I love about them is the sound. A long time ago I was playing with a club band and one of the other drummers had a Yamaha Recording Custom set, and I just loved the kick drum sound. Years later I was at a music festival with Dave McClain from Machine Head, he introduced me to Greg Crane from Yamaha, and he invited me down to check out the drums. I played different lines and spent all day trying different drums and tunings. I just fell in love.

MD: Those drums are put through a lot when you're playing with Slayer and Kerry King, and the drums have always held up for you, right?

PB: I've never had any problem with any of the Yamaha drums.

MD: It's great to see you, and good luck with Kerry King and with Slayer.

PB: Thank you.

Bill Gibson

Chosen Songs: "In Bloom," Nirvana, "You Get What You Give," The New Radicals. Chosen House Drums: Absolute Hybrid Maple.

MD: Bill, it's great to see you. Can you tell us what you've been up to?

BG: I have been working a lot in my home studio. As most everyone knows, Huey has lost his hearing, and so it took us off the road. So, you could say I'm semi-retired. But I've been playing with Bill Champlin and Sons of Champlin, which is a ball. I'm also taking lessons and working with my daughter a bit; she is a singer-songwriter.

MD: How many years did you tour with Huey Lewis?

BG: I believe it was 41 years.

MD: When you and the band made the *Sports* album, did you know that you had some really special songs on that record? What were your thoughts back then?

BG: We knew that we had a good record. We had written some good songs; some songs were pitched to us that we did. We didn't know how big it was gonna be. We had no idea.

MD: What was one of your favorite memories, when you think back on the decades with Huey, between the albums, the tours, the videos, *Back to the Future*, what are some of the great moments that you remember?

BG: What strikes me the most is the camaraderie that we had as a group and the chemistry we had as musicians. It was special from the get-go, but we had a ten-year run when we were very prolific with our writing. And then there's the friendships, we felt like it was us against the world. We were out to conquer the world, and we did it.

MD: And you never stopped until you did it. That comes from the camaraderie, coupled with a lot of hard work and perseverance.



Bill Gibson



Kendrick Scott

BG: That's exactly right.

MD: How long have you been playing Yamaha Drums?

BG: I started endorsing Yamaha in 1985, so it's been 40 years.

MD: What Yamaha drums are you playing right now?

BG: The new Recording Custom kit. I love it. I'm trying to get them to give me a Phoenix kit, but that's a tough ask.

MD: That's a great sounding kit too, I love the Phoenix kits.

BG: I love my Recording Customs though.

MD: What sizes do you use?

BG: I have 8x10", 10x12", 11x13", 13x14", 15x16", and an 18x 22" kick.

MD: What's your go-to snare?

BG: I don't really have a go-to snare, but for Yamaha stuff, I have a brass 13" that I use as a piccolo that I love, and I've mostly been using a 5x14" Yamaha Maple snare drum.

MD: What speaks volumes about Yamaha, is that you've used their drums on rigorous tours and in the studio. Those are two very different conditions, but Yamaha has fit both bills for you, and that says a lot.

BG: Oh yes, they are fantastic. And everybody I've ever met at Yamaha has been like a family member to me. They've treated me so well. I feel the relationship I have with them is special, and there's no reason to ever want to leave.

MD: That says it all.

Kendrick Scott

Chosen Songs: "Jeremy," Pearl Jam: "Shine," Collective Soul.
Chosen House Drums: Recording Custom.

Though *Modern Drummer* did not have the opportunity to sit down with Kendrick Scott for an interview, it is fitting to share a moment from the evening that speaks volumes about his professionalism and presence behind the kit. While performing Pearl Jam's "Jeremy," Kendrick's bass drum beater came loose— a potential groove-stopper for any drummer. But rather than panic or pause, Kendrick stayed locked in. With a smile, he adjusted on the fly, and he shifted his approach without compromising the integrity of the groove. While the Yamaha crew and a few of the performing drummers hopped up to remedy the situation, Kendrick continued to support the band and serve the song with a calm, confident touch, never losing the musical thread. It was a powerful and fun reminder of professionalism. Even without a formal interview, Kendrick's performance during "Jeremy" said it all.

Anton Fig

Chosen Songs: "Nothing Compares to You," Sinead O'Connor; "Black Hole Sun," Soundgarden.
Chosen House Drums: Absolute Hybrid Maple.

MD: Anton, it's always great to see you. What have you been up



Anton Fig

to?

AF: I've been doing a bit of home recording and sending the files out. I've also been traveling around and doing quite a bit of touring this year.

MD: Who are you touring with?

AF: At the moment, I'm out with Bob Dylan.

MD: Wow, that's nice. You played with so many legends on the Letterman show, and you played with a different legend almost every night, and now you're out on the road with another legend. Where are you guys touring?

AF: We're with Willie Nelson's Outlaw Tour this summer across America at the moment.

MD: That's great. Has there been a pinch-me moment on the Dylan tour?

AF: All of them!

MD: Every song, every show?

AF: It's the greatest thing in the world.

MD: I agree. You have been with Yamaha Drums for many years. How long has it been?

AF: I've been with Yamaha Drums since about a year after joining the Letterman show.

MD: What year did you get the Letterman gig?

AF: I believe it was 1987.

MD: That's well over 35 years with Yamaha. What drums are you playing now? And what is your configuration?

AF: I am playing a Phoenix kit, and on the tour with Dylan it's just a rack tom and a floor tom. A very simple four-piece kit. The toms are 13" and 16".

MD: What about the kick and snare?

AF: 24" bass drum, and my Yamaha signature snare drum.

MD: That's cool that you are still playing your signature model. It's such a cool looking drum.

AF: And it sounds so good.

MD: It really does. We'll see you on the road with Dylan and other legends, I'm sure.

AF: Thank you, good to see you.

David Garibaldi

Chosen Songs: "All Star," Smashmouth; "This is How We Do It," Montell Jordan. Chosen House Drums: Recording Custom.

MD: David your career has been so well documented that there's not a lot to really say—it's all been said. You've made such a huge impact for so many decades, what are you up to lately?

DG: I'm enjoying my life and enjoying that I don't have to be on the tour bus. I have projects going on, I'm teaching, working on a book, so I've got plenty to keep my busy.

MD: What's the book that you would recommend if somebody wanted to start learning the Garibaldi approach to funk drumming?

DG: I think *Future Sounds* has got all the fundamental stuff in it about building grooves and how to think about that. But



David Garibaldi



Greg Crane, Paul Bostaph, Matt Rudin



Anton Fig and Otis Brown III



Tommy Igoe and David Garibaldi

together, all the books say a lot, so I think that if you start going through things, there's a lot of helpful material there.

Sound has a lot to do with it. The sound that you achieve is so important, I'm big about that, and I teach that a lot. People must understand that sound starts in your head. When I was learning how to play, there weren't a lot of video examples. So, you had to use your imagination to create a way for yourself to play, to replicate the sound you were hearing. I think the most valuable way to learn is to use your imagination.

MD: Just add ideas, as I like to say. You've been playing Yamaha Drums for how long now?

DG: Since 1982.

MD: Amazing. What is your go-to Yamaha kit?

DG: Recording Custom. I have used them for years. I use a 13" and 16" mounted toms, with a 22" kick.

MD: What's your go-to snare?

DG: Well, I like my DG signature Yamaha snare. That one is great. But then there's a lot of others as well. Wood snares are really nice, so it's kind of whatever you'd like your sound to be. It comes down to how you hear and want to present yourself.

MD: What size and material is your signature snare?

DG: It is made of anodized brass. It's a 3.5x14" in the style of a piccolo, while not exactly traditional. I've always loved that sound.

MD: It's got enough body, and it's not just all crack, even though it's a 3.5".

DG: It's all in how you tune it. It's a very versatile drum and you can tune it in many different ways.

MD: To get enough bottom out of it?

DG: Yes.

MD: We can't wait to hear you play tonight. We've gotta do this again.
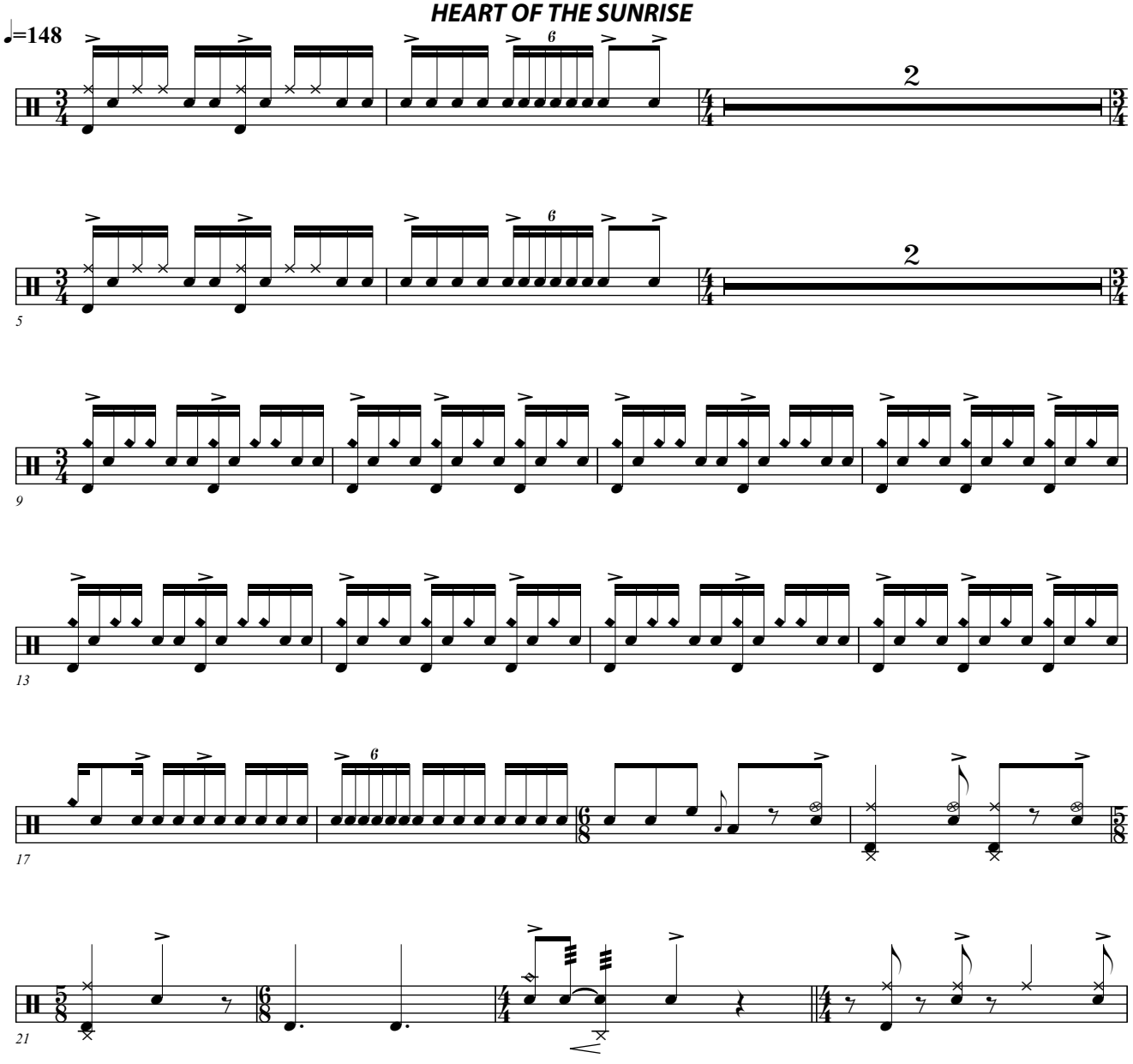
DG: Anytime. Thank you.
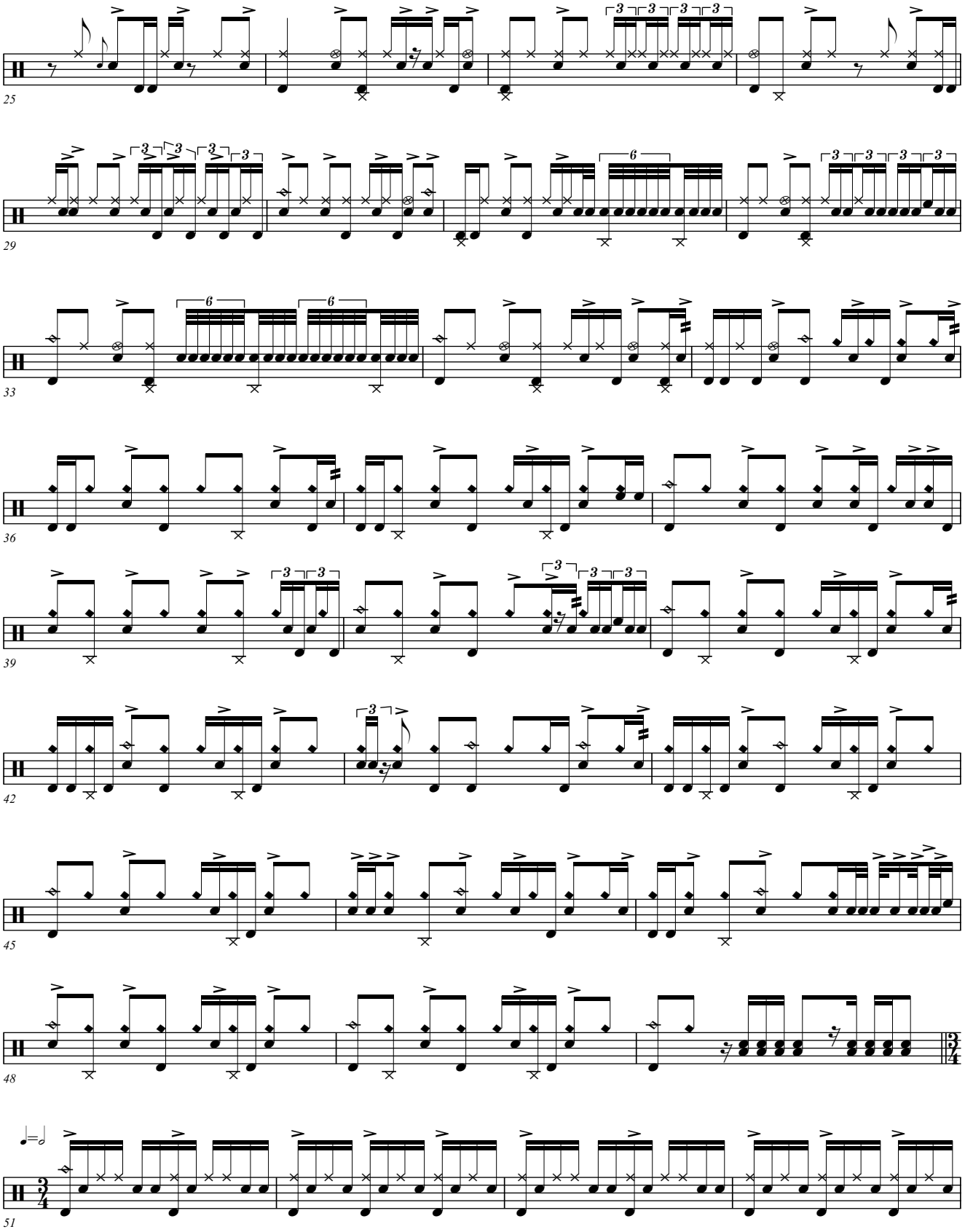
The Yamaha *A Night in the Pocket* was a huge success in conjunction with the amazing Music City Drum Show. Everyone had a fantastic time. *Modern Drummer* and the rest of the drumming community thanks the staff at Yamaha, the house band, the club, and all the featured drummers for a terrific night. We can't wait until next year to be back in the pocket with Yamaha!

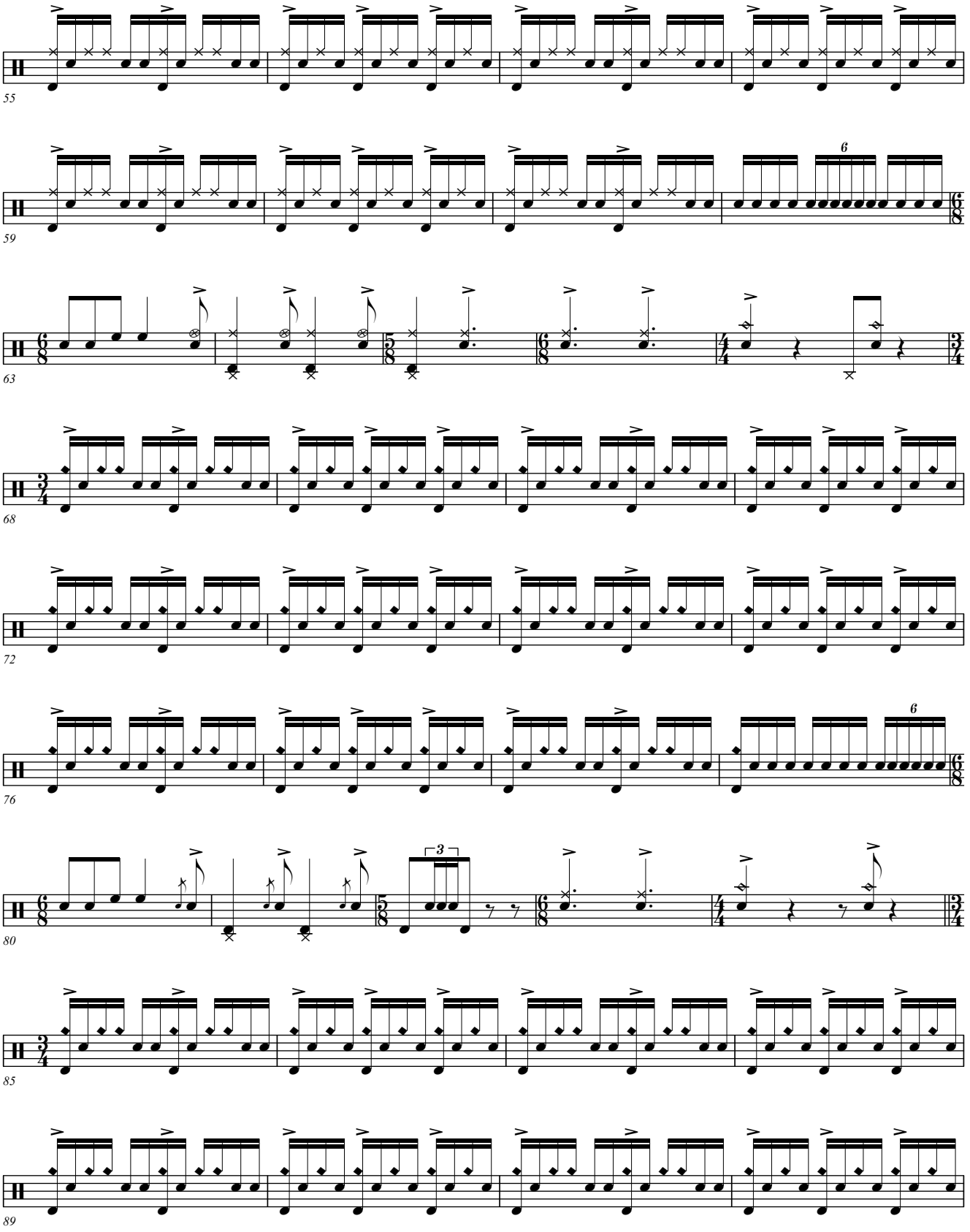
Yes, "Heart of the Sunrise," from the recording *Fragile*, drummer Bill Bruford
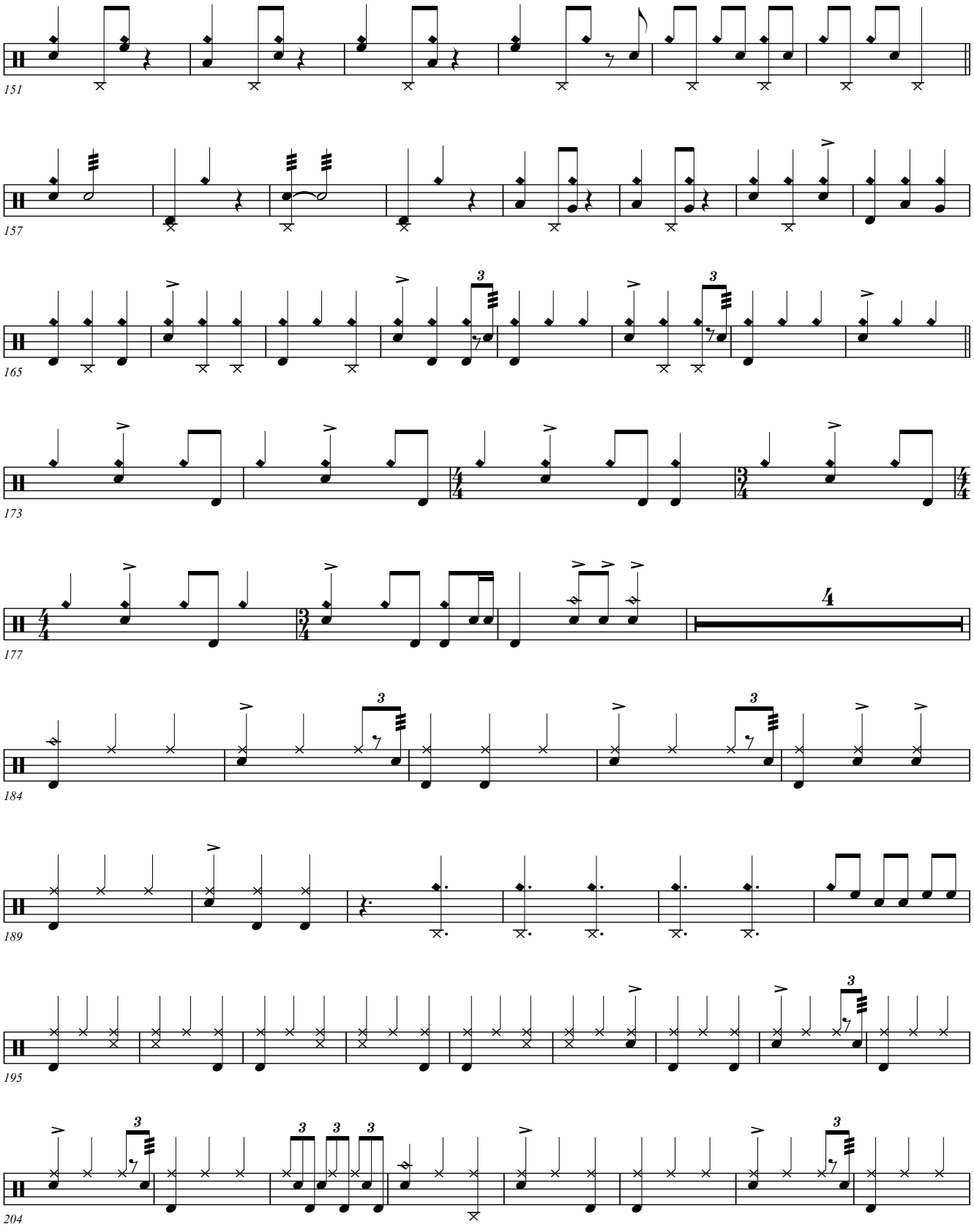
Transcription by Marc Atkinson
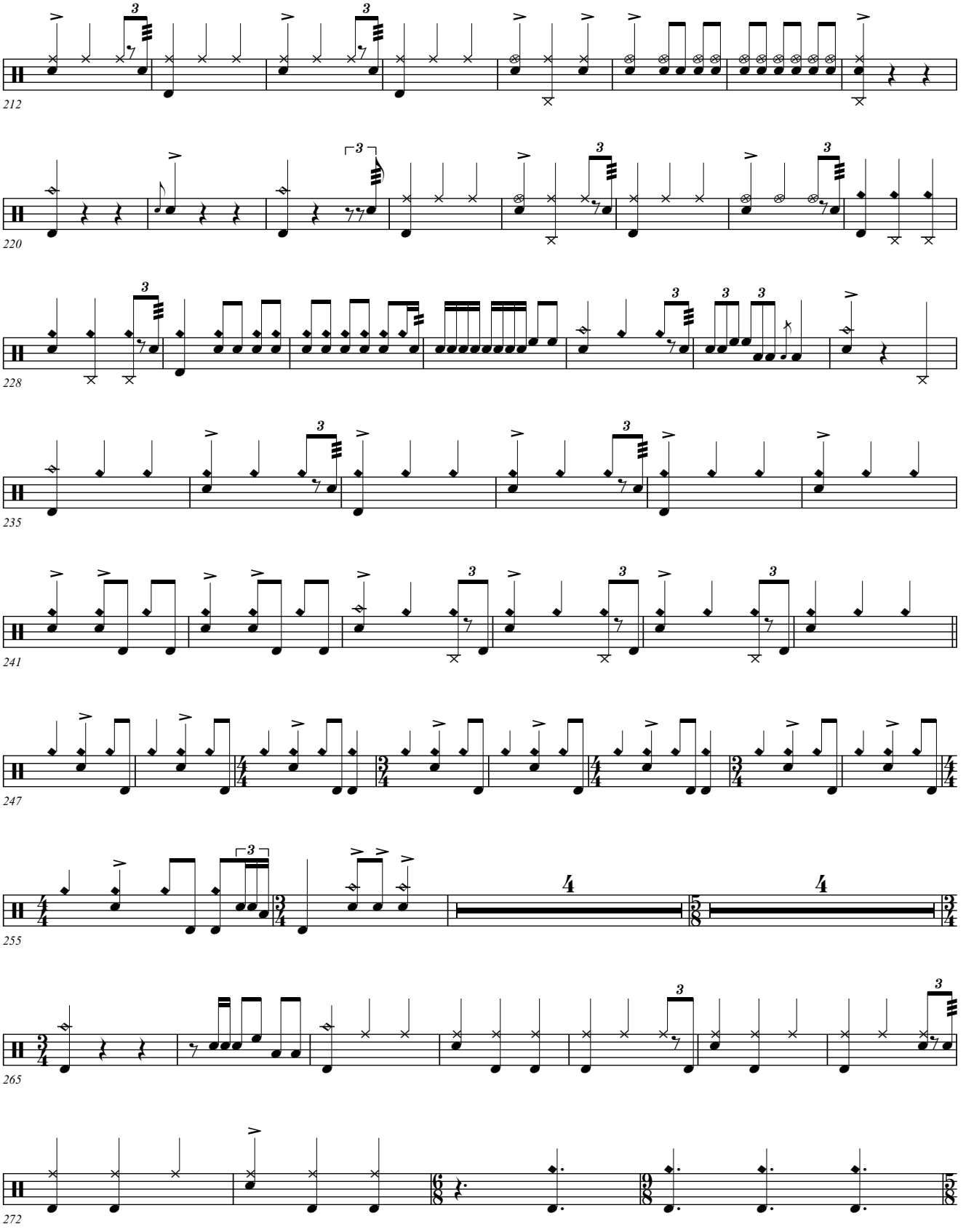
This month's transcription comes from the classic 1971 Yes album *Fragile*. Featuring the legendary Bill Bruford, "Heart of the Sunrise" closes the album—and in my opinion, stands as one of the greatest Yes tracks ever recorded. Rhythmically it's a fantastic piece to study and learn. Despite the frequent changes in time signature, the groove moves so naturally that the shifting meters almost become irrelevant. Bruford's drumming on this track seems to declare that bar lines are secondary to musical expression—he plays entirely for the music. The key to navigating this piece lies in recognizing that the eighth note serves as the unifying thread throughout. Keep that pulse steady, and everything else falls into place.
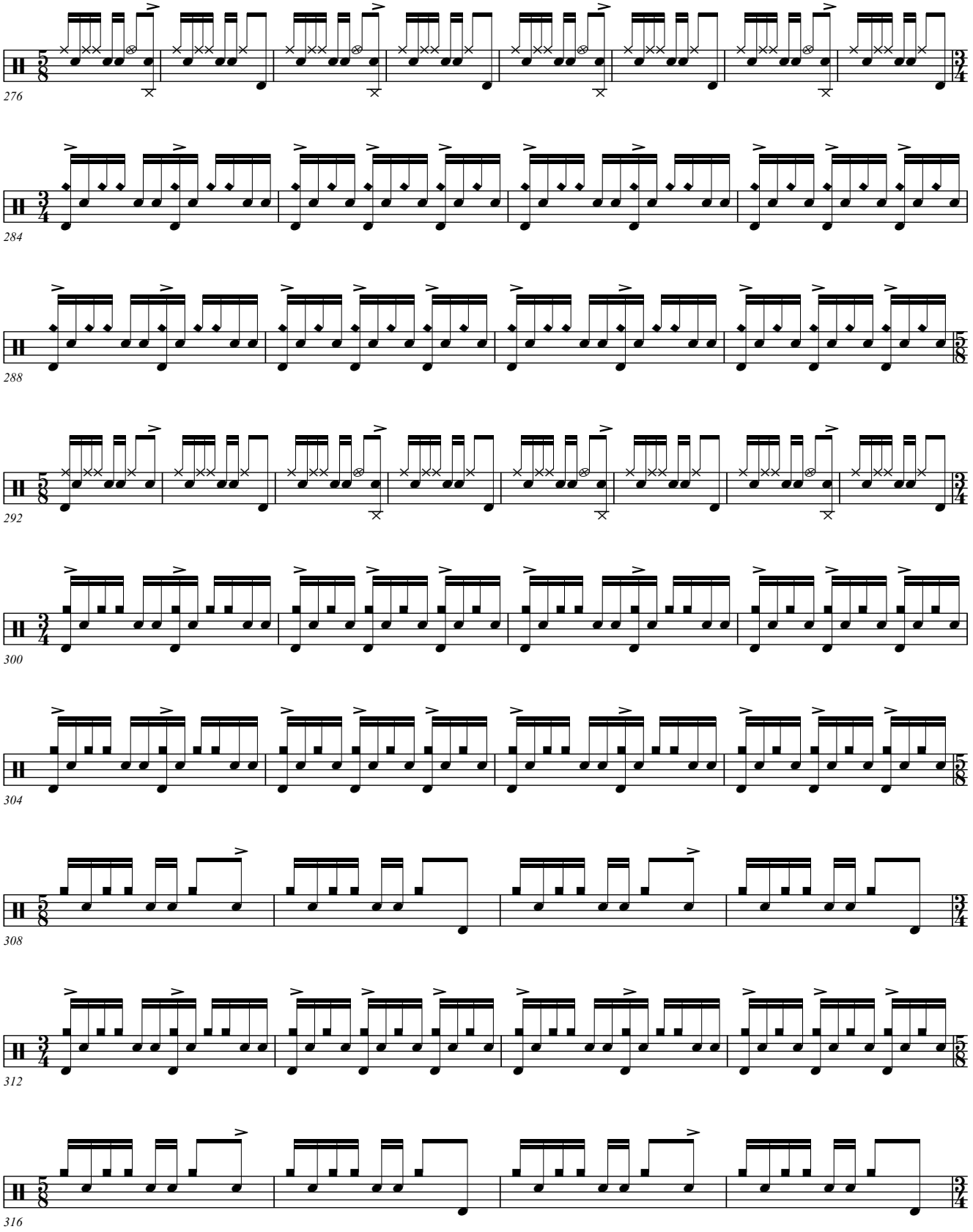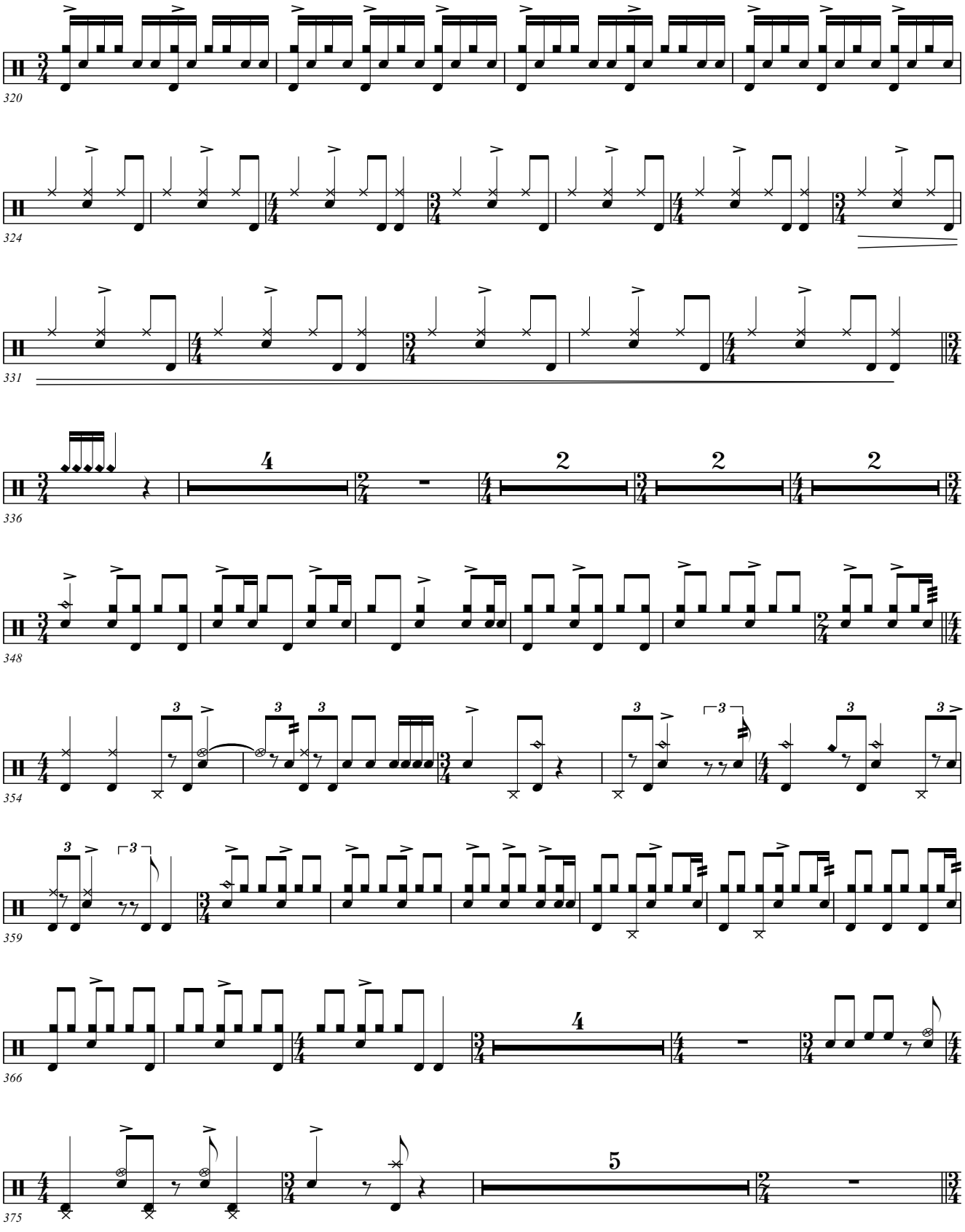



25
29
33
36
39
42
45
48
51
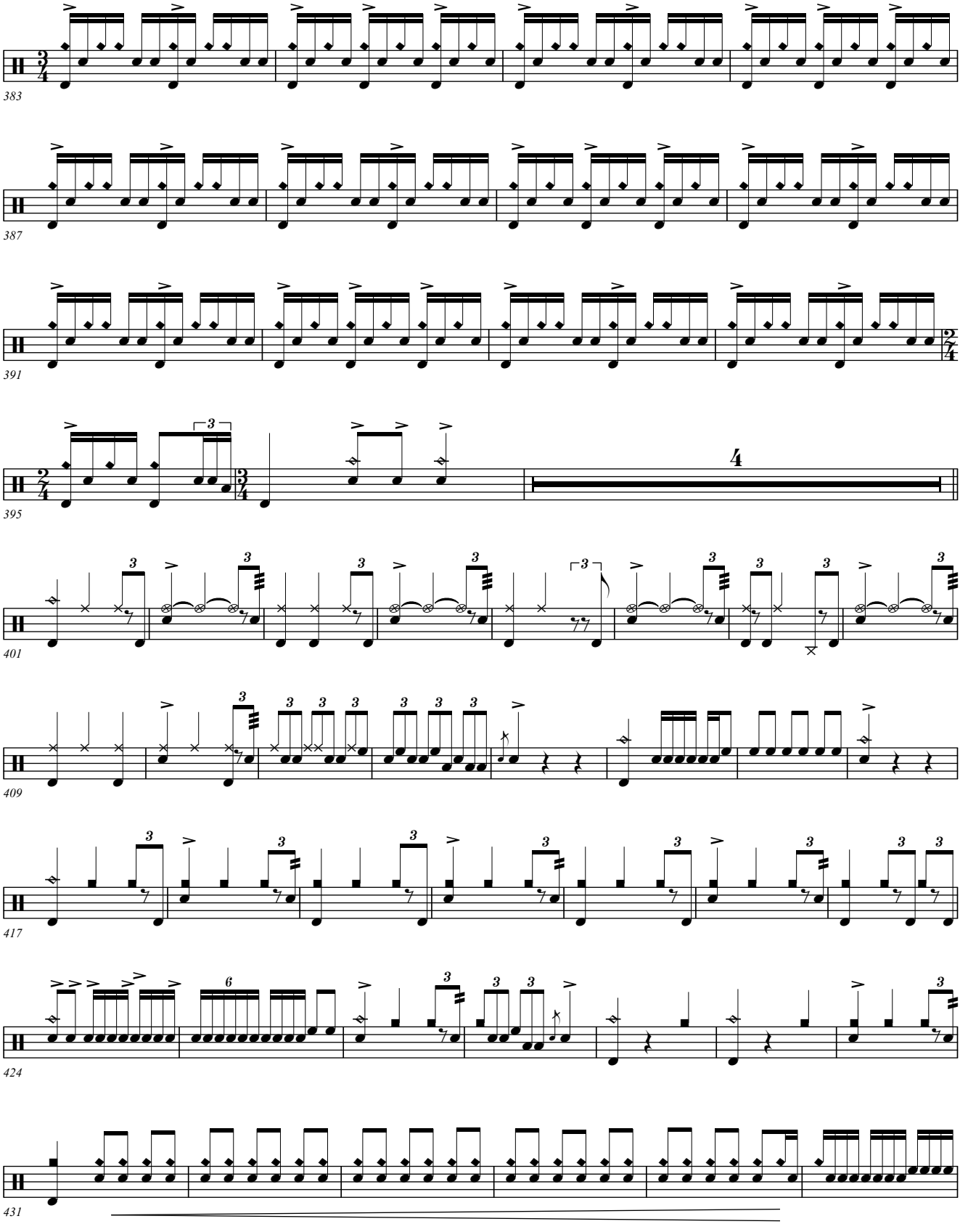

55
59
6
63
68
72
76
6
80
3
85
89

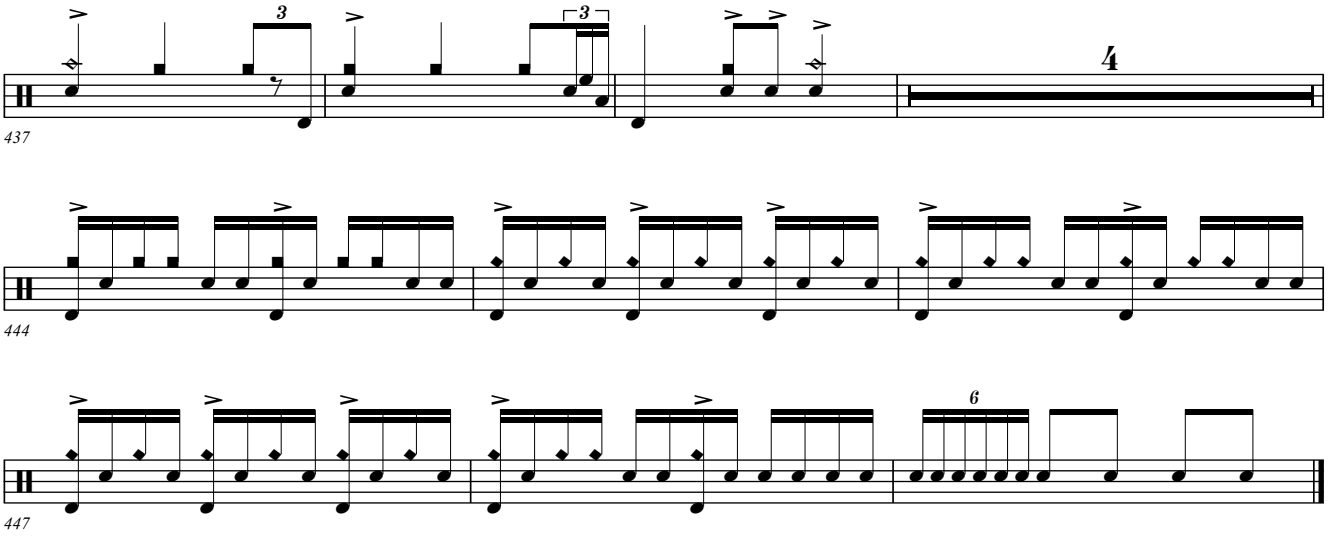

151
157
165
173
177
184
189
195
204


212
220
228
235
241
247
255
265
272


276
284
288
292
300
304
308
312
316


320
324
331
336
348
354
359
366
375


383
387
391
395
4
401
409
417
424
431



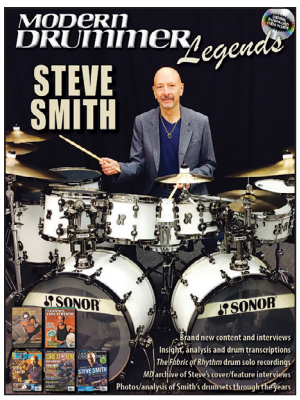


Marc Atkinson, a dedicated musician, honed his craft under the guidance of the renowned Gary Chaffee. Now calling Las Vegas home, Marc is on the brink of unveiling his labor of love—a comprehensive transcription book that promises to captivate music enthusiasts worldwide.

Check out Marc's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER®

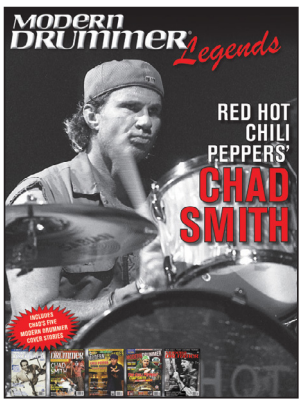
The *Legends* Collection

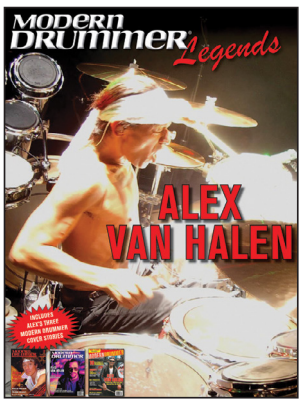














Not just another drum book or magazine, it's *Modern Drummer* Legends!

Extensive and New In-Depth Interviews • Artist Approved Content

New Song Transcriptions with Artist Insights

Never-Before-Seen Photos • Digital Download Components

Legends **Coming Soon:**

Billy Cobham • Carmine Appice • Gavin Harrison • Giovanni Hidalgo • Carl Palmer

Cindy Blackman Santana • Dave Weckl • Charlie Watts • Eric Singer • Alex González

Buy from your favorite music retailer, check out more at moderndrummer.com/legends

Your Drumming PERSONA

By Chris Lesso

"I pretended to be somebody I wanted to be until finally I became that person. Or he became me." **Cary Grant**

What core traits and attributes do you choose to bring to the kit? Your drumming persona takes shape the same way an actor might prepare for a role. We all do this naturally. The "you" that goes to work, isn't the same as when you're with your kids, or with your friends. The difference is most people aren't intentional about the personas they bring into play. They don't design, they settle.

We're not just *finding* ourselves. That part of our identity came from our upbringing, environment, all the factors in which we didn't have a say. All those past choices and events that shaped us are dead, dissolved in the distance. Becoming our persona is future based. Instead of making slow progress with who we already are, we can transform in an instant. We're no longer fighting ourselves, but stepping into a new identity primed for success. We create from a blank slate, and with that, comes incredible freedom to become anything we imagine. We can blow up parts of our personality, while muting others. It's you, but it's not.

You could be a stone-cold killer, or a warm healing presence. There are no rules. It's a custom identity already in you that wants to come out and help you win in any domain. Don't overthink it, stay playful! It evolves over time. So much of it is being comfortable with what we're *not*. Think of your favorite superheroes; they weren't all things to all people. Those things that held you back before, now become strengths. We're empowered because now we can choose. By breathing life into it, we design our future.



Kobe Bryant became the Black Mamba. Stefani Germanotta became Lady Gaga. Clark Kent became Superman. Singer Beyoncé thought of her persona as an "alter ego" character she conjured every time she performed and gave this spirit a name: Sasha Fierce. Normally shy and reserved in real life, when she was onstage, she became that character that channeled the music, one that was bold, confident, and big. We can morph into any identity to access our dormant potential within. You are a superhero waiting to come to life! One of my first bands had a singer that used to call me "L1" whenever he saw me pulling off parts he thought only a supersonic machine could achieve. It stuck. If I ever needed to live out my brave heart spirit, I became that persona. It wasn't me playing anymore, it was "L1." That character could handle anything, inventing on the spot to take any failure and turn it into fuel with bold confidence. All limits dissolved when I became "L1." Sometimes I channel my drumming heroes and inspirations, but "L1" is unique to me in who I become behind the kit and in life when I need to. What character can you take on to rise to new plains you've always wanted to reach?

The world of hip hop uses this concept in a big way. Hip hop is an urban craft, and so many practitioners that found themselves starting with nothing used the art form as a way to break out of their surroundings. Growing up in the roughest parts of Brooklyn, Robert Diggs rejected his confines and stuck to his inner vision. He turned himself into the RZA to tap into deeper reserves of ingenuity and confidence, going on to form the Wu Tang Clan. Hip hop, almost by definition, is filled with stories of taking the "normal" identity we're given and re-scripting it into something never before seen to access new fields of possibility. You can't survive in hip hop without believing in and magnifying what makes you unique. It is about living out self-belief through action. This starts with no one seeing it but you. The point of entry is to live your swagger. Don't say "I'm sorry." Don't worry about offending anyone. Never accept where you are, but catapult yourself to new heights of self expression. The world is lucky to have you; let them know it! Create a persona above yourself, and be bold enough to step into it.

By taking charge of our persona, we seek the best version of ourselves for the role we're stepping into. It's not what we're doing that's changing, it's who we become in that moment. The triggers that flip the switch can happen from the outside, or we can take charge of them through rituals. Music is a powerful gateway to snap into that state. Elite athletes use playlists to light up their winning persona when it counts. It's big and bold because we're embracing all we can be, otherwise it would stay locked away. Most people never take action to leave this kind of legacy. Through creating our persona, we're stepping into a new heroic version of ourselves, one that not only helps us win, but dominate. Get Chris' free OPEN HANDED DRUMMING guide at chrislesso.net/OPEN

Progressive Drumming Essentials: Switching Gears with Double Bass Drums

By Aaron Edgar

Progressive Drumming Essentials is a collection of articles originally written for *Modern Drummer* magazine. They are exactly what the title says, PROGRESSIVE drumming essentials. This series of articles, and the book that contains them all, represent a great deal of material that Aaron constructed over the years for his own development, he credits them as being a large part of finding his voice on the drums.

The book, *Progressive Drumming Essentials*, is organized into six sections (Fundamentals, Odd Subdivisions, Rhythmic Tricks, More Odd Subdivisions, Polyrhythms, and A New Perspective on Polyrhythms.) We will be excerpting Aaron's articles in our Rock Perspectives series for a new generation of drummers to learn the Progressive Drumming Essentials.

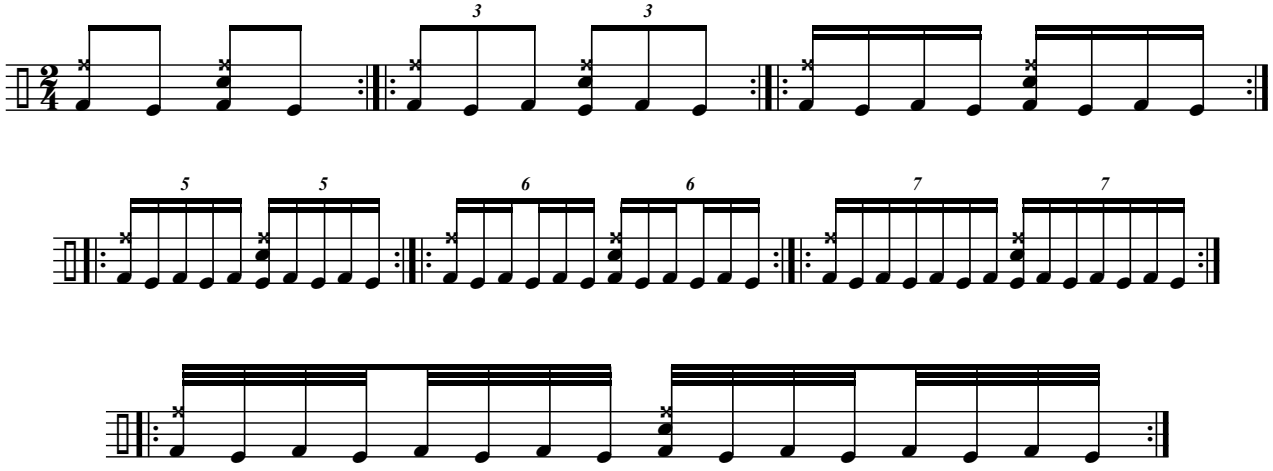
Aaron Edgar says in the introduction to his book, "I believe that learning music is a journey. You'll find greater depth of understanding when you dig deeper into the material. Once you've mastered what's on the page, modify it! Make these ideas your own and explore your own creativity. Treating these lessons in this fashion, while striving to internalize the rhythms against a steady pulse, will ultimately free you to integrate any rhythm or concept into your playing in a natural way. I sincerely hope you have as much fun with this material as I do!" We couldn't agree more, let's get to work!

SWITCHING GEARS

Changing subdivisions on a dime is a fundamental skill for playing double bass in modern heavy metal. Switching gears to a faster subdivision can help build intensity, and with a careful execution it sounds incredibly tight and powerful. A great example of this would be playing a 16th-note groove and then ramping up to 16th-note triplets.

Bass Drum Subdivision Pyramid

In this example, each subdivision from 8th to 32nd notes is played on the bass drums while the hands outline a quarter-note groove. The hand pattern gives you a musical frame of reference throughout the seven subdivisions.



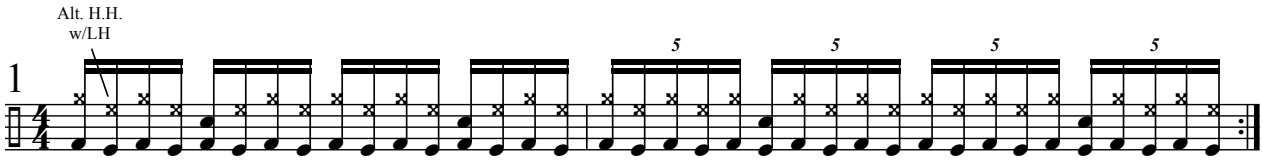
First focus on each example individually, and try to make it feel comfortable while playing along with a metronome. We're going to eventually put the examples together, so your starting speed will be dictated by how fast you can play a measure of 32nd notes.

Running the Pyramid

Set your metronome a few bpm below your maximum tempo. Play the first measure for four bars, and then transition to the second measure. Focus on executing the transitions as precisely as possible - don't gradually slide into each subdivision. Practice the first two measures back and forth until they're solid. Continue with this method all the way up to 32nd notes.

When you've mastered all of the transitions, play the entire pyramid from measure 1 to 7 and back. Don't be too concerned with how many bars you spend on each subdivision. Take as much time as you need to make each of them feel comfortable. When one subdivision is settled into the pocket, make the jump to the next. If the transition is bumpy, jump back and forth until you get it tighter. Repeat this until you can switch freely between all of the subdivisions.
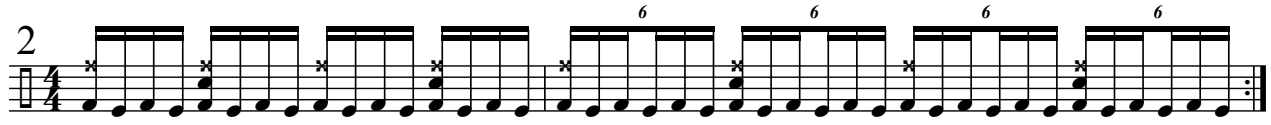
Another way to practice this is by matching your hands and feet. Put both hands on the hi-hat (or other tight sounds), and match the bass drum rhythm. Play an accent on the snare with whichever hand lands on beats 2 and 4. Exercise 1 demonstrates this idea in 4/4 with 16th notes and quintuplets. Practice the entire pyramid in this fashion.



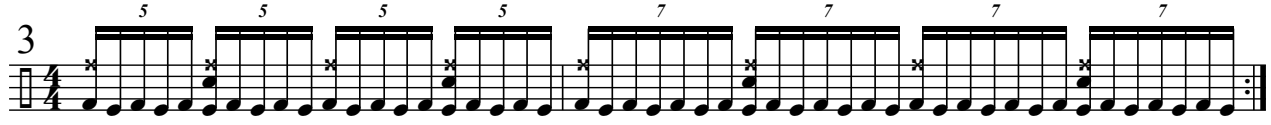
Additional Groove Exercises

Now it's time to tackle larger jumps, such as 8th-note triplets to 32nd notes. For each of these exercises, create a two-bar phrase in 4/4 comprising one bar for each subdivision. There are forty-two possibilities, however there are eight main pairs of more common transitions to master first. They are: 8th notes to 16th notes, 8th notes to 16th-note triplets, 8th notes to 32nd notes, 8th-note triplets to 16th-note triplets, 8th-note triplets to 32nd notes, 16th notes to 16th-note triplets, 16th notes to 32nd notes, and 16th-note triplets to 32nd notes.

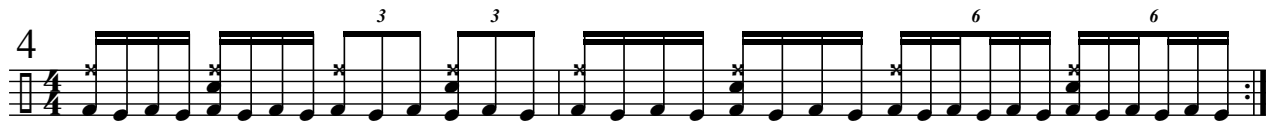
Here's what 16th notes to 16th-note triplets looks like.



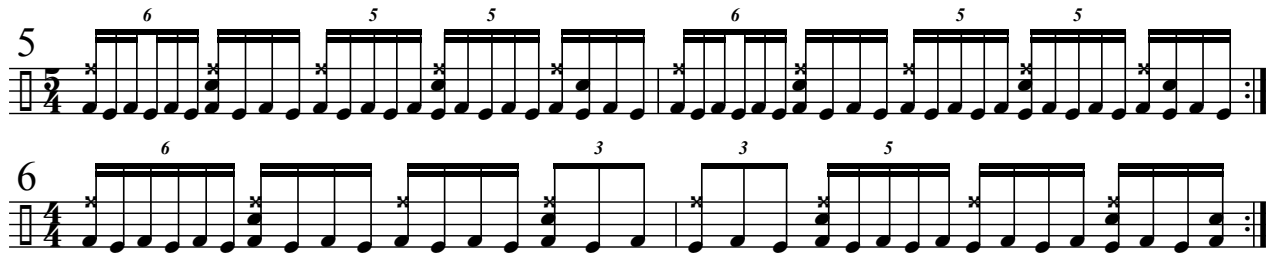
If you're feeling brave, try creating more advanced combinations, such as this quintuplet to septuplet exercise.



When you feel like you've gotten a handle on the full-measure transitions, try experimenting with shorter groupings of notes. For example, you could make a two-bar phrase in 4/4 using measures 3, 2, 3, and 5 from the pyramid.

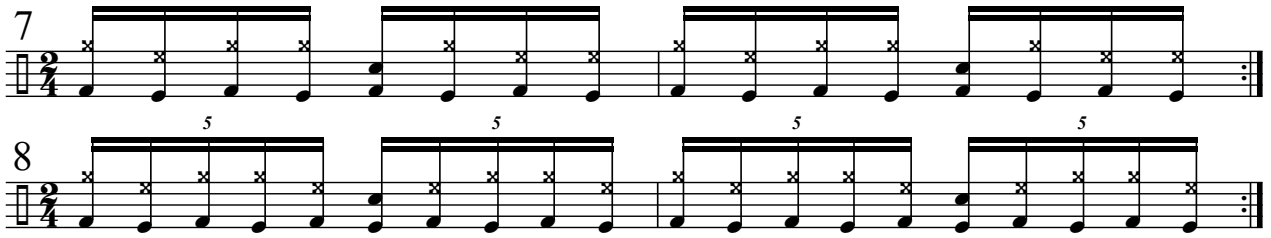


Here are some examples that use more advanced phrasings. Exercise 6 has an odd number of notes, so the foot pattern reverses on the repeat.

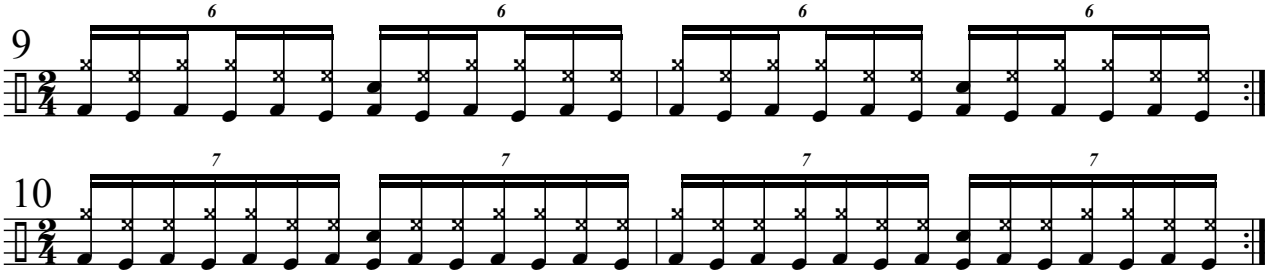


For an additional independence challenge, try different sticking patterns over alternating singles on the bass drums. Exercises 7–11 demonstrate a few alternate sticking patterns you could try for 16th notes through 32nd notes.
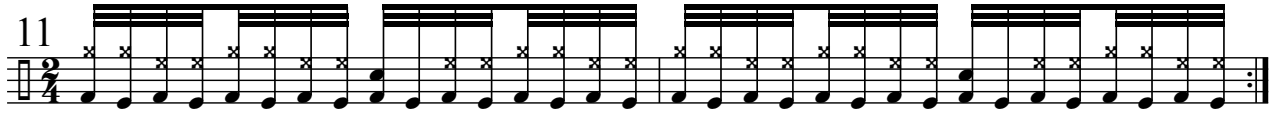
Paradiddles and RLRRL



Paradiddle-Diddles and RLLRRLL



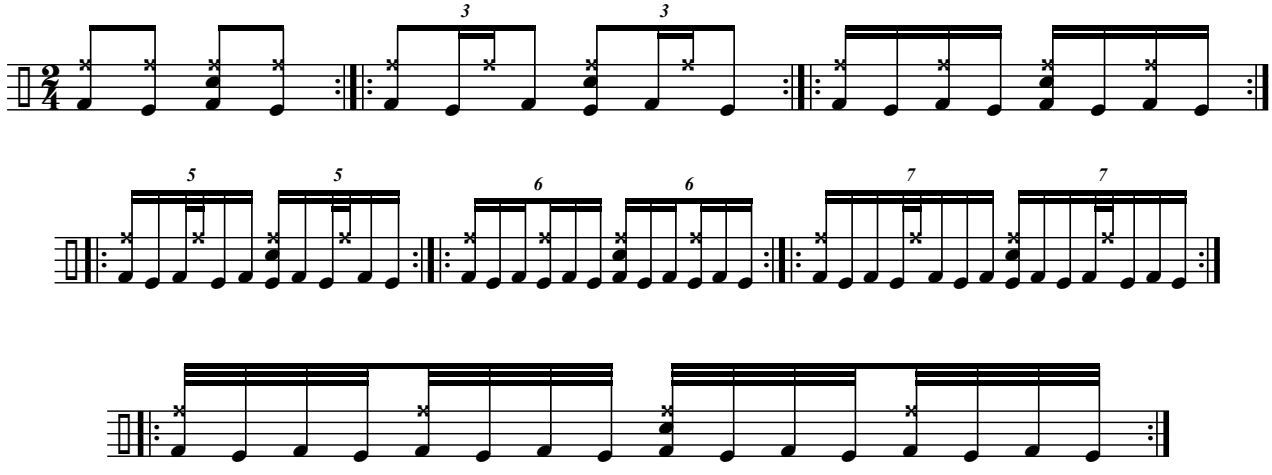
Doubles



For advanced polyrhythm junkies looking for an extra challenge, try running the pyramid while playing 8th notes on the hi-hat over each bass drum rhythm. In measures with triplets, quintuplets, and septuplets, the "&" of each beat lands on its own between bass drum notes. Go slowly, count, and good luck!

If you're having trouble placing the "and" within the quintuplet and septuplet examples, skip ahead to the polyrhythms chapter titled "Five and Seven Over Two," and come back to these exercises later.

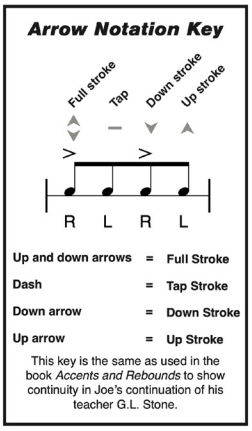
Double Bass Subdivision Pyramid With 8ths on the Hi-Hat



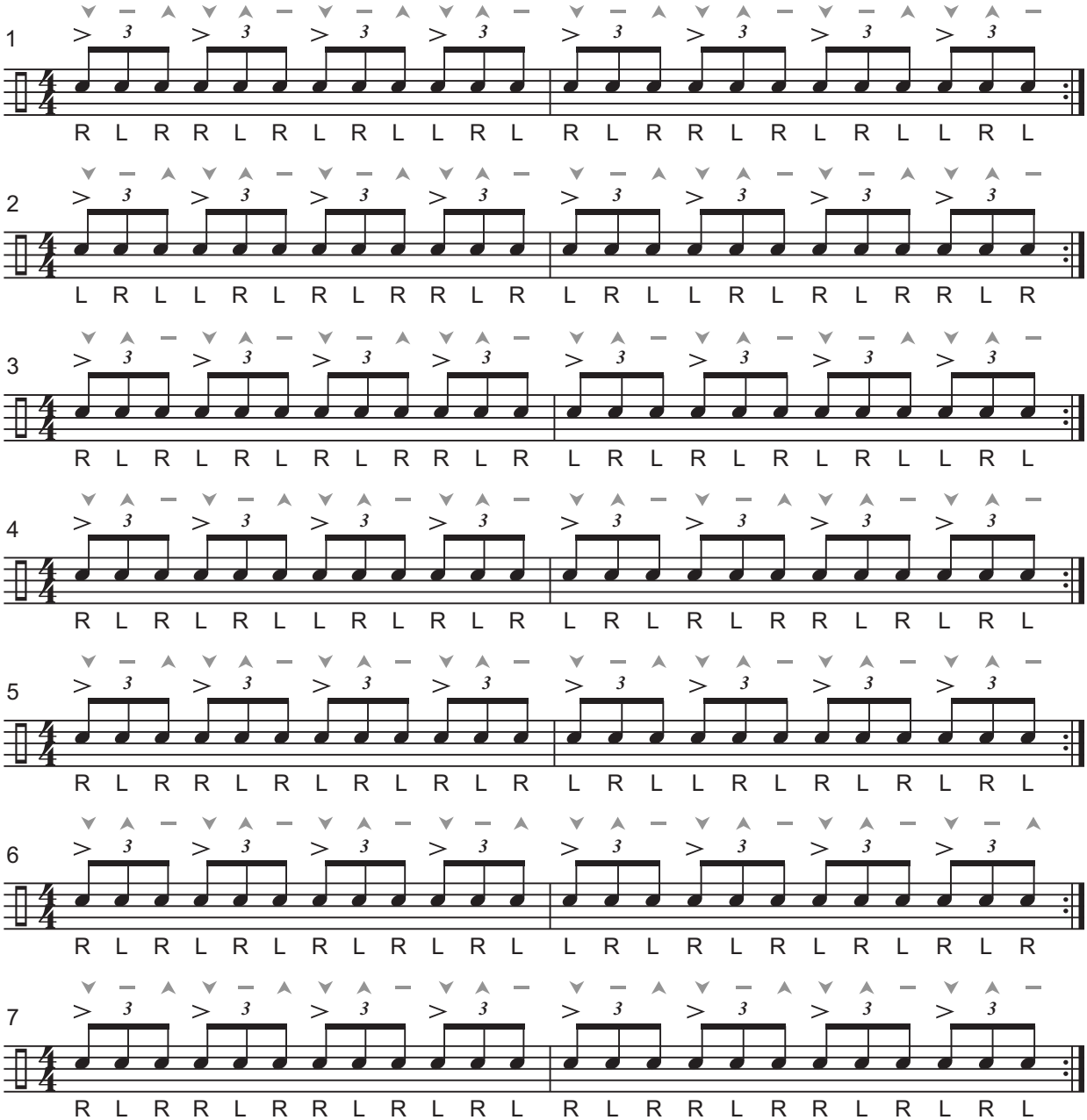
Master Studies II: Triplet Variations

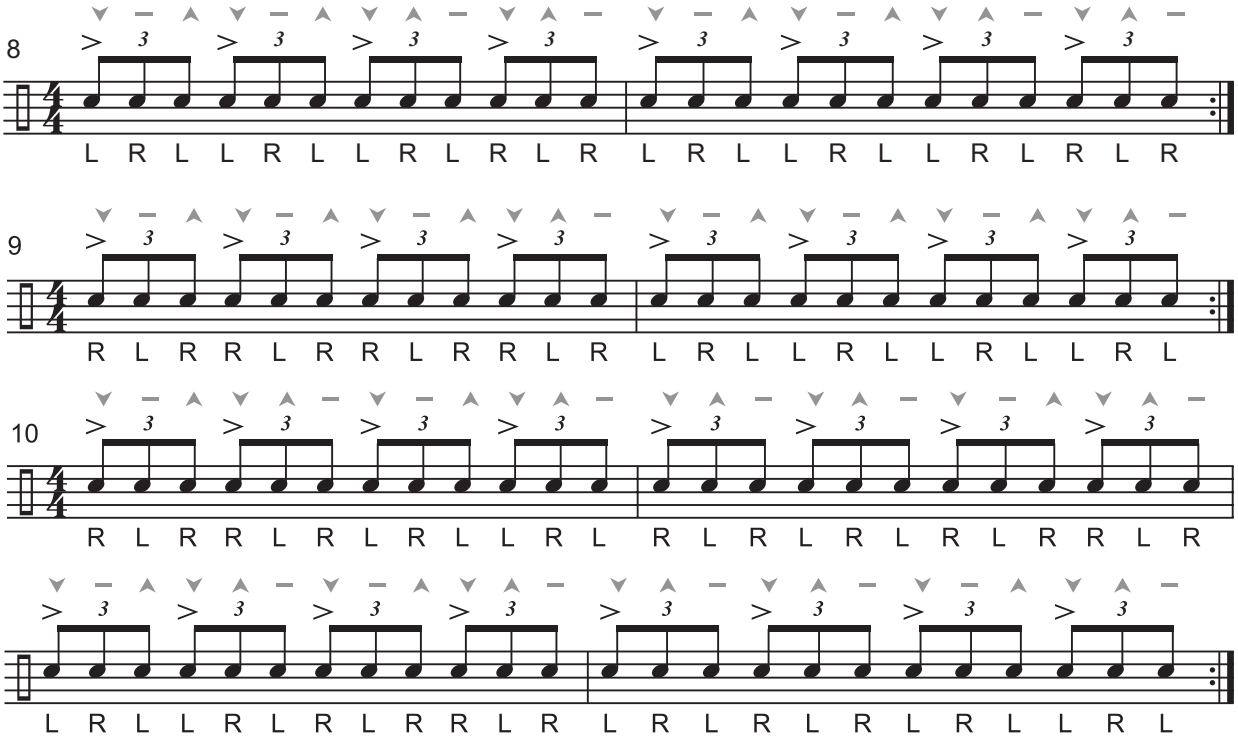
By Joe Morello

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 include some of Joe's creative Triplet Variations.



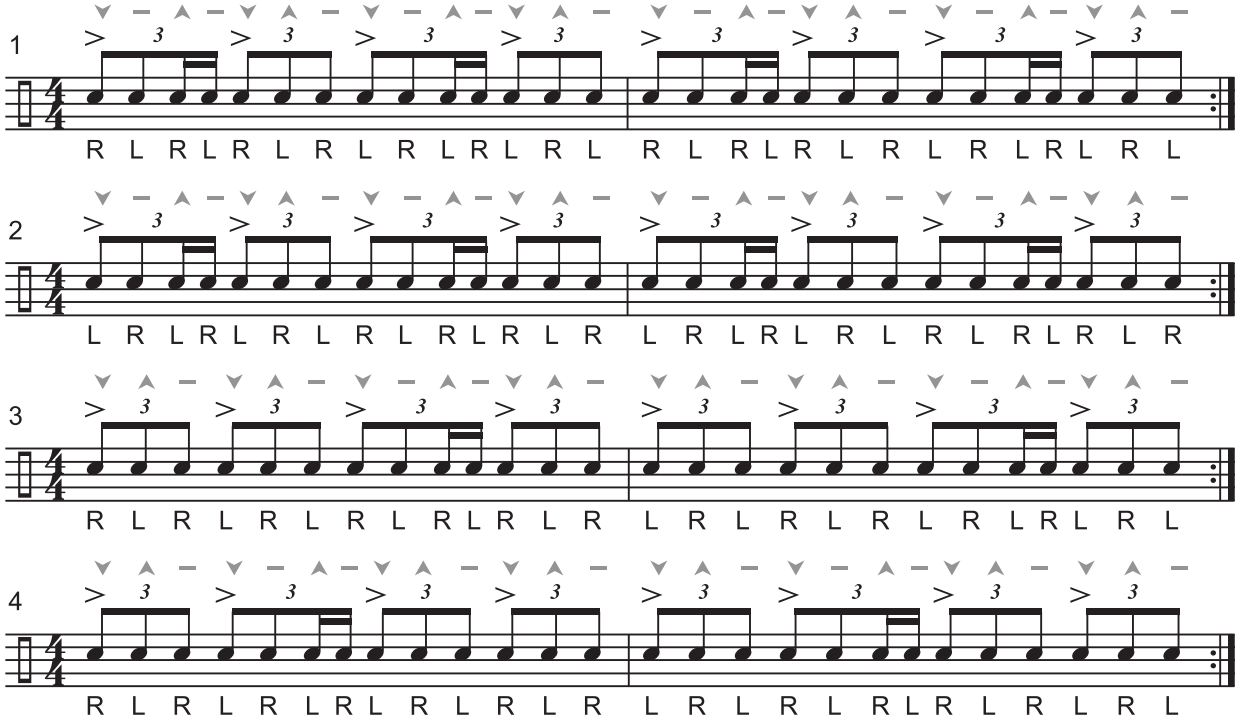
The following exercises are great for developing control. Play each of these slowly at first, and try to remain relaxed at all times. Again, speed will come with slow, accurate practice. Once you've developed proficiency playing each one with accents, try playing them without accents. These exercises can also be played at varied dynamic levels.
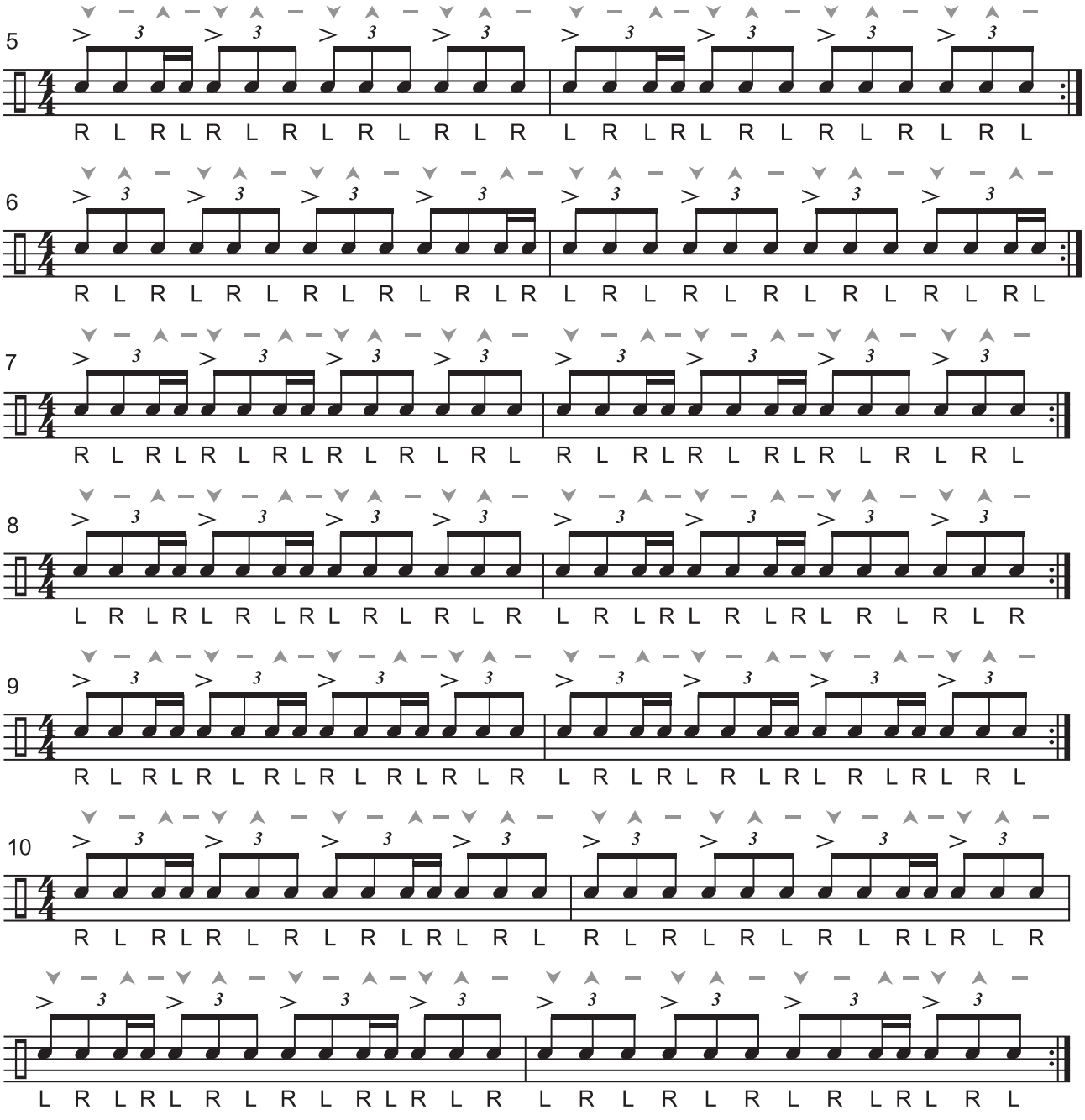


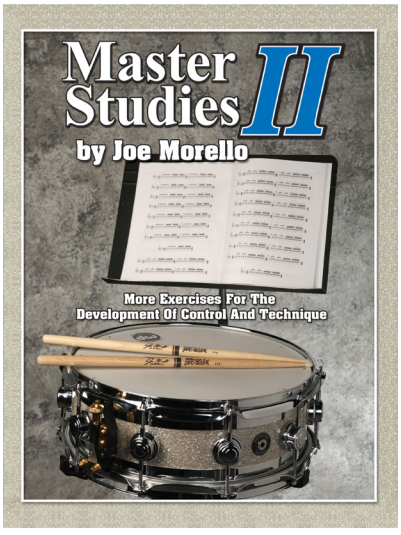


Triplet Variations With Fill-Ins Using Single Strokes

This exercise is based on the previous exercise. Now we're adding fill-ins with single strokes.



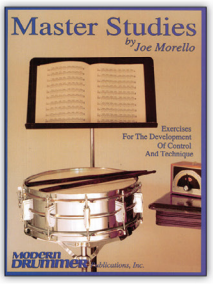

5
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
6
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
7
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
8
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R
9
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
10
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

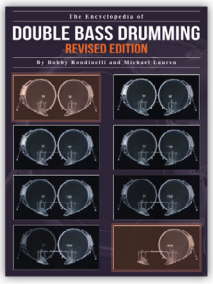

Master Studies II
by Joe Morello
More Exercises For The Development Of Control And Technique

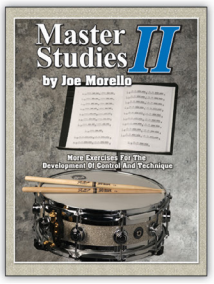
MODERN DRUMMER®

BEST SELLING DRUM TITLES WORLDWIDE



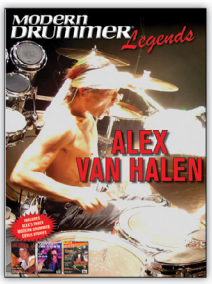


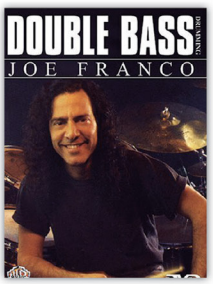




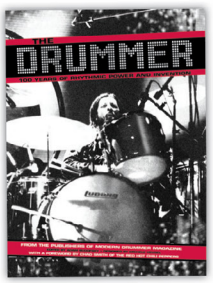




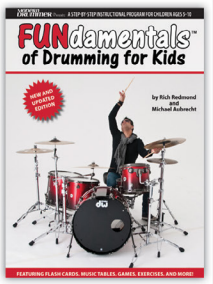


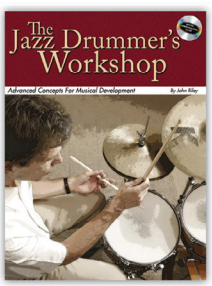




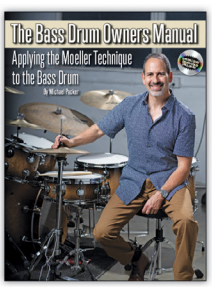




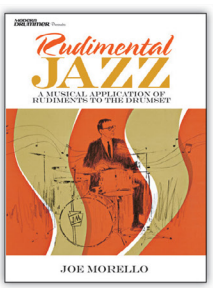


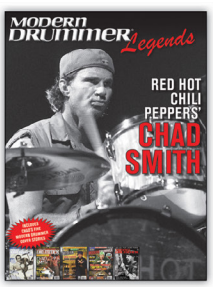




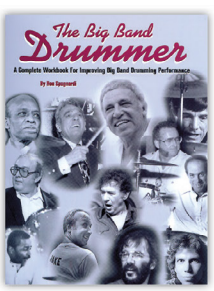


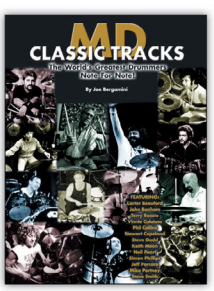


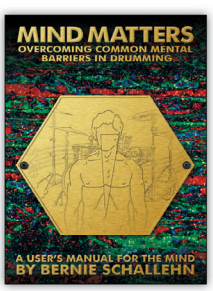












Available in print and digital format at **moderndrummer.com** or from your favorite music retailer

The New Breed: 39 Systems Part 2

By Gary Chester

Gary Chester's groundbreaking book *The New Breed* is legendary. The book, and Gary's teaching methods are deeply intertwined, it is a *lifelong* commitment of dedication, study, and development. Gary Chester's Systems, Reading Exercises, Advanced Systems, Advanced Reading Exercises, Composite Systems, Grooves, and Applications are creative and advanced ways to learn.

Gary Chester was one of the most famous drum instructors in drumming history. He took his extensive musical experience from playing drums and percussion on hundreds of sessions in the New York recording studios and turned them into his own drumming systems. He taught these systems to many drummers in his own teaching studio and many of his students earned their own success in the world of music.

The systems in *The New Breed* will help you to develop your coordination and reading ability, and will give you a greater awareness of time, all of which will allow you to be part of the "new breed" of studio drummers." They are, "Systems for the development of your own creativity."

This month we will study the rest of his Systems before moving on and combining them with the Reading Excersices next month.

39 SYSTEMS

The following pages contain 39 basic patterns, called "systems," followed by ten pages of reading material, which are to be used as the "melodies" for each system.

Start by memorizing the system, being careful to play the correct instrument with the correct hand or foot. You will not be playing the melody yet, but be sure to notice where you are eventually to play it. Play the system many times, striving to make it feel as good as possible. While you are playing the system, sing the click pulse (quarter notes).

After you have memorized a system, turn to the first two Reading pages (14 and 15) and play them as the Melody of the system, on the instrument that is specified with each system. After you can play both pages from beginning to end comfortably, proceed to the second set of Melodies, and practice them the same way.

It is not intended that you rush through any of this material. Do not proceed onward until you have achieved total mental and physical independence and awareness with each system.

To aid your awareness, you should learn to sing each part that you are playing, in addition to singing the click pulse. In other words, while playing the complete System with Melody, sing (1) the click pulse, (2) the melody, (3) the snare drum line, (4) the cymbal line, (5) the hi-hat line, etc.

When singing, it helps to sing a sound that resembles the particular instrument, and to sing it as rhythmically as possible *out loud*. For example, the bass drum part might sound like "boom," while you might sing the hi-hat part with a "chick" sound.

The following abbreviations are used in this book:

H.H. = hi-hat Ride = ride cymbal (or additional closed hi-hat)
Bell = cymbal bell B.D. = bass drum Fl. tom = floor tom

Melody = Reading exercise pages

L.H. = Left hand R.H. = Right hand
L. F. = Left foot R.F. = Right foot

Examples:
R.H./Ride = Right hand on ride cymbal (or closed hi-hat)
L.H./Fl. tom = Left hand on floor tom
R.F./B.D./Melody = Right foot on bass drum plays melody
L.F./H.H. = Left foot on hi-hat
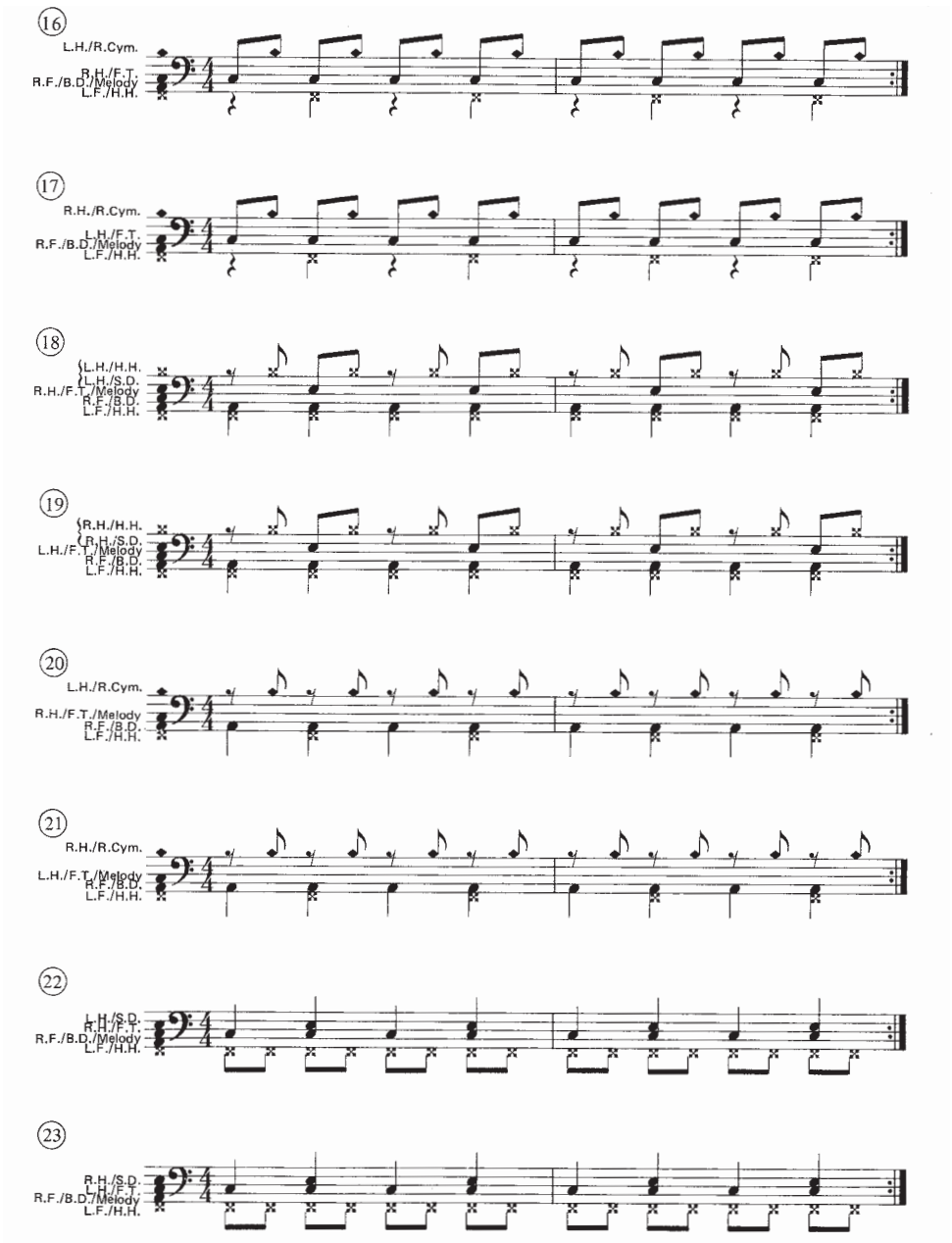


PRACTICE TIPS FOR SYSTEMS

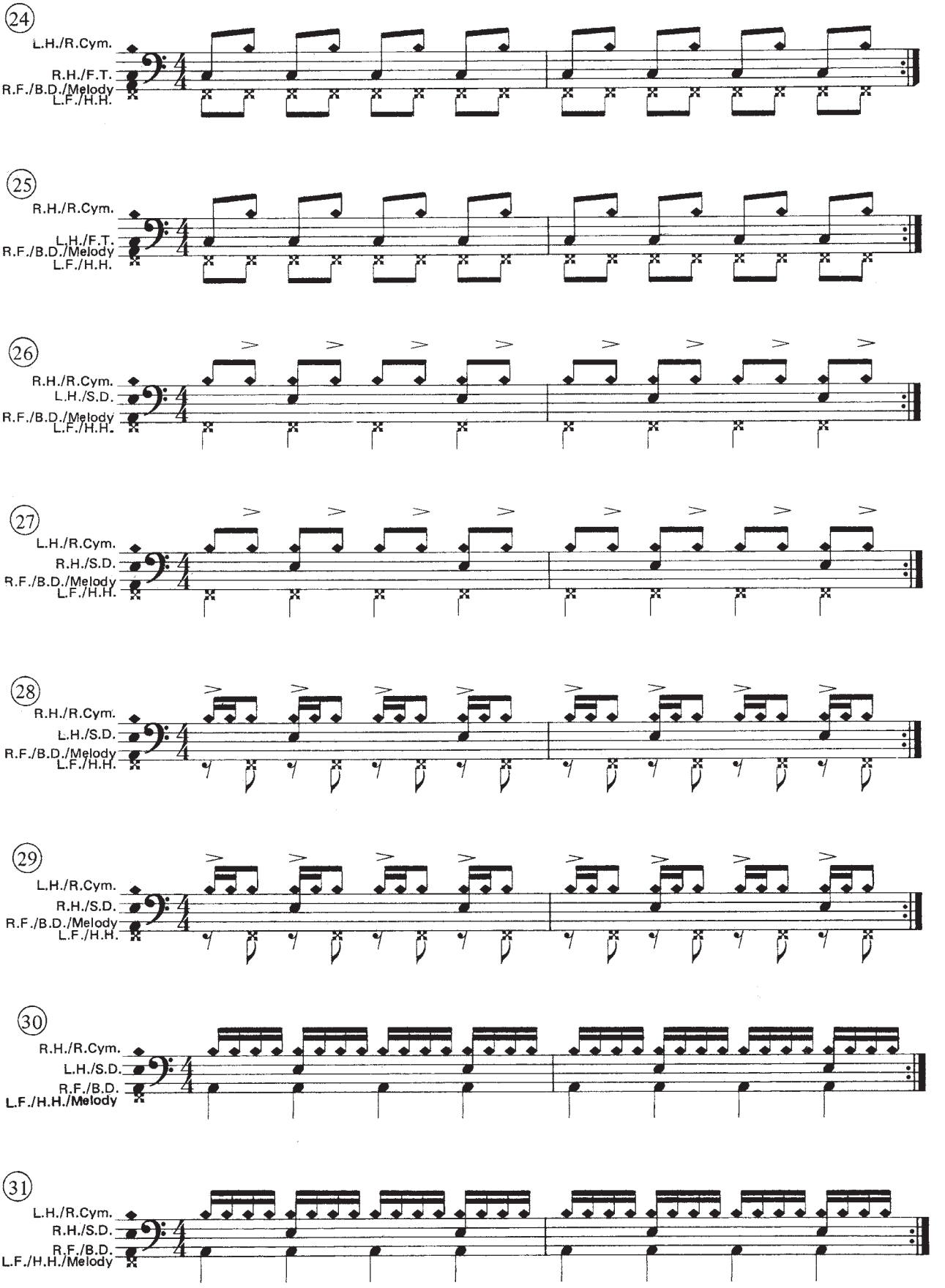
I suggest practicing each bar at least four times, or as many times as it takes to get a good understanding of what you are playing. Start slowly and relax. The tendency is to rush through each measure and get right to the end. That is not the point of the exercise, although you will be able to do that after you have mastered each individual measure.
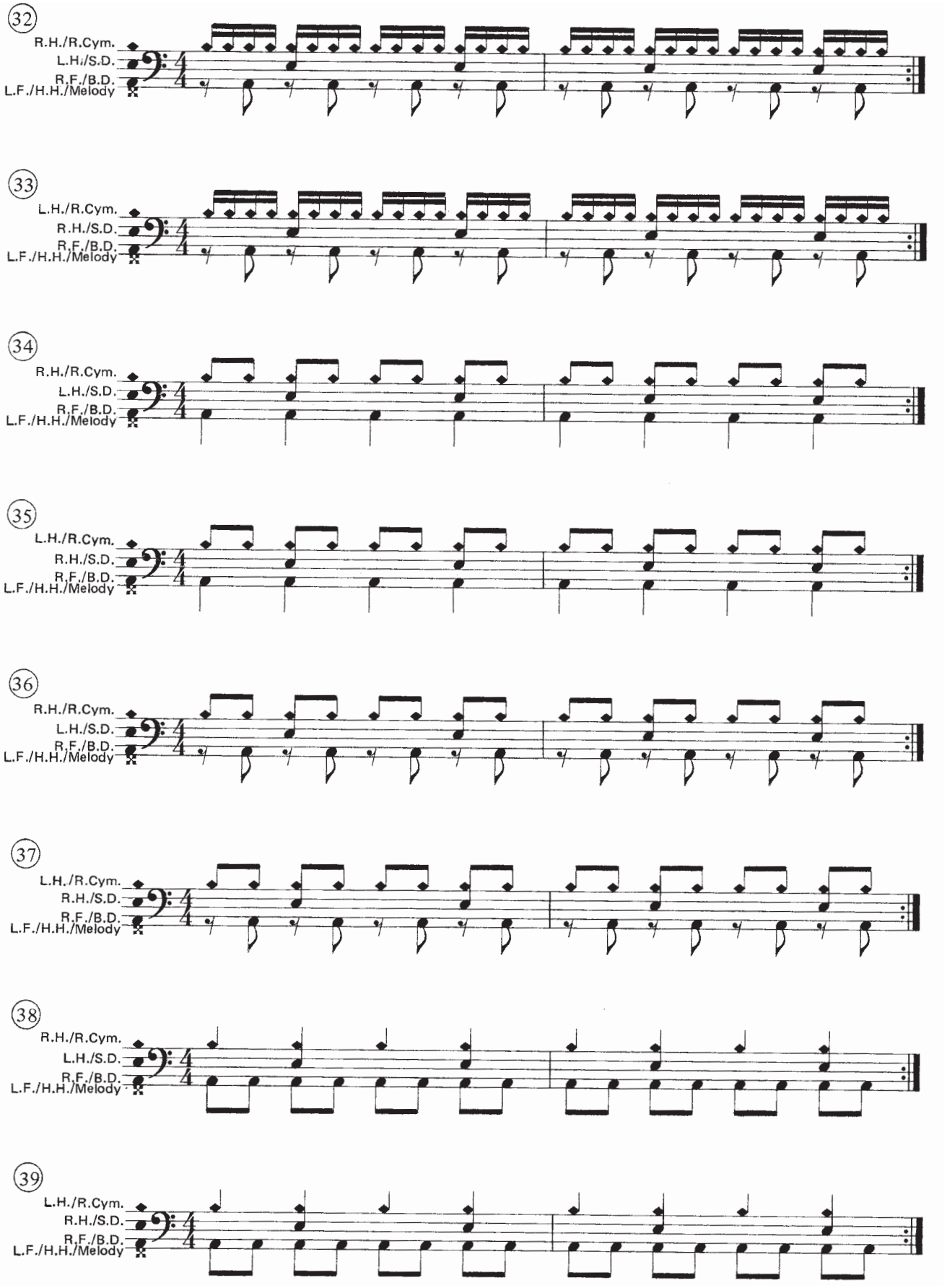
After you become familiar with the technical-coordination aspect of each system, then you can work on feel, groove, dynamics, and application for a variety of musical situations. For example, you could pretend that the line you are sight-reading on the bass drum is a horn melody line, and play everything with the hands dynamically as though you were setting up a big band.

When you read these systems in practice, try to read the phrases across as you would sight-read a page of music—not up and down. By this I mean that most people relate each note to where it falls in relation to the quarter note. It is good to feel this when you sing, but I do not recommend trying to read against the quarter.

These systems all work together. Try to work through them in order, as they are designed to be practiced that way. Master these systems and you will have an incredible variety of musical ideas, to be called upon as you need them.




24
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./F.T.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
25
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./F.T.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
26
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
27
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
28
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
29
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D./Melody
L.F./H.H.
30
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
31
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody


32
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
33
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
34
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
35
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
36
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
37
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
38
R.H./R.Cym.
L.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody
39
L.H./R.Cym.
R.H./S.D.
R.F./B.D.
L.F./H.H./Melody

Rhythm Vocabulary Development Series Part 5: Playing in 7/8

By Michael Packer

In our last installment, we explored 5/8—how asymmetrical subdivisions and maximizing intentional "space" can unlock phrasing that is both musical and conversational. Now let's push further into odd-time territory with 7/8. 7/8 might seem even more challenging at first. But with the right concepts you can use and grow your vocabulary and play in a time signature that feels that feels as natural as 4/4.

Understanding the Pulse

7/8 is inherently lopsided: seven eighth-note pulses per measure means there's no even subdivision like 4/4 or 6/8. Common subdivisions include:

3 + 4 (1-2-3, 1-2-3-4)

4 + 3 (1-2-3-4, 1-2-3)

2 + 2 + 3 (1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3)

3 + 2 + 2 (1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2)

Each subdivision offers its own downbeat, 3+4 can feel like a lopsided march, while 2+2+3 often has a dance-like, syncopated character.

Exercise: *Clap and count different groupings aloud. Feel how each one changes the internal gravity of the measure.*

Filling the Space in 7/8

Just like in 5/8, you're not trying to cram notes into every pulse indiscriminately. Instead, you're expressing your ideas intentionally. Seven eighth note "spaces" is your raw canvas. Within that, you can fill with:

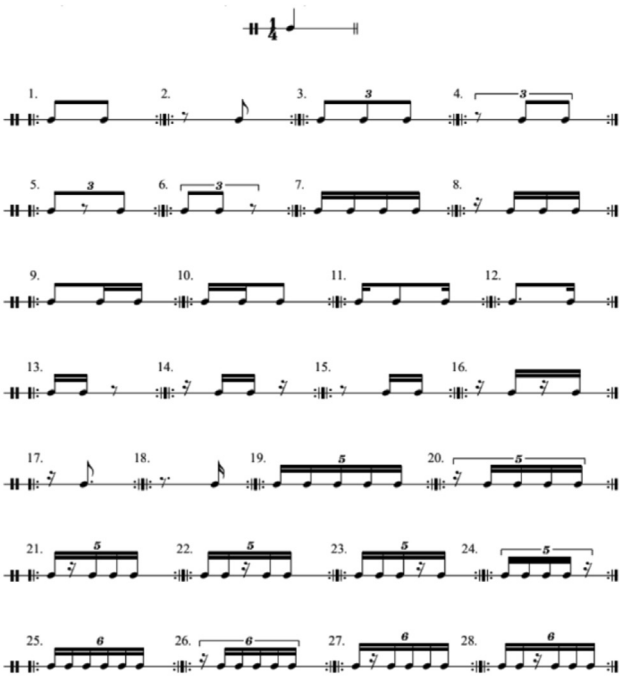
- Eighth notes (steady pulse)
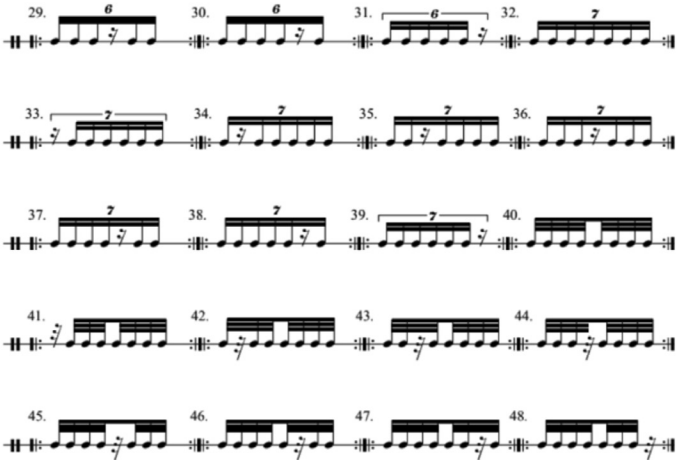
- Sixteenth-note subdivisions (denser, funkier textures)
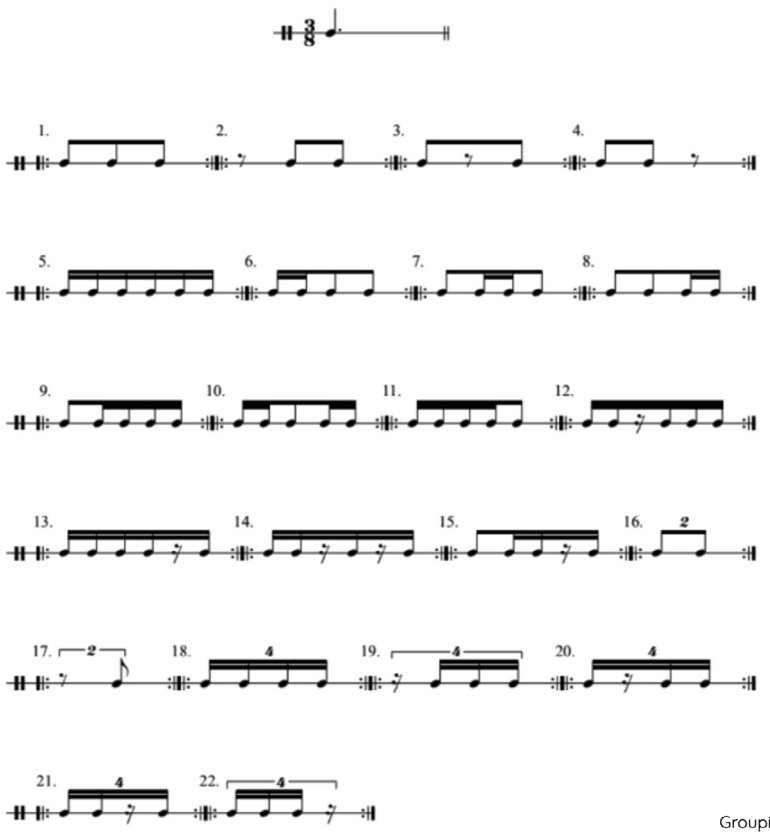
- Triplet figures (even more asymmetrical tension)

- Rests (silence that punctuates your phrasing)

- Think of it this way: ***each subdivision grouping is a phrase.*** You're not just playing beats 1 through 7—you're having a rhythmic conversation through groupings. Now, let's revisit the concept of "filling" the space of a note. In 7/8, your measure contains seven eighth-note spaces. Some of these spaces might naturally feel like eighth notes (two sixteenths), dotted quarters (three eighths), or even triplet groupings. Below are rhythmic ideas you can use to fill the spaces:







Example Subdivision Ideas

Try these sample ideas for building your vocabulary:

3 + 4: Play a three-note motif in the first group, followed by a four-note variation.

2 + 2 + 3: Accent the start of each grouping; add ghost notes in between.

4 + 3: Experiment with open hi-hat on the 4-group, tight snare backbeats in the 3.

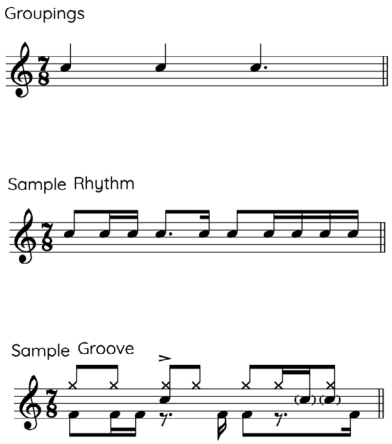
These are starting points. Don't think of them as "licks" to memorize, but as conceptual seeds you can grow into your own phrasing. Below, start by choosing one of the subdivisions and play a simple, single-line rhythm with your hands to internalize the feel. Once it's *comfortable*, expand on it—transform that rhythm into a full groove or develop it into a dynamic fill.
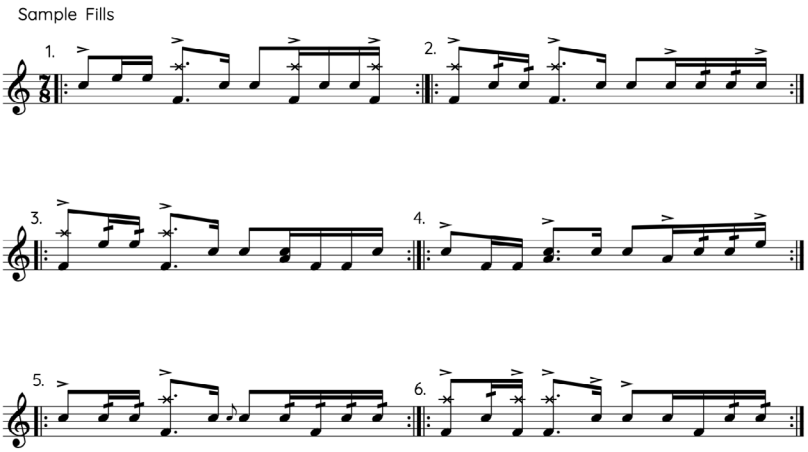
Playing the Space

As before, the space matters as much as the notes. 7/8 can quickly become cluttered and busy if you try to play as many notes as possible in the spaces that are available. As you continue your practice, remember to always take a musical approach so that you are saying something meaningful and adding to the composition. This will also make it much easier to transition the work you do in the practice room to a performance situation.

Final Thought: Make 7/8 Home

Your rhythmic vocabulary in 7/8 doesn't have to be dense or flashy—it just has to be you. When you internalize its unique phrasing, you're not just keeping time. You're bending it to your creative will. Stay curious, stay patient, and keep exploring.





Alex Van Halen Signature Snares

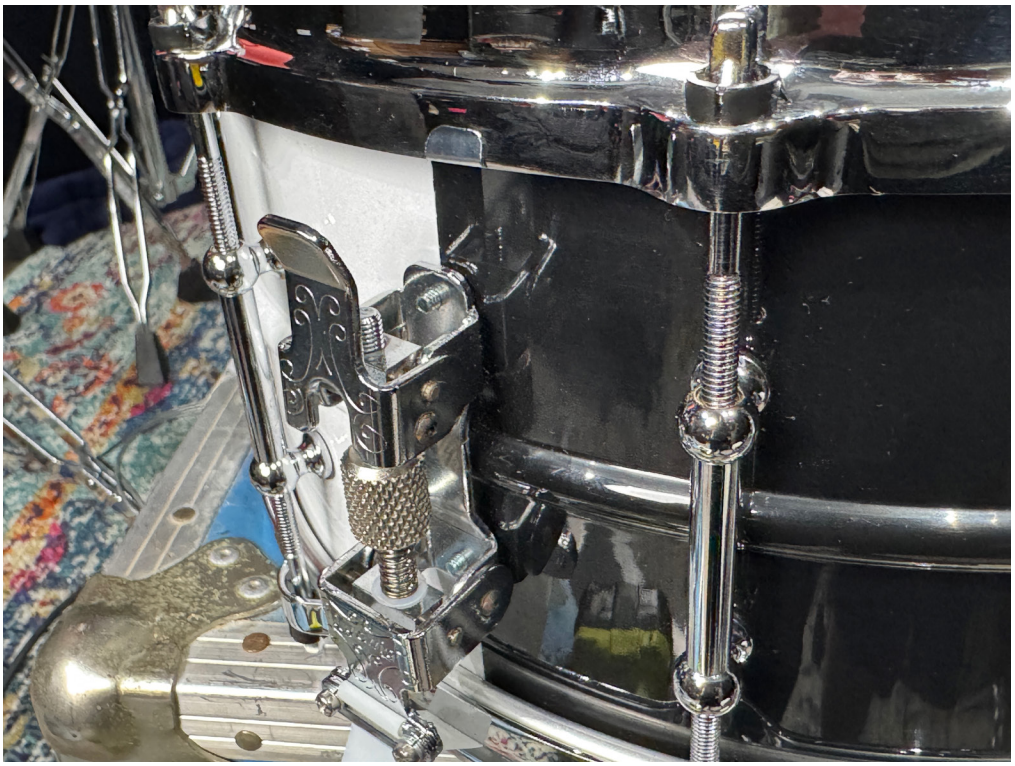
By Donn Bennett

It's difficult to describe the massive influence that Alex Van Halen had on generations of drummers. His explosive energy, thunderous double bass technique, and unique snare sound combined with his blazing speed and showmanship helped redefine the drummer's role in a guitar-driven band. His ability to lock in with his guitarist-brother Eddie Van Halen, was developed to a level that only brothers who grew up with their shared passion for rock 'n' roll could ever achieve. Alex's drum sounds and custom drum setups, raised the visual and sonic bar for rock drums.

In 2016, Alex Van Halen began talks with the Ludwig drum company to develop a new Alex Van Halen signature model snare drum. They determined the snare would have a 6.5x14" metal shell, similar to the 1970s Ludwig LM411 Super Sensitive









model that Alex played in his early Van Halen years.

John Douglas was Alex's drum tech and is well known for designing custom drum sets for Alex and many other top rock drummers. John began developing prototype design models of some of the possible snare design ideas.

John produced these two prototype snares. Both drums started out with a 6.5x14" Ludwig aluminum shell. The first was painted in broad black and white horizontal stripes, reminiscent of Alex Van Halen's 1981 *Fair Warning* tour drum set. This drum was fitted with chrome tube lugs and cast hoops with a P86 throw off. A coated Remo Emperor X head was used on top and a set of 40 strand snare wires on the bottom.

Here's what John Douglas had to say about this drum "When the talks began about another AVH signature snare drum, my first idea was the black and white vertical stripes….an obvious nod to Alex's iconic kit from the Van Halen *Fair Warning* tour. I hand painted the black and white stripes, but Ludwig decided they could not reproduce it… and I didn't have the time or the desire to paint a couple hundred drums! Therefore, this is the only one in existence."

Ludwig decided to move forward with other prototypes. This one was finished with engine turned spirals and copper plated hardware. According to John Douglas, "This drum was very close to production … but we had trouble finding anybody who could do the engine turned aluminum on an existing drum shell. It seems they could only do it on flat stock. We finally found a guy that could do it and he did two shells. We added copper plated hardware. Then the guy disappeared, and we had to scrap that idea. As far as I know …there were only two of these ever in existence. Alex had one, and he gave me the other. Alex's sold in auction last year and you now have the other one."

In the end, the idea wasn't scrapped, the idea was just modified. John ended up hand buffing a similar design in the Alex Van Halen signature model that Ludwig finally released in 2017. When the Ludwig Alex Van Halen Signature Model snare drum was finally released in 2017, the entire production of 100 snare drums sold out immediately.

OUT NOW!

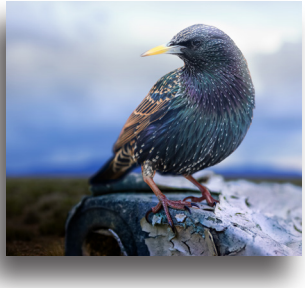
Modern Drummer enjoys spotlighting new recordings that have the drums at the center of their sound. These recordings might be drummer-led, or just include a high-quality, special, or unique drumming and musical performance from the drummer and/or musicians in the band. This column is not restricted to 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!

Zac Farro
Operator
Zac Farro drums
Congrats Records



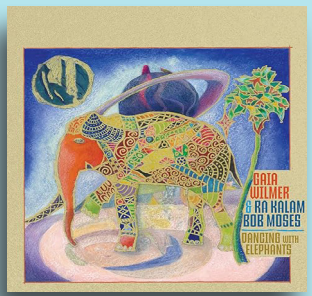
After 20 years on the music scene, *Operator* is Paramore drummer Zac Farro's first album under his own name. After years working under the moniker Halfnoise and in Paramore, Farro describes the nine cuts on the record as, "An entire inner dialogue with myself, within myself." As is heard on the single "1" and "Good Old Days," the music leans heavily on lush, funky, and peaceful 70's pop combined with 80s and 90s electronica. Throughout the recording, Farro leans upon collaborators Josh Gilligan, Chancey Pierce, and Daniel Kadawatha, all members of the Nashville scene. Farro states that the central theme of *Operator* is the universal question of, "How can we better connect with other people?" *Operator* features a healthy blend of programmed and processed real drumming. Farro's singing voice is a nice blend of relaxed falsetto and sumptuous soul, check out "Second Chance" and "Simple Actions." His melodies are delivered with a relaxed pace as heard on "I Need You" and "Operator." "My My" and "All I Really Want to Know" are the standout tracks of the record. This is a nice debut.

Styx
Circling From Above
Todd Sucherman drums
Ume Records



When Todd Sucherman joined Styx over 25 years ago, the band hit a new gear. From the initial sounds on the title track of their new record "Circling from Above," there are even more gears to hit. From the first note, you know you are in for something very different. Then the drums kick in with a deep, slow, loping, groove and it hits you, Styx meets Pink Floyd, pretty cool! The song "Forgive" includes a wonderful slow loping groove as well. Through the last few records (*Crash of the Crown* and *The Mission*) Styx has been evolving and finding new musical avenues. Their early prog roots seem to be coming back to the forefront, when "Build and Destroy" enters, your mind might even harken back to classic prog-era Yes. However, when the songs "Michigan," "King of Love," "Everybody Raise Your Glass," and "The Things You Said" kick in, the classic Styx sound to the forefront. There are a lot of great grooves to support that sound, listen to Sucherman's killer shuffle on "King of Love." "It's Clear" is a fantastic track with a perfectly orchestrated drum part. Todd Sucherman really shines when he is creating and orchestrating drum parts that frame songs and connect different musical sections. He smooths out arrangements and gives complicated music a supremely natural flow. Sucherman has never done this better than on *Circling From Above*, he is creating some great drum parts, and he just keeps getting better. But it's not all complexity, Sucherman supports Tommy Shaw's Nashville tinged "Blue Eyed Raven" with a nice boogie groove, and the pocket on "We Lost the Wheel Again" is perfection. The various musical influences are everywhere on *Circling from Above*, my ears hear touches of Queen, The Beatles, Pink Floyd, The Who, Yes, and many more. Most importantly, it all comes out sounding like Styx, one of the hardest working American bands ever. And after 18 records, (thankfully) the sound of Styx is still evolving. Old Styx fans, new Styx fans, and drummers, will love this record.

Gaia Wilmer and Ra Kalam Bob Moses
Dancing With Elephants
Ra Kalam Bob Moses drums
Sunnyside Records



Any led or co-led recording featuring Bob Moses is an adventure, and this recording is no different. Wilmer and Moses have composed (what Moses calls,) "Spiritual Free Jazz from Another Dimension." For *Dancing With Elephants,* the two composer-creators combine the sound of five saxophonists (Gustavo D Amico, Daniele Germani, Neta Raanan, George Garzone, and Gaia Wilmer,) vocalist Song Yi Jeon, flautist Yulia Musayelyan, electric guitarist Leandro Pellegrino, and pianist Leo Genovese, to be supported by Bob Moses' bed of drums and percussion. Garzone and Genovese anchor the band of younger musicians. The music seems to form a (sort of) suite of joy and musical adventure. Moses' array of African drums, gongs, drums, and other percussive sounds are played (and recorded) beautifully and they put you in the middle of a jungle of sound, texture, and pulse. The many instrumentalists find their way through the compositions and inside Moses' percussive soundscapes to find the delicate sound of dancing elephants. Along the way different combinations of saxophones are used to create different textures. While Garzone and Genovese's interplay is featured when they appear together on six of the ten tracks, the interplay between all the musicians is astounding, and their chemistry with Moses is otherworldly. In fact, the entire recording is otherworldly (in the very best way!)

Pat Petrillo
Contemporaneous
Pat Petrillo drums and percussion
Innervision Records



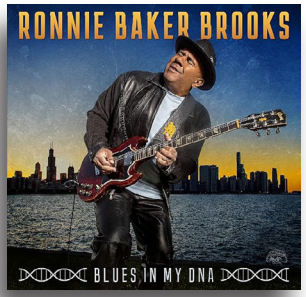
Pat Petrillo is back with a new record of instrumental fusion, drumming fire, and groove. *Contemporaneous* features guests like guitarists Oz Noy and Chieli Minucci, and bassist Gary Grainger. The opening tune called "Fused" is a burning fusion composition fusing pocket and pyrotechnics. The shuffle of "Late Night Diner" grooves hard, and Petrillo and bassist Scott Ambush hook up well while the tight horn section sits nicely atop the rhythm section's deep pocket. "How's the Weather" harkens back to the classic sound of Weather Report and features a burning soprano saxophone solo by Phillip Wack. "Summer in Philly" and "Glide in My Stride" capture the best aspects of groovy 70s smooth jazz. The driving "On the Regular" is the standout drumming track featuring Oz Noy and Gary Grainger. Pat's solo over the ending vamp is stupendous. Petrillo wrote or co-wrote all the tunes on *Contemporaneous* and is playing (and composing) his butt off! The NJ meets second line of "Grizzle" features Rob Paparozzi on Swamp Harmonica, the funky "Dirty Jerz" includes some nice guitar work from B.D. Lenz, and "Sunset Sound Studio 2" includes some playful grooving from the band. However, Pat's shifting back-beats, compositions, and great drum sound are the engine that makes everything move. Pat Petrillo finds the space within his songs to play a lot of drums, he doesn't rely on solos and drum features to show us what he can do. The proof is in the music.

Esthesis Quartet
Sound & Fury
Tina Raymond drums
Sunnyside Records



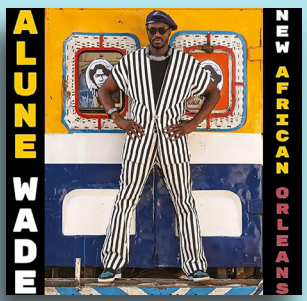
For their new record, the quartet of flautist Elsa Nilsson, pianist Dawn Clement, bassist Emma Dayhuff, and drummer Tina Raymond have seamlessly integrated the guitar work of Bill Frisell on a recording which is partially dedicated to trumpeter and mentor Ron Miles. This is a quite adventurous recording, and Tina Raymond's drumming is driving the adventure. The spontaneity and the creativity of this record is breathtaking. A few tunes include voices and electronics, but it is the playing of the musicians that push the musical envelope. Frisell inserts himself into the music with a light-handed strength and blends perfectly with Nilsson's flute. The overall concept of this band and its music is supremely strong and endlessly deep. Dayhuff's bass sound is warm and woody, and the unspoken hook-up between Raymond, Dayhuff, and Clement is ethereal, just listen to "Is There a Message." Raymond's own "Ace of Pentacles" is an exciting and easygoing closer that brings Frisell's twisting lines to the forefront. After hearing Tina Raymond on her debut as a leader, and interviewing her for *Modern Drummer*, I knew I wanted to hear more, and this record leaves us wanting *even more*! This is a beautiful record. Tina Raymond is a drummer to watch!

Ronnie Baker Brooks
Blues In My DNA
Steve Potts drums
Alligator Records



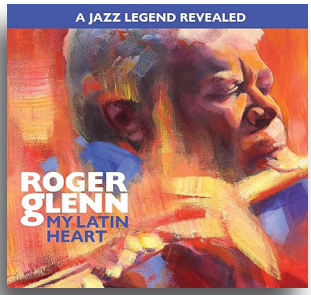
Ronnie Baker Brooks is a modern Blues legend, and Steve Potts is a Memphis drumming legend that deserves a lot of attention. They are a pair made in Blues heaven. Potts has spent a career playing with Gregg Allman, Pops Staples, Neil Young, Joe Walsh, and he is currently the drummer for Booker T & The MG's. On this recording we can all hear what the musical legends have heard and felt in Potts' beat and down-home grooves. Check out the pocket of "Blues in My DNA," "My Love Will Make You Do Right," and "I Found a Dollar Looking for a Dime." Steve Potts is the real deal. His drumming is patient and strong, listen to "Stuck on Stupid." His patience and taste come through on every record he has made (and there has been many!) Ronnie Baker Brooks' guitar playing and singing sits on the foundation of Potts, bassist Dave Smith, and rhythm guitarist Will McFarlane, this is a first call band! The pocket doesn't get any deeper than "All True Man" and the shuffle of "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul." This is blues drumming at its best.

Alune Wade
New African Orleans
Alix Goffic, Herlin Riley, Cyril Atef, Jon Grandcamp, drums
ENJA records



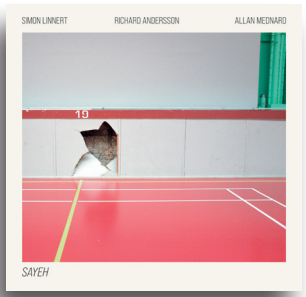
West African bassist and composer Alune Wade's music explores the multiple junctions between his native West African rhythms, the Afrobeat and Juju rhythms from Lagos, and the brass band music of New Orleans. Drummers Alix Goffic and Cyril Atef play on the majority of this record and their drumming propels the interesting union of Wade's music. However, Riley and Grandcamp lend their swagger to two tracks each. The inclusion of four musical standards, Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Child," Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man," Fela Kuti's "Water No Get Enemy," and Dr. John's "Gris-Gris Gumbo Ya Ya" might explain Alune Wade's music best. Those are the ingredients of Wade's music, and what an indescribable musical recipe he has created. Any fans of Salif Keita, Richard Bona, Youssou N' Dour, Weather Report, or Sixun will love this music. The most unique aspect to Alune Wade's music is the tightly orchestrated horn section that graces nearly every track. The drummers are wonderfully transparent within Wade's thickly rhythmic and harmonic music, meaning that they contribute strongly to the musical whole without drawing undue attention to themselves or their drumming.

Roger Glenn
My Latin Heart
Paul Van Wageningen drums
Derek Rolando, John Santos, Michael Spiro percussion
Patois Records



From Executive Producers Sam Beler and Greg Errico (drummer for Sly and the family Stone) and the Unity Music Foundation comes a new record filled with San Francisco Latin music stalwarts. Roger Glenn is a Latin music lifer, having cut his teeth years ago with Mongo Santamaria. Glenn is a multi-instrumentalist who plays vibes, flute, alto sax, marimba, and also does some singing. Guitarist Ray Obiedo plays a strong part on this record producing, engineering, and mixing. Drummer Paul Van Wageningen is a Bay area drumming mainstay who makes every recording and band he plays in, better. Van Wageningen is that type of musician, he raises the game of everyone around him. Listen to his groove on "Cal's Guajira," and how he provides a comfortable foundation for all the soloists, pay special attention to Derek Orlando's outstanding conga solo. John Santos and Michael Spiro guest on "Angola" and weave a beautiful tapestry of rhythm under Obiedo's guitar and Glenn's vibes. Spiro and Van Wageningen prove to be a classic Latin percussion and drum team on the tune "Samba De Carnaval." Just listen to that Samba breakdown and try to not start dancing.

Simon Linnert, Richard Anderson, Allan Mednard
Sayeh
Allan Mednard drums
KODA-NCB Records



Drummer Allan Mednard has been popping up on a lot of jazz recordings recently, but this recording is extra special. Pianist Simon Linnert has assembled the perfect trio for his musical concept on *Sayeh*, and Mednard shows taste beyond his years. The easy comparisons for this trio would be the trios of Keith Jarrett and Bill Evans, but Linnert's trio is walking in their own path. Allan Mednard is playing almost entirely with brushes and mallets, but he and Linnert are gently directing the flow of this beautiful trio. When Mednard finally picks up a pair of sticks on "Nefertiti," he has waited for the perfect time, and he makes an extra-special contribution to the music. Playing music by Carla Bley ("Ida Lupino,") Paul Motian, ("Once Around the Park,") Andrew Hill ("Erato,") Wayne Shorter ("Nefertiti,") and Thelonious Monk ("Boo Boo's Birthday,) gives us a good idea where this music is heading. Add a few Linnert originals, and three (seemingly) improvised compositions called "Sayeh I," "II," and "III," and you have an introspective trio deserving much more attention. For this trio, every note has intention, beauty, is caressed, and played with care.

Ola Onabule' and Nicolas Meier
Proof of Life
Chris Nickolls drums
Will Fry percussion
Self-Produced



Singer Ola Onabule' and guitarist Nicolas Meier have joined forces to create some high quality and worldly pop music. Meier has previously toured with Jeff Beck and recorded his own *Infinity* recording with Vinnie Colaiuta and Jimmy Haslip. Onabule's deep and velvety voice and Meier's acoustic guitar blend perfectly. Their songs are acoustic based, and well arranged. The funky "Funmilyao" and "Sorry in the Morning" are standout tracks. Chris Nickolls' drumming frames the tunes nicely, while not getting in the way. Fry's percussion on "Eternally Yours" provides nice flavor. The drumming and percussion interplay on "Two Scoops" is the drumming highlight, and Onabule's scatting in unison with Meier's guitar playing is a joy to hear. Sonically, this is a beautiful record, the recording and mixing provide a nice wide stage for the music to flower and blossom.

Manuel Pasquinelli
Heartbeat Drumming, Bellmund Session
Manuel Pasquinelli drums
Heartbeat Rhythm Productions



Every drummer has said it, "The drums are the heartbeat of the band." But for Manuel Pasquinelli's *Heartbeat Drumming*, that saying has been reversed. For Manuel Pasquinelli's *Heartbeat Drumming*, Pasquinelli's actual heartbeat is the center of his solo drumming performance. Using something called a heart-rate belt, Pasquinelli created a way to amplify his own heartbeat and play drums along with its tempo in real time. He added pre-recorded drone sounds to finish the soundscape. These solo concerts were recorded live in studio, for a one time only, no overdubs, live session. The outcome and recording are fascinating, although it might not be for everyone. For us drummers, the study of how our own heart rate and pulse fluctuates while we are playing, and the study of how that will affect what and how we play is untapped research and analysis. The relationship and the give and take of how *what* we play affects our heart rate, and in turn how our heart rate affects *what* we play, creates an interesting musical yin and yang, chicken and the egg relationship. It is a fascinating 37-minute listen and study, and hopefully it will lead to further investigation of this interesting musical relationship.

Marty Ehrlich
Trio Exaltation
Nasheet Waits drums
Sunnyside Records



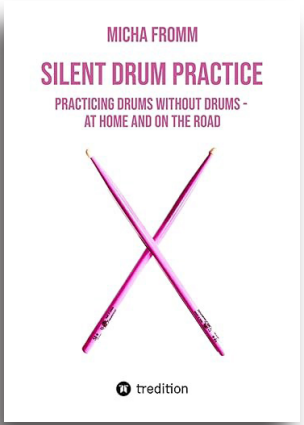
Saxophonist Marty Ehrlich has explored the tradition of the saxophone trio with trios featuring bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Pheeroan Aklaff, bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Andrew Cyrille, and bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Peter Erskine. For this, Ehrlich's most recent take on this explorative instrumentation, he has called upon his onetime Andrew Hill bandmates bassist John Hebert and drummer Nasheet Waits. They even perform two of Hill's compositions "Dusk" and "Images of Time." Ehrlich's trio is a band with deep and intimate knowledge of each other's playing. Waits paints with time and texture, and his pulse carries the trio into the stratosphere. Nasheet's sound whether with sticks, brushes, mallets, or any combination of three is impeccable. Hebert's bass sound is big, with a wood toned clarity. And Ehrlich's saxophone floats above, between, around, and beneath them. Listen to "Twelve for Black Arthur" and "Variations on a Vamp," Waits and Hebert are a hand in glove team of bass and drums. They don't play together, they *breathe* together. At any time, you can hear any member of this trio play time, comp, and / or solo. Pay close attention to the conversation on the tune "Dusk," this is high level, communicative, and conversational music.

Dawn Clement
Delight
Matt Wilson drums
Origin Records



The piano trio of Dawn Clement, Buster Williams, and Matt Wilson have found a nice musical foundation to stand on and a nice atmosphere to live within, and that foundation and atmosphere are a *Delight*. If you think you know where the performances on the opener "Outstretch" or "Alone Together" are going, keep listening (and be pleasantly surprised.) "Monk's Dream" is probably closer to what you were expecting from this trio. Clement has a firm grasp of Monk, and Wilson sounds well-versed in the humor and phrasing of Monk drummer Frankie Dunlop. Buster Williams' oft-played "Tokudo" let's the trio find a footing in equality, giving everyone equal chance to play in the musical playground of "Tokudo." Julian Priester's "Elmer's Holliday" is rarely played, but offers the trio a chance to simultaneously groove and explore. Today, no bassist's time is more elastic than Buster Williams. Matt Wilson's playfulness and sense of exploration seeps into every note he plays. Dawn Clement's mature sense of freedom and leadership allow the musicians to do what they do best. This is a wonderful trio that should record together some more, this is joyous music.

Silent Drum Practice: Practicing Drums Without Drums—At Home and On the Road
Micha Fromm
Tredition Books



Many of us drum teachers have been telling students (for years!!!) that there are many outstanding ways to practice the drums silently. We have also been telling our students that they don't *always* have to be physically at a drum set for effective practice. For those of us who have spent time on tour busses and staying in hotels, quiet practice away from a set is a necessity. For those who have young children and want to practice the drums, the sound of drumming can often become a barrier. And for those drummers who are apartment dwellers, quiet practice is a must. With all that being said… Who among us hasn't had to deal with the issue of silent or quiet practice on the drum set?

Drummer Micha Fromm has heard these concerns, and he has addressed them ALL in his new book *Silent Drum Practice*, and it is outstanding! But his book is *much* more than simple quiet practice tips and techniques. The author discusses learning music as a language, learning to listen, motivation and inspiration, stage presence and stage fright, tension and release, effective practicing, body movement and coordination, and much more. There are also 38 videos that accompany the book (accessible through scanning QR codes.) If it sounds like there is a lot packed into 169 pages, there is. I don't think there is a drummer alive who wouldn't gain something valuable from some aspect of Micha Fromm's book. Fromm explains things simply without talking down to us. Some of his concepts are surprisingly simple, but that doesn't mean they are obvious or common. I'm not a fan of "self-help" books, so don't worry, this is NOT one of them. This is a book dedicated to solving problems, and it does a very good job at doing just that. *Silent Drum Practice: Practicing Drums Without Drums—At Home and On the Road* is inspirational and creative. Finally, a book that focusses on the *how*, not the *what*.

Mike McDermott's Joan Jett Touring Kit

Photos by Jason Mehler



Drums: SJC Custom M5 Maple Shells Black Stain/Black Hardware – 6.5x12 Rack Tom, 12x14 and 14x16 Floor Toms, 14x22 Kick Drum.

Snares: CDC Custom 7x14 Maple, Modern Classic 7x14 Maple, Dark Horse Percussion 8x14 Wood Hoop Ballad Snare (Nickname "Santa's lil' Helper").

Heads: Toms Batter – Remo Ebony Emperor, Toms Reso - Remo Clear Ambassador, Snares – Remo Emperor X Snares, Big Fat Snare Drum Bourine Topper (w/ jingles) on Ballad Snare.

Cymbals: Sabian Cymbals – 15" & 16" Groove Hats, 18" HHX Ozone Crash, 20" AAX Projection Crash, 22" Paragon Ride, 21" HHX Groove Ride, 20" AAX Aero Crash.

Hardware: Tama Titan Stands, Iron Cobra Hi-Hat Stand, Iron Cobra Bass Drum Pedals W/Low Boy Beaters or Danmar Beaters.

Throne: Porter and Davies BC2 Tactile Throne.

Drumsticks: Pro Mark 808 Ian Paice Model wood tip.

In-Ear Monitors: Jerry Harvey Audio – Roxanne.

Mics: SE Electronics BL8 inside Kick/V Kick outside, SE 8 Overheads, SE 7 for Hi-Hat and Bottom Snare, Sennheiser 904's on Toms, Shure SM57's on Snares.

Accessories: Tandem Drum Drop mutes, Drum Key Shop Custom drum key, Sleeved Washers, Big Fat Snare Drum mutes (Jingle and Regular), GOMC Cases.






EVANS


SJC
Joan Jett
and the
Blackhearts

MODERN DRUMMER

TOUR KIT RUNDOWN VIDEOS



CHECK THEM OUT HERE









Andy Hurley - Fallout Boy
Blly 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

YouTube

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