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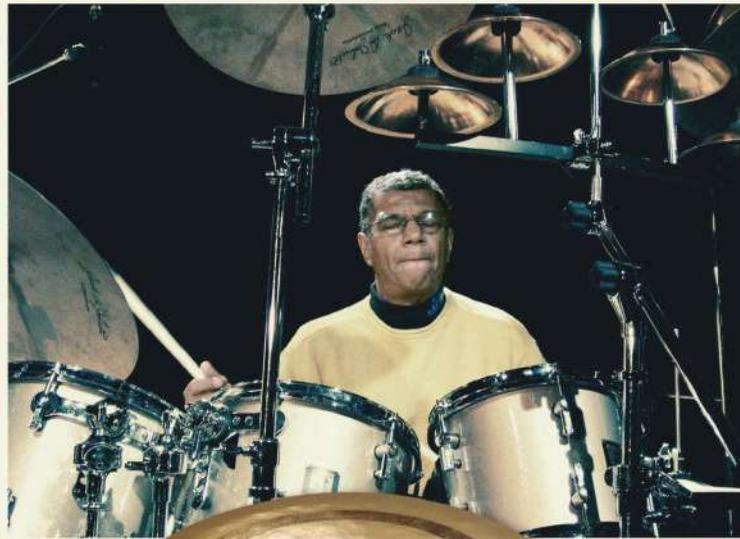


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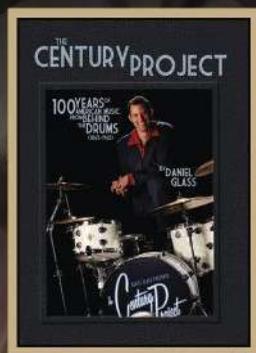
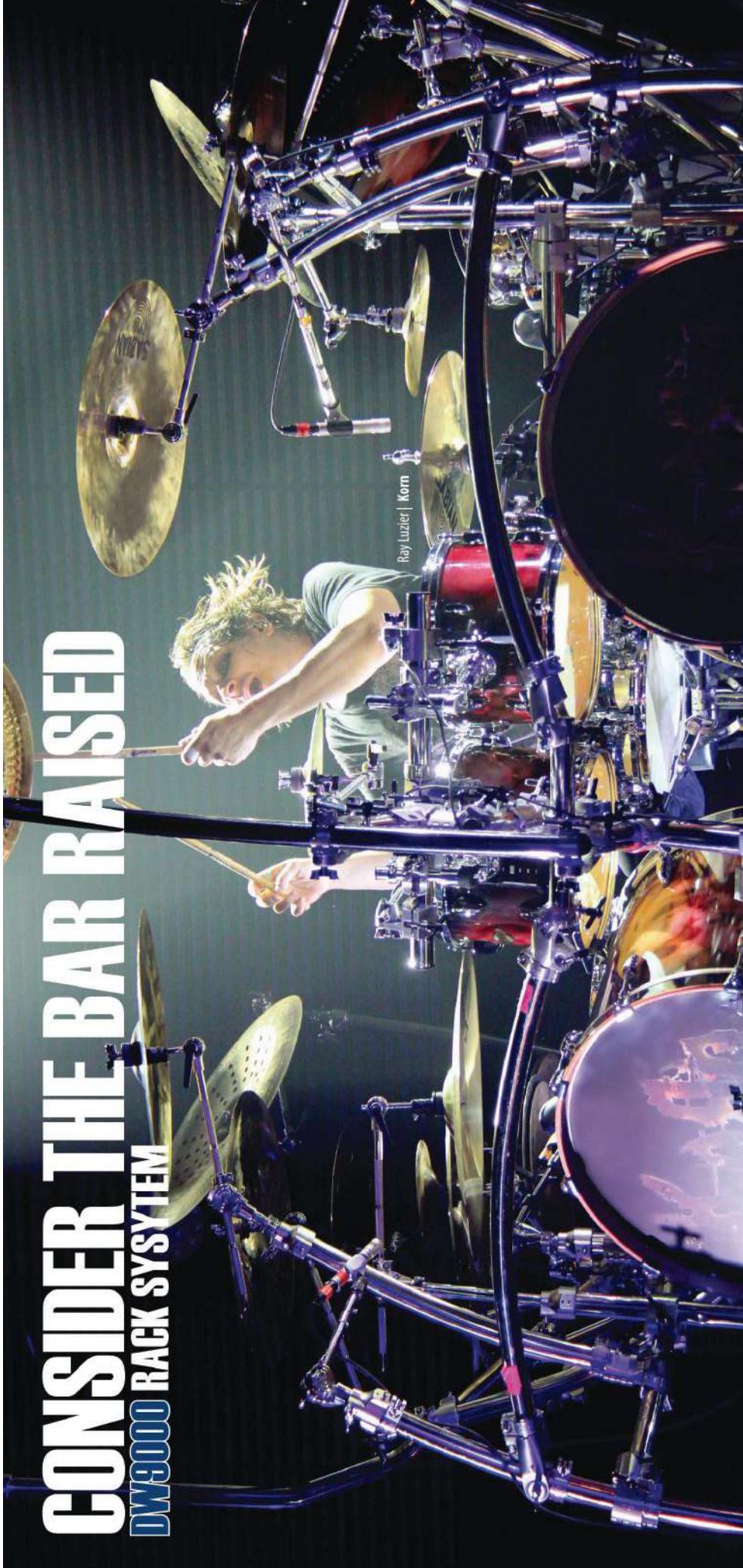


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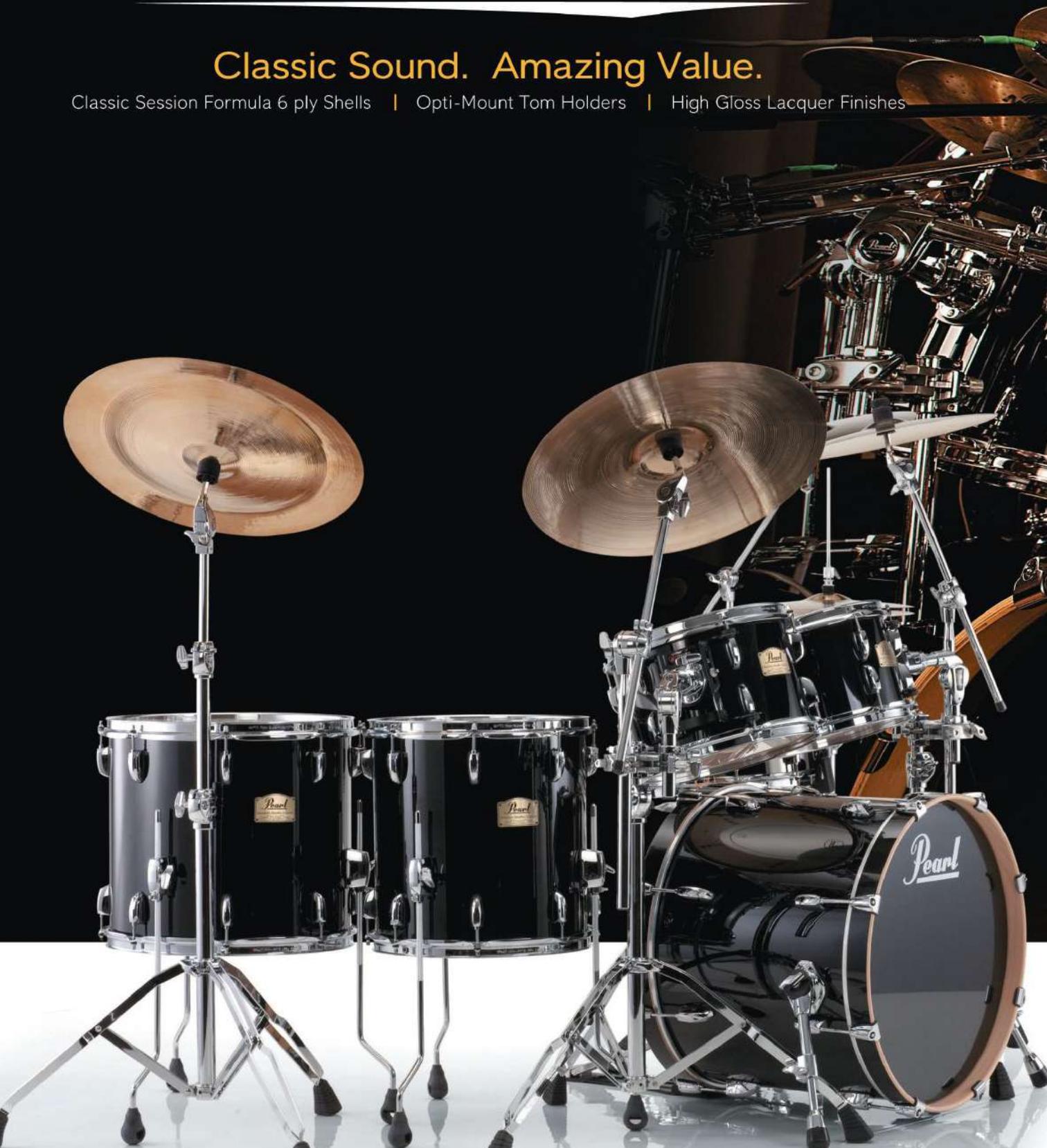


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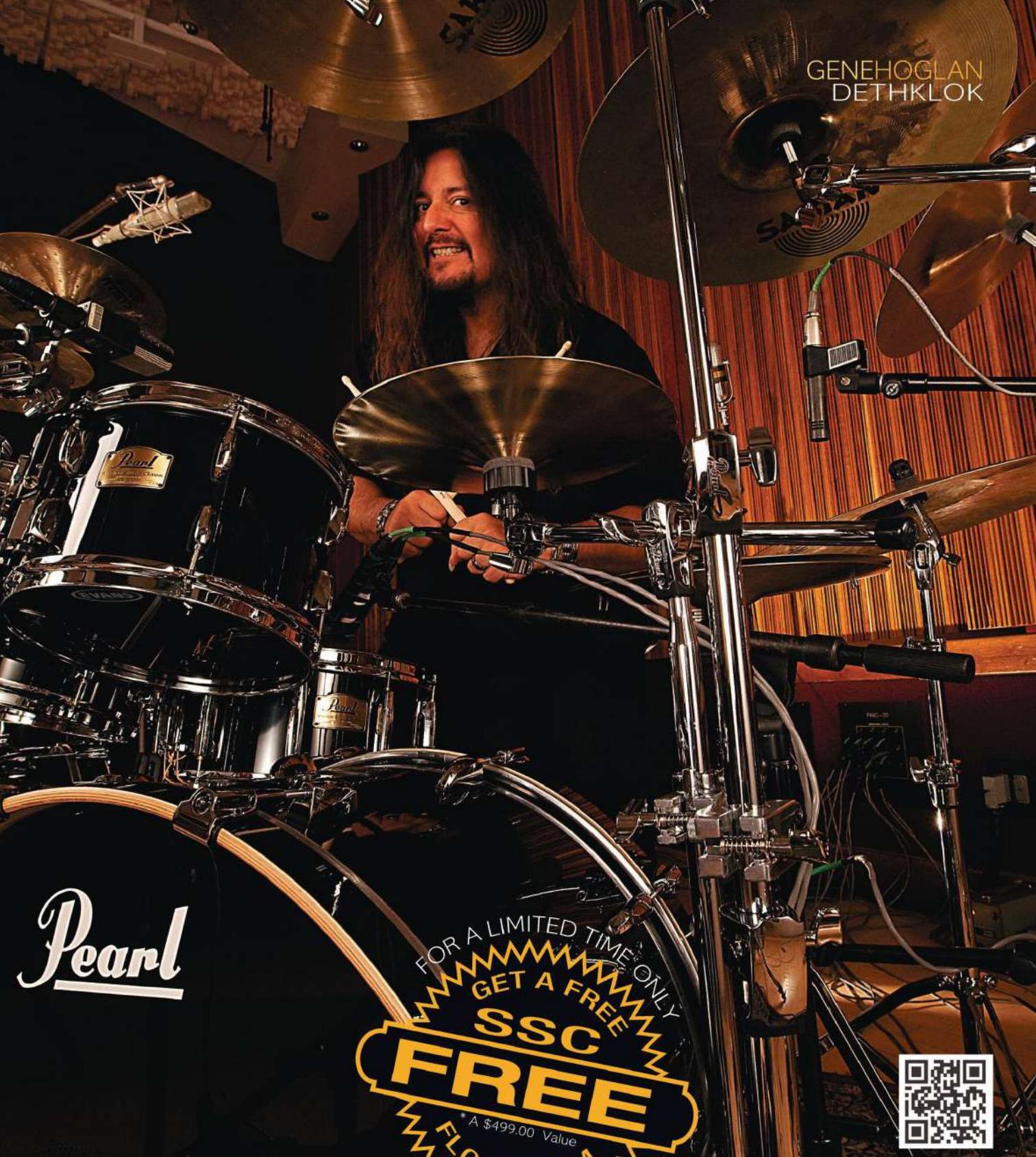
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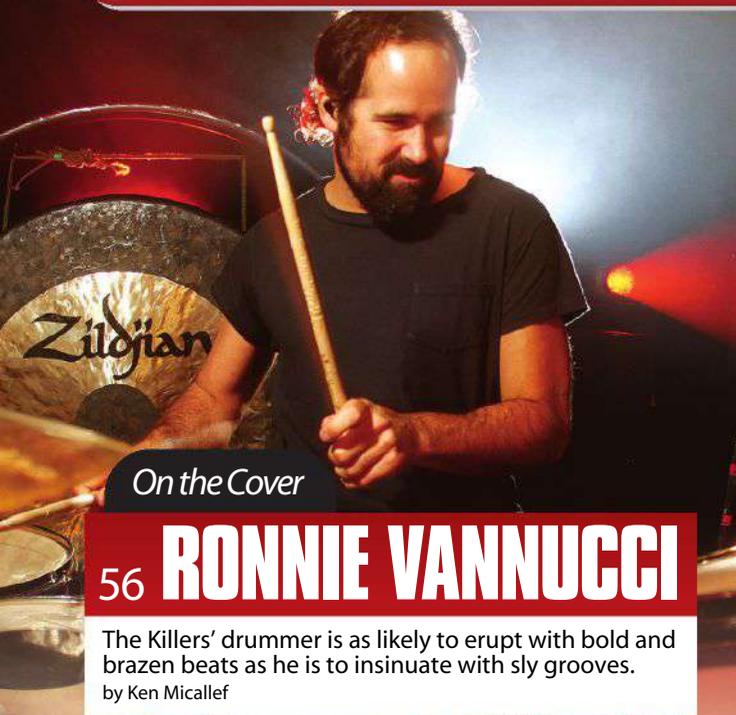
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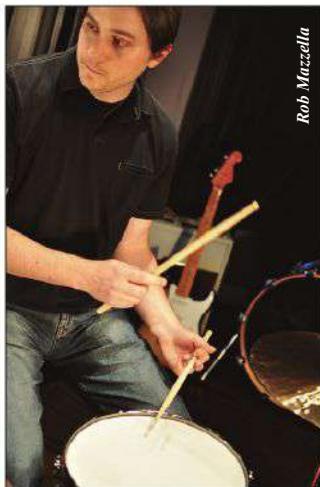
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Calling All Drummers!

Most of us in the New York City metro area are finally returning to some semblance of normalcy following the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We lost power for a week here at *MD*, and several members of our staff were in the dark at home for upwards of a dozen days (me included). Sure, it was a major drag having to fend for fuel and tending to a generator to keep a refrigerator and sump pump running, and cycling through grainy stations on a small AM radio for daily news updates got really old really quickly. But throughout these stressful days, I've had to continue to remind myself that it could've been worse and that many others are still dealing with much more dire circumstances. We've heard numerous horror stories from fellow drummers, teachers, and business owners regarding damaged homes, workshops, studios, equipment, and so on. Those things will take weeks, months, or even years to recover—if they ever do.

While there's no way to replace sentimental property lost by friends affected by Sandy, there's still a lot we all can do to make this recovery period feel a little less raw. Help a neighbor rebuild a fence, donate to the Red Cross (redcross.org), offer a utility worker a hot cup of coffee.... No gesture can be deemed too big or too small. If there's one lesson I've learned from Sandy, it's that while we can't control which way the wind blows, we *can* choose to come together to help push through trying times. Oh...I've also learned that a few hours of practice on the pad each day actually *does* make you play better. (Go figure!)

On a much lighter note, now's the time for you to start thinking about which drummers you feel made the most out of 2012 and vote for them in this year's Readers Poll. You can find a list of our nominees for each category on page 32, and you can cast your votes by logging on to moderndrummer.com anytime between January 1 and February 15. Our nominees are based on the artists that we felt did especially good work these past twelve months, but feel free to write in your own suggestions—we want to be sure you always have a chance for your voice to be heard. Results will be announced in the July 2013 issue.



Rob Marzella

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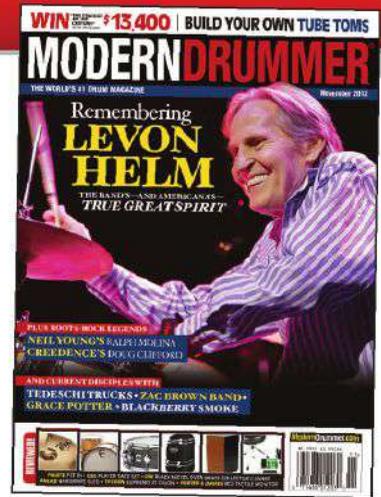


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LEVON HELM AND AMERICANA ISSUE

Thanks for the great tribute to Levon Helm (November 2012). The band I play with, Bow Thayer & Perfect Trainwreck, had the wonderful opportunity and privilege to open for Levon and his band eight times over the last several years, including six Midnight Rambles. They were much more than just invitations to share a bill. If he knew you were sincere, you were warmly welcomed into his musical family forever. At the last Ramble we played together, in late 2011, I got to play double drumkit with him on "The Weight." At the end of the song, I went over and gave him a big hug and said, "I love you, Levon," and he said, "I love you too, brother." I was floating on air for weeks. He was one of the kindest, most sincere, and most humble people I've ever met. He's known for having one of the best voices in rock 'n' roll. I think he also had the most infectious smile in rock 'n' roll. Thank you, Levon, for giving so much of yourself to all of us. You were and will always be what music is all about.

Jeff Berlin

Thank you so much for honoring Levon in print. Devoting the issue to Americana only adds to his legacy. I am the same age as Levon was when he passed, so I have followed and admired and prayed for him for most of my adult life. I will never forget the day he passed, April 19—my late wife's birthday. He was truly a man and a drummer to be honored and emulated. Thanks, Levon, for all you have given us and left us, but most of all for being a true, honorable man in a world like ours!

Gregory Stiles

I have been waiting a long time for this great issue. Not to say that every one isn't great—they are. But for me you guys hit it with Levon Helm, Ralph Molina, and the great Doug "Cosmo" Clifford. These guys have been on a huge number of hits. They show us all how it's done: musically, tastefully, and with passion. And give the drummer some—I loved it when Doug said John Fogerty didn't like the marching drums for "Who'll Stop the Rain" but finally gave in. And was Cosmo right? Hell, yeah! Love you guys, and I look forward to my *Modern Drummer* every month. Can't get by without it.

Jeffrey Serfes



SHEDDING SNARE SOLOS ON THE PAD

I just finished reading Mike Dawson's Editor's Overview "Hello, Old Friends!" (September), and I have to tell you how in sync we are right now. With Grand Slam tennis in season I set up my practice pad, put up Wilcoxon's book, grabbed a pair of Vic's SD1 Generals, and watched some tennis. Mike mentions internalizing each phrase, and that's what I started doing, so as not to beat myself up for watching the tube while practicing. I do go to the kit and play through the pieces as well, and one way is to play a New Orleans foot ostinato underneath. "Paradiddle Johnnie," "Rhythmania," and "Rolling in Rhythm" work well. And don't forget to orchestrate—now, that's fun!

Your message is a good one to put out there, and I'm sure you inspired many to do the same and reap the benefits. Thanks for another good Editor's Overview.

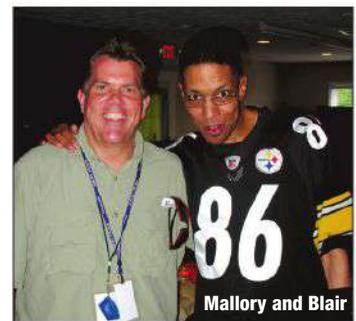
Matt Patuto

Dropped Beat

In the November 2012 issue, the photo of the latter-day Band on page 57 should have been credited to George Lembesis.

J.D. BLAIR

Thank you for your September Update on J.D. Blair. He is without a doubt one of the classiest drummers in the business. I've had the pleasure of meeting many well-known professionals during my time as a board member for the annual Ichthus Music Festival



here in Wilmore, Kentucky. On more than one occasion J.D. has been there backing up various artists and doing a fantastic job. His personality is winsome and his enthusiasm infectious. When he sits behind his kit and assumes the role of "Groove Regulator," he displays an astonishing command of the music, all the while letting his pure enjoyment of the moment shine on his face. I have been enriched by my conversations with him, as he inspires me to improve by his encouragement and talent, all displayed with genuine humility. He's definitely one of the good guys!

Martin Mallory

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- Glen Sobel of Alice Cooper Band



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JACK IRONS

The Wallflowers' new drummer reboots, finds happiness, and lets it all hang out.

Jack Irons, a founding member of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and former drummer for Pearl Jam, is boldly pressing the career reset button, and his current bandmates are giving him a shout-out for it. Having recently joined the re-formed Wallflowers, Irons is name-checked by frontman Jakob Dylan as the band's new drummer in the punky, disco-licious song "Reboot the Mission," the lead single (featuring Mick Jones of the Clash) from the album *Glad All Over*, the group's first studio record in seven years.

"I went in thinking, *We're either going to make music well together or we aren't*," Irons says, adding that *Glad All Over* was recorded click-free and live, with minimal overdubs, at Nashville's Easy Eye Sound studio. "I think we're all happy with the way it came out."

Everything seemed to fall into place during the making of the Jay Joyce-produced album, but Irons was initially apprehensive about entering a band setting again, after willfully removing himself from an emotionally untenable rock 'n' roll lifestyle a number of years ago. Eschewing band environments virtually altogether, Irons began working on his experimental, self-produced, drum-heavy solo efforts, *Attention Dimension* (2004), *No Heads Are Better Than One* (2010), and *Blue Manatee* (2011). "But I never



Tamarind Free Jones

stopped playing drums or wanting to play with other musicians," he says. Indeed, in the last few years Irons has appeared on releases by Eleven, Hole, Mark Lanegan, and his side project Arthur Channel, featuring Wallflowers bassist Greg Richling and Eleven guitarist and longtime friend Alain Johannes.

Perhaps due to his unwavering commitment to his instrument of choice, Irons today exudes the confidence and looseness

of a determined drummer in command of hard-driving grooves laced with rhythmic sophistication. "I'm a different man," Jack says. "With the Wallflowers I feel like I'm embarking on another chapter of my life. I'm much more mellow now, and my children are a bit older, so it's easier for me to tour. Right now I'm happy and healthy. That's not something I could have said when I was younger."

Will Romano

NEWS



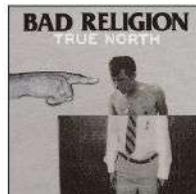
In 2010, **the Collective** moved to a new location in Manhattan for the first time in twenty-six years. The expensive construction and soundproofing of the new facility began in September and ran through the end of the year. According to director

Anthony Citrinite, issues related to complaints of noise being heard from practice studios and classrooms led to long and expensive litigation. As a result, the Collective moved again, to a location that better serves the needs of its students.

In order to raise money for soundproofing and legal expenses, Fractured Atlas, a nonprofit arts-service organization, has accepted the Collective for a fiscal sponsorship. The Collective SP and L Initiatives project has been set up to receive tax-deductible contributions and is requesting help to support its efforts.

In addition to the fundraising drive, the Collective is planning an auction and is asking for donations such as memorabilia and equipment. Citrinite says contributors can also make a donation as a gift or memorial. Monetary contributions can be made online at fracturedatlas.org, and checks made payable to Fractured Atlas may be mailed to the Collective at 123 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Please include "the Collective" in the memo line.

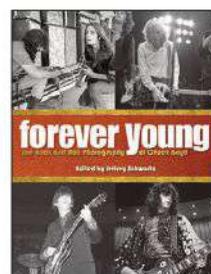
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TOM TEASLEY

A world percussion specialist has been spreading good will abroad, lending a fresh voice to Dadaist film, and thriving on the D.C. theater scene.

With recent performances all over the world, film projects coming to fruition, and cool educational material in the works, renowned world percussion performer, educator, and composer Tom Teasley has been even busier than usual. Most recently Teasley traveled to Iraq as a cultural envoy for the U.S. State Department, a position he's proudly held for nearly four years. "My role as cultural envoy has had an enormous impact on the way that America is seen through the eyes of



Chiu-Chi Charlie Chang

others," Tom says. "This is especially true in the Middle East. One strikingly memorable event was at a school in Iraq. I was the first American these kids had seen who wasn't wearing a uniform. When I pulled out a doumbek and other indigenous instruments, their eyes lit up. When I played their traditional rhythms combined with American funk and jazz, they started dancing."

Teasley has upped the ante in his live performances by incorporating the melodica, a keyboard-operated chromatic harmonica. "A big discovery was that playing an instrument that requires breath to control it impacts my drumming," Teasley explains. "I'm finding that I'm much more focused on shading and nuance."

A staple of the Washington, D.C., theater scene, Teasley is performing as the sole musical accompaniment for the Folger Theatre production of *The Conference of the Birds* and will be a part of the Constellation Theatre Company's spring 2013 production of *Gilgamesh*. Of his role in *The Conference of the Birds*, Teasley says, "As the only musician, I am frequently 'text painting' [substituting sound for words and action] while also hinting at the grander, broader message contained within these parables."

New Teasley film projects include setting several of Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling's early-twentieth-century Dadaist films to music, as well as having his compositions used by the Discovery Channel. Of the latter opportunity, Tom says, "Like much of my work, the Discovery Channel association is a natural progression of what I was previously doing. The connection came about as a result of my theater work and experience performing a variety of world music traditions."

For further evidence of Teasley's art, check out his latest recording, *All the World's a Stage*, and don't miss the innovative results of his reimagining of Richter's film *Rhythmus 21* on his YouTube channel.

Ben Meyer



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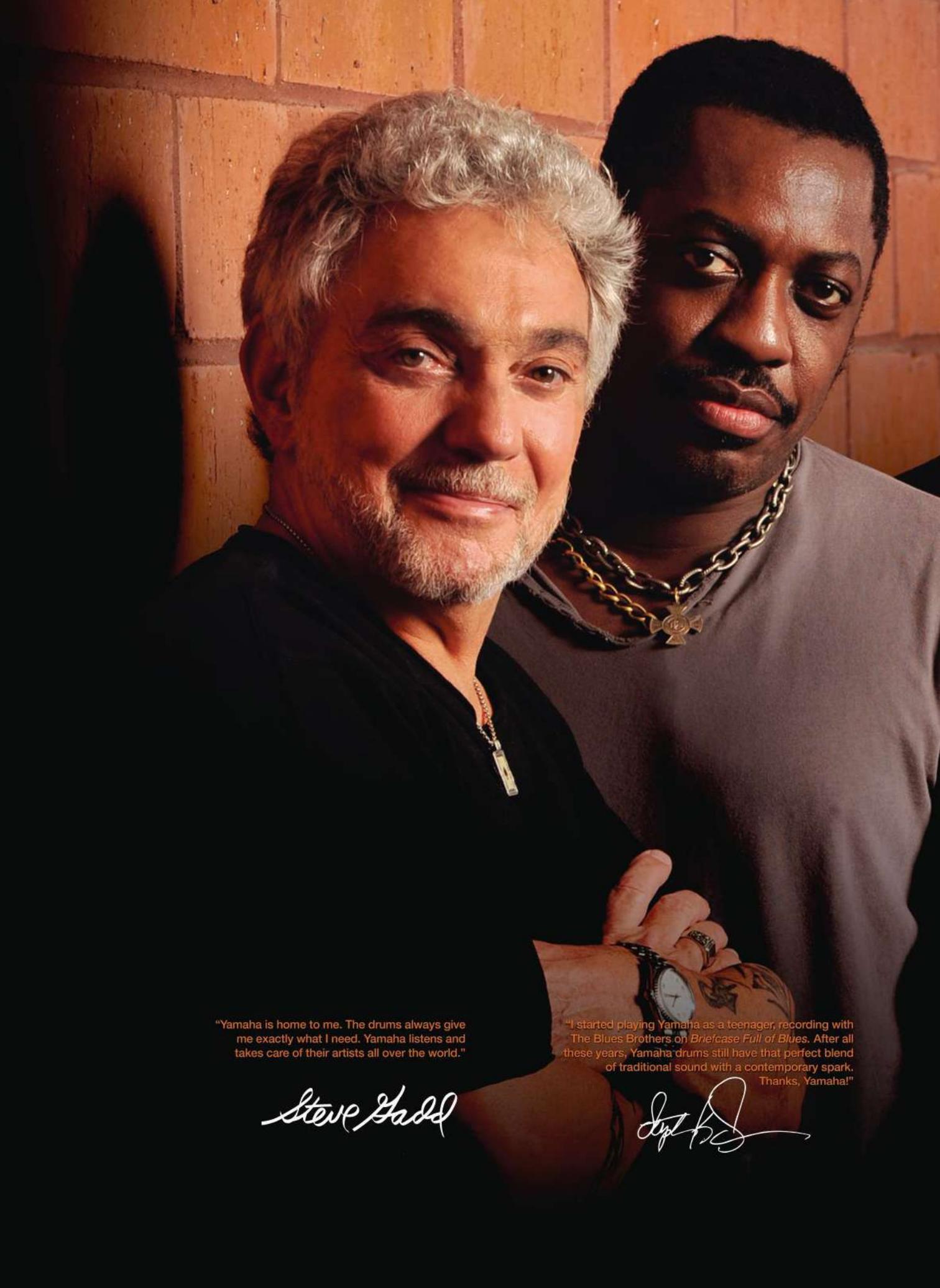


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Dave Weckl



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This month: STICK MEN/NAKED TRUTH/ CRIMSON PROJEKT SOUND EXPLORER **PAT MASTELOTTO**

Since some backline kits are pretty awful [most of Mastelotto's gigs are outside the U.S. and on provided kits], I pack as many small essentials for my gigs as possible. I also take plenty of felts, because they're light and you can leave them and make the next drummer happy!

I live by the 50 pounds/22.5 kilograms-per-checked-bag rule. The oversize-bag fees are killer, especially on internal European and Japanese flights. So I travel with one or sometimes two checked bags at 50 pounds each, plus as much as I can carry on in my wheelie and backpack. I am currently packing for my fourth trip to Europe this year.

Among the stuff in my carry-on wheelie is a Mackie submixer and clear plastic bags (so TSA can see easily) with lightweight, reliable audio and trigger cables, power supplies, and adaptors. Also in the wheelie are a few small cymbals (Paiste 15" hi-hats, a 14" crash, a couple Cup Chimes, and for some gigs my Hammerax Chime Vine). And there will usually be some electronics, like my Nord Drum brain, my MOTU UltraLite audio interface (if it's a laptop gig and I need multiple outputs), my Korg Nano controller (so my sweaty hands don't have to mouse the laptop), and some trigger pads like the Roland KD-7 kick trigger, PD-9 pad, or little CY-8 cymbal pads (because they're so lightweight). It all depends on the gig. Then I'll have a small, carpeted balsawood

shelf that fits into a snare basket. I set my computer and small toys on that. My checked bag also has a duffel bag of clothes and a duffel bag of hardware that includes small percussion toys and cymbals.

My stick bag is about as acoustic as I get; after that, it's mostly electronics. On most of my gigs I'm a hybrid acoustic/electronic drummer playing bass lines, vocals, and other essential bits, so my priority is the electronics. I might play several dozen different kits in one year, and the hardware is the biggest hassle. I always bring a little cowbell post so I can mount a pad, like you would a cowbell, on the kick drum, along with a way to mount the Roland SPD-SX and Roland HandSonic.

My HandSonic almost always goes with me. It's an essential. I've had it a long time, and I can make some freaky noises with that sucker. Its cheesy little

sequencer is great for a quick "click track" to play to. And I love its delays and roll functions and what you can do with its pressure and after-touch features.

I usually need a sampler, and these days it's my Roland SPD-S, or its info on a USB stick. I also take the Korg Wavedrum, depending on the gig. It's very dynamic, and a few patches really suit the exploratory music I play.

Interview by Mike Haid



For a player such as Pat Mastelotto, who likes to have many sound choices at his fingertips while on tour, making the most of carry-on luggage is imperative.

BACK Through the STACK

In November 1996, we asked Metallica's **LARS ULRICH** about the source of the band's change to a more "soulful" direction on its multimillion-selling self-titled 1991 album.

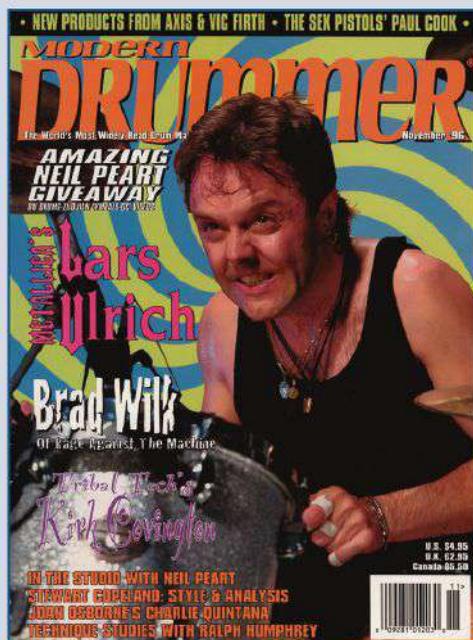
We were making records and touring before we could even tie our own shoelaces. And after *Ride the Lightning* [1984], when we moved back from L.A. to San Francisco, I think we felt a little inadequate as musicians. The thing I skipped over a little too easily when I started drumming was just the basic rudiments, and I felt a little limited in the fill area. So at the same time Kirk [Hammett] was taking lessons from [guitarist] Joe Satriani, I went back and took lessons from Satriani's drummer. And for a couple of years, I just went through a lot of that stuff and tried to fill in the blanks and expand my horizons.

The records we made right around this time were *Master of Puppets* [1986] and *...And Justice for All* [1988], and when I listen to those records now, I feel a sense of trying to be as inventive and creative as I could—even pushy—with a lot of the fills I played. There's a lot of aggressive playing on those records, and as happy as we were with them at the time, the magnitude of what we were trying to do didn't really hit us

until we started touring for *Justice*.

We were playing hundreds of gigs and playing these ten-minute songs that were so progressive and so full of these odd time signatures and really difficult parts. We'd come back to the dressing room afterward and start talking about it, and we came to the conclusion that, frankly, we just weren't having fun playing them. Songs like "...And Justice for All" and "Frayed Ends of Sanity" became nothing more than exercises in trying to get from one point to the other without screwing up.

When we got away from the touring and had time to examine what we were doing, we came to the conclusion that playing all this weird-ass, challenging stuff had nothing to do with playing music from the heart and soul. The progressive side of Metallica, and my playing and the role of the drums—I felt we'd taken that as far as we could and that it was really time for a sharp turn. So when we



came back together and started writing music for the black album, I was keen, at least from the drumming end, to do whatever I could to make it soulful.

To read the entire Lars Ulrich feature—and all the other great material from the November 1996 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.



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MIND MATTERS

by Bernie Schallehn

Too Old to Rock?

As I get older, I'm discovering new challenges regarding my drumming. Some are to be expected. Aspects of my timing, speed, and endurance are changing, and not for the better. But the real sucker punch is when I've gone into an audition with musicians twenty or thirty years my junior, blown the room away, and then not gotten the gig. I'm fighting age like a maniac! Can you help me deal with this and maybe offer some tips for knocking the rust off?

KJ

Listen. Do you hear that? It's the sound of me applauding the fact that you're still slamming those 2s and 4s. It proves that your passion for drumming has sustained itself over all these years. Let me be the first to celebrate the idea that you're still behind the kit.

Now, here's a quick reality check. You say you're fighting age, but that's a battle you're bound to lose. Time moves forward and never backward. So let's work *with* your age—not against it.

You and I are probably in the same age bracket. In the June 2008 issue of *Modern Drummer*, I wrote an article titled "It's Not Easy Being Gray: Tips for the Over-Fifty-Five Drummer." Some of the topics covered included condensing your kit, learning to play hand percussion, physical and mental training, age-related limitations, and dealing with ageism. You'd find the read immensely helpful, so I suggest you grab a back issue if you don't already have it.

I wrote that article more than four years ago, and since then I've grown older, had more life experiences, and given additional thought to this topic. Let's continue where I left off about being a "senior" musician.

When rock 'n' roll was first coalescing into a genre, no one could speculate on the longevity of the music or the players. But consider just a few of the seasoned rock drummers who are still layin' it down—Ringo, Charlie Watts, Carmine Appice, Steve Gadd, Simon Kirke.... And look at some singer-songwriters over sixty who are still performing—Sting, Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen.... What does that tell us? Older musicians can still rock!

Let's look at what's in your realm of control and what's not possible for you to change.

In your control:

1. Your perspective on situations
2. Practicing
3. Maintaining or getting into good physical and mental shape
4. Staying current regarding advances in drums and drumming

Out of your control:

1. The passage of time
2. Receding hairlines
3. Loss of muscle tone
4. Age-related illness or disability

It's not so much what happens to us in life, but what meaning we give to the experience. You can be angry and bitter about being an older drummer, or you can frame it to yourself (and perhaps in classified ads, if you're looking for a gig) that you're seasoned, experienced, accomplished, well versed, or wise. Don't those terms feel better when you describe yourself with them, rather than pigeonholing yourself as simply an old drummer? I find liberation in aspects of being in the biz for many years. Gone are so many of the doubts and fears of my youth. So what if you drop a stick, blow a fill, or get kicked out of a band? All those things



C. Harper's Old Brass Snare

I recently acquired an old brass snare drum. All I know is that the woman I bought the drum from purchased it at a farm auction/estate sale about seven years ago in Teulon, Manitoba, Canada. Apparently the homestead belonged to a family that had moved to Canada from Europe in the early 1900s. There are no distinguishable markings on the drum, except for "C. Harper," which someone wrote on the bottom head. The heads appear to be natural animal skin and are starting to deteriorate around the wooden hoops. The snare tension system is simple, and the snares seem to be gut. Other interesting features are the leather-covered handle and the brass hook attached to the drum. Would the hook have been used to attach a sling? Any information you can provide on this drum, especially its age and value, would be greatly appreciated.

Brendan Thompson

"That's a nineteenth-century martial snare drum that was used for parades by military groups," says *MD* Collector's Corner columnist and drum historian Harry Cangany. "From the metal studs welded on the hoops, I would tell you it's German. That handle is actually a leg rest. The hook is for a strap/sling to attach the drum to the drummer. The shell looks to be brass that has darkened with age and from contact with oily hands. This is a single-tension drum, so it will have a loud, boxy sound. It's a museum piece, and as such it's worth \$200 to \$300."



have happened to me, and I'm still here playing. You live through it, and the anxieties die.

Practice every day, even if it's just playing rudiments on a pad. Regarding your concerns of timing, speed, and endurance, be sure to exercise the muscles needed to execute those paradiddles and ratamacues. Use them or lose them.

Join a gym, and consider hiring a personal trainer who will devise drum-specific exercises. (This month's Health & Science article is also dedicated to drum-centric moves.) Get strong, lose your gut if you have one, and build your endurance through cardiovascular exercise.

For your mind: Read, learn to juggle, or do crossword puzzles. Challenge your brain. Again, use it or lose it.

You had an audition with younger musicians. As I've mentioned in previous columns, you never know what an existing band is looking for in hiring a new drummer. They can write volumes in their Craigslist ad about what they want, but which drummer gets the gig—and why—often remains a mystery. You attribute not getting the gig to being an old guy. But maybe they just didn't like your playing style. When I've auditioned for bands with younger musicians, they seem to fall into two categories. They either think you're an old fart who's going to fall asleep after the second song (yes, ageism does exist), or they don't care how old you are as long as you deliver the goods and don't look like an escapee from a retirement community.

Guys hate losing their hair, but for some it's inevitable. If you're "folklily challenged," skip the bad comb-over and consider wearing a cool hat or shaving your head and growing some facial hair. Imagine walking into an audition in great physical shape with a shaved head and a beard. Badass!

In closing, I suggest you keep playing. You'll find your place. As the world-class drummer/percussionist Wally Reyes once told me, "Death is the only thing that should retire a drummer."



Bernie Schallehn has been a drummer and percussionist for over forty-five years. He holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and, while in private practice, held the credentials of a certified clinical mental health counselor and a certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor.

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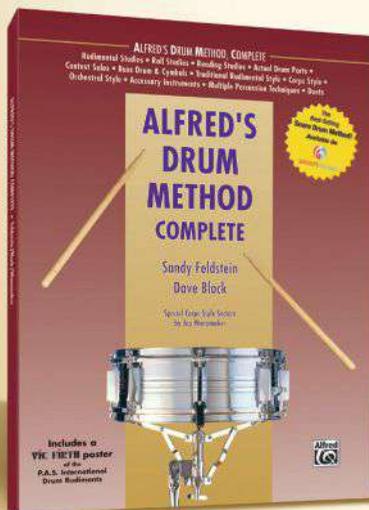


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PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



by Stephen Bidwell

When I was contacted about reviewing an all-hickory drumkit, I had to think for a second: *Have I ever played a hickory-shell drum?* The answer is yes; I once played a stave-constructed hickory snare from Head Drums. I then searched eBay for “hickory snare drum” and came up with just two boutique options. Gretsch has been exploring less-commonly used woods in its Renown Purewood series for a few years, and the all-hickory kit shipped to us was stunning—both visually and sonically. If you’re able to try out one of these limited-run kits, you’ll no doubt be wondering the same thing as us: Why isn’t hickory used more often in drum making?

THE DETAILS

Gretsch initially built just thirty-five hickory kits in each of two setups. Our review kit (list price: \$3,080.99) included a 16x20 bass drum, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and a 5½x14 snare. The other setup option (list price: \$3,999.99) includes an 18x22 bass drum, 7x10 and

no complaints from our opinionated sound guy about not having a hole in the front head.

The snare was also an instant classic. After evening out the tension between the lugs and trying to get my normal top-to-bottom-head pitch ratio, I was awarded with a full crack and articulate ghost notes, which added up to an ideal funk/rock sound. The snare wires required tightening on both sides of the strainer throughout the four-hour gig, but I haven’t played many snares that don’t have that same issue. I saw no brand name on the snare wires themselves, but they were of better quality than most factory-supplied versions.

The toms took a bit more work to gel with my tuning concept. The combination of single-ply heads, die-cast hoops, and thin shells with 30-degree bearing edges made for a lot of sustain initially, with the floor tom being the biggest offender. When I tuned it up to about the middle of its range, where the shell really sang, I could strike the floor tom, walk to the kitchen, grab a drink, and

With such stunning looks and focused, all-purpose tones, these limited edition kits are destined to become modern-day classics.

8x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and a 6x14 snare drum.

The American-sourced hickory shells are 6-ply and are assembled at the same Taiwanese plant as the rest of the Renown series. All of the drums feature 30-degree bearing edges and die-cast hoops, and the rack toms have GTS suspension mounting systems. The honey amber color and rich wood grain of the hickory are well accented by a clear lacquer finish. The one difference between these and other Gretsch drums is that the hickory models do not feature the classic Silver Sealer interior finish.

The kit came equipped with Evans heads: coated G1 snare and tom batters, clear G1 tom bottoms, a clear EMAD kick batter, and a coated Gretsch-logo front head. The tom mounting system, floor tom legs, and bass drum spurs were all top notch and made for easy and sturdy setup.

STRAIGHT TO THE GIG

I don’t typically take review drums on a gig immediately after they arrive at my house, but seeing as these were shipped with great heads and were already tuned up, I decided to try them with a wedding band after I had barely touched them. Members of the band immediately commented on the unique appearance of the kit, and several wanted to get a close-up look to check out the grain of the wood.

I tuned up the front kick head just under a quarter turn at each lug to clear up a few overtones, but I left the batter side as it was tensioned out of the box. The result was a very full and punchy sound that was bigger than that of any 20” bass drum I’ve played in recent memory. And I got

walk back, and it would still be ringing out. Through some dampening and tuning experiments, I was able to get the drum to make a satisfying “thoom,” and after I got the head worn a bit, the ringing was a lot more manageable.

I’ve also admittedly never gotten completely used to Gretsch’s hallmark five-lug rack tom design, so it took a couple gigs of experimenting to get the toms where I wanted them. After determining that some of my normal top/bottom pitch ratios weren’t exactly what worked best on these drums, I was treated to a focused, punchy rack tom tone.

I got to take the Purewood hickory kit to some other interesting gigs and rehearsals. The drums all spoke through well when I played with a nine-piece Afrobeat band, and the substantial-sounding kick gave my right foot a renewed sense of authority in funk and pop situations. I tuned the entire kit up to the top of its range for a jazz trio date, and the drums had a great feel at all dynamics. The snare worked well tuned up high, like the sound of modern-day Roy Haynes, and the 20” kick wasn’t at all overwhelming in a trio setting.

I did have a bit of trouble competing in terms of volume with my louder ambient rock project. In defense of these drums, I normally use a big Bonham-esque setup with that group, but I’m quite certain this kit would compete if properly miked and pumped through a decent PA system.

HICKORY’S FOCUSED TONE

As far as comparisons to other woods, the closest we can find is that hickory has the focus of birch and some of the bite of oak or harder woods. I’m always a bit skeptical when I hear that drums sound like they’re “pre-EQ-ed,”



but I was offered the following evaluation by a trusted live engineer: "All of the lower-mid information that typically muddies up toms and kicks seemed to have been already tuned out of the drum itself." That unsolicited observation was offered just hours after I'd taken the

Purewood hickory kit out of the box.

If you were to convince a custom drum maker to build you a kit out of hickory, you could imagine paying more than twice the \$3,080.99 list price for the fusion-size kit we reviewed. I'm still perplexed by the void of other hickory

drums on the market, and Gretsch has no official plans to make more at the moment. So if you want a sonically unique, potentially rare, and eye-catching set of drums for a very non-boutique price, you should put in your order now. gretschdrums.com

SOULTONE

Vintage Old School 1964 Series Cymbals

by Michael Dawson

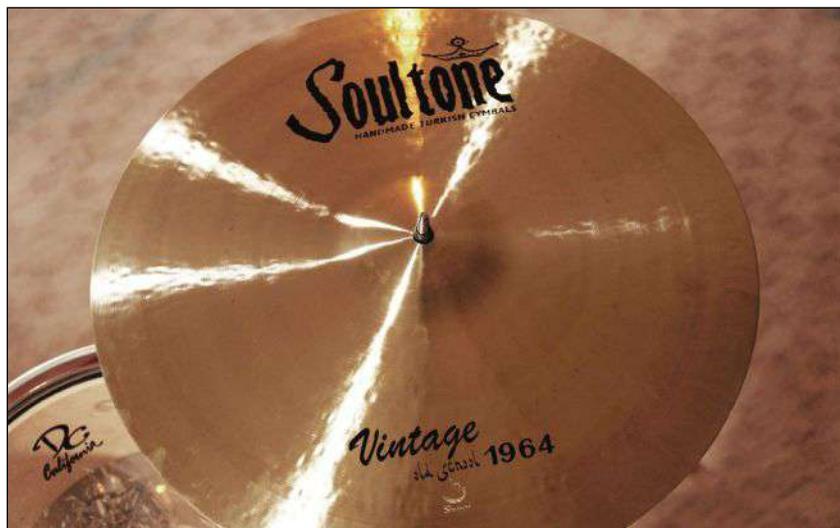


Soultone Cymbals was founded in 2003 by the Los Angeles-based drummer Iki Levy, in an effort to provide high-quality models with what Levy describes as "a balance of proper weight and tone properties." Current lines include the all-purpose Custom and Custom Brilliant, the thin and jazzy Vintage, the darker Extreme, the special-effects FXO, and the fast/bright Gospel.

Within the Vintage series are two sub-series, Vintage Old School, which is designed to replicate the sweet sounds of cymbals made in the 1950s and '60s, and Vintage Old School 1964, which is specifically tailored to sound like legendary jazz drummer Tony Williams' coveted cymbals on the classic recordings he made with Miles Davis around 1964. We reviewed the Vintage Old Schools in the March 2011 issue, and this month we're taking a look at the 1964s. We were sent 20" and 22" crash/rides and 14" hi-hats.

VINTAGE PHYSIQUE

All Soultone cymbals are made from B20 bronze (80 percent copper and 20 percent tin) at a foundry in Turkey. Vintage Old School 1964 cymbals are tightly and shallowly lathed from edge to bell and are hammered extensively throughout the entire surface, except for the bell. The



and the bottom is medium-heavy. The hi-hats have much steeper bells and bows than the crash/rides, so they sounded brighter and clearer.

CHUNKY HATS

In contrast to the thin, papery hi-hats used by many jazz drummers in the '60s, Tony Williams favored heavier cymbals. This choice made his left-foot work sound stronger, and it caused stick strokes to jump out of the mix. (Check out how prominent his hi-hats are on the track

responded very quickly and evenly—almost as if they were 13"—when used to play Papa Jo Jones-style open/closed swing patterns. Interestingly, these heavier-than-expected hats didn't fare as well for super-clean, tight stick sounds, so I wouldn't go to them first in a funk or pop situation. But of the all Vintage Old School 1964 cymbals we reviewed, they came the closest to replicating Williams' timeless tones.

20" AND 22" CRASH/RIDES

Soultone designates the 20" (\$704) and 22" (\$799) Vintage Old School 1964 cymbals as crash/rides, so first I tested them as crashes for a demo recording session with a new alternative/prog project. I wanted the crashes on these tracks to be big and washy and blend with the guitars, rather than explode with quick accents. The 1964s sounded stellar in this application. The 20" was especially sweet. It responded quickly, opened up evenly, and had a super-smooth sustain. It also produced some clear high harmonics, similar to what you hear from professional-grade B8 cymbals, like Paiste Giant Beats, which added a nice sheen to the decay. The 22" offered a darker crash sound, but it also

After nearly fifty years, drummers are still chasing the legendary tones that jazz great Tony Williams made famous in his early days with Miles Davis. These cymbals are the latest attempt to re-create that coveted classic sound, and the results are exemplary.

bells on the crash/rides are small, which helps increase stick articulation, and shallow, which gives them a more balanced, richer tone. The crash/rides also have a fairly flat profile, for additional control. These cymbals are in the medium-thin range, so they have some flex, while the hi-hats are firmer and heavier by comparison. The top hi-hat is medium in weight,

"Seven Steps to Heaven," from the Davis album of the same name.)

Soultone's 14" Vintage Old School 1964 hi-hats (\$649) have similar presence to Tony's pair, so it was very easy to get a strong foot chick with them, and they produced a clean, breathy splash. When held partially open and struck, they had a ton of sparkle and sizzle. The hi-hats also

responded quickly and had an even, clean sustain. I liked crashing this cymbal more subtly, using more of the tip of the stick to add a bit of “point” to the front of the note.

Both 1964 crash/rides featured strong and musical stick sounds when used as rides, and their spread was wide, even, and fairly controlled. Even when bashing swing patterns on either cymbal at over 200 bpm, I couldn’t get the wash to overpower the attack. The overall tone of these cymbals was warm and clean, not dark and trashy.

The 20" 1964 crash/ride had a more prominent sustain, and when played as a ride its high harmonics were much more noticeable, almost to the point of creating feedback. (I was able to rein in the harmonics with a 2" rectangle of gaffer’s tape

placed over the Souldtone stamp.) As such, I would recommend using this model not as a primary ride but more as an alternative when you want a wider, brighter, and more metallic sound.

The 22" 1964 crash/ride had a drier attack and a lower pitch, but also with a long sustain and even decay. The high harmonics weren’t as noticeable, so it was a bit easier to control this cymbal, which was more articulate at all dynamics. This is a very nice jazz ride with a great combination of sparkling stick click and warm wash. The 22" was my choice between the two crash/rides, and—to my ears—it was fairly close to recalling the spirit of Tony Williams.

So, do these rides sound *exactly* like

what you hear on records featuring Williams in 1964? No. But considering all of the factors that went into capturing that classic tone—microphones, mic placement, recording equipment, and, most important, Tony’s unique touch—the 1964s are pretty darn close to hitting the mark. While they excelled in articulation, presence, and musicality, they lacked a bit of that dry, trashy funk found in the source tracks. Maybe it’ll take a decade of use for these models to “dirty up.” But setting comparisons aside, the 1964s are expressive cymbals that stand tall on their own for jazz and beyond.

souldtonecymbals.com



WINCENT

Assorted Drumsticks, Brushes, Rods, and Mallets

by Ron Seidel

Finicky drummers hunting for the perfect pair of playing utensils should consider Wincent, an up-and-coming outfit from Sweden that came into existence as an unassuming side project for touring drummer Dan Nylén. In the early '90s, Nylén became unsatisfied with the limited selection of rods available and set out to craft his own. He enlisted the help of his father, a woodworking teacher named Bo Wincent Nylén, and began building custom birch rods using wood from Scandinavian forestland. Company founder Nylén then partnered with fellow drummer Johan Nyquist, and together they continued to grow operations. Now Wincent produces a wide variety of hickory and maple drumsticks, wire and nylon brushes, multirods, and a small selection of other drum accessories.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Nyquist tells us that all carving takes place under Wincent’s roof in Sweden. The birch used for the rods is Scandinavian, the hickory

is acquired from a single supplier in the United States, and the maple is procured from Canada. Wincent uses custom-built

periods and to help prevent cracking in the rimshot area. Unlike with lacquer finishes, this wax coat doesn’t cause the sticks to

After starting out as a pet project aiming to produce better multirods, Wincent now offers top-quality hickory and maple drumsticks, wire and plastic brushes, felt mallets, stick holders, practice pads, and stick grip, all made in Sweden.

machinery that employs a stone-grinding technique to shape the wood. This method is said to contribute to the drumsticks’ even, balanced quality, while providing each stick with a super-smooth surface without microscopic cracks.

WAX PROTECTION

In attempting to make its product more resilient, Wincent bathes its sticks in a water-based wax formula, which is claimed to help keep the wood intact for longer

become slippery when they get wet from sweaty hands.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Though wood-based manufacturers can be environmentally friendly only to a degree, Wincent takes some initiative to be more sustainable. According to the company, the forest from which its hickory is acquired has a “giveback ratio” of 1:2.33, meaning that for every tree knocked down and used for hickory sticks, two and a third trees are planted.

Furthermore, the paper and plastic Wincent uses for packaging are eco-friendly, and the company's production machinery is cooled with water, which is then reused.

HICKORY STICKS

Wincent provided us with five models of hickory sticks. The 5AXL has a standard 5A diameter but an extended reach of 16½". These sticks offered quick and light cymbal response, but rimshots sometimes felt a bit awkward to achieve due to the additional length. The extra ½" would be good for drummers using larger setups but would likely seem unnecessary on smaller, compact kits.

Next up are the 16" 5B and what Wincent calls the 55 Fusion, a model with a diameter between that of a 5A and a 5B. The 55 Fusion provided a nice, balanced grip and excellent rebound. In comparison, the 5B felt a bit duller coming off the ride. The tips of the 5Bs are closer to a teardrop shape, whereas the 5AXL and 55 Fusion have acorn tips.

The 7A has a small, round tip, which makes this model optimal for swing ride patterns. After only a short period, the tips started to show some early signs of cracking, so the 7A proved to be less durable than the other hickory sticks.

The final hickory model we checked out is Motörhead drummer Mikkey Dee's signature stick, which has the diameter of a 2B and is 16¼" long. Featuring an acorn tip, these sticks were great for loud playing and for warming up on a pad.

Each Wincent drumstick features a model-indicator label on the butt end. This seemingly minor detail turns out to be a great touch, making it easier to discern different-size sticks when they're stashed in a stick bag or holder with the tip facing down.

BRUSHES, BIRCH RODS, MULTIRODS, AND MALLETS

Wincent also provided us with brushes, a pair of birch rods, and Swoosh sticks, which are mallets featuring soft felt heads. The ProBrush 33 is a medium-weight wire brush that has a solid, smooth rubber handle. The wires had a hard attack and fairly stiff rebound, so for more delicate playing the lighter 29 model would be better.

The 19P birch rods are intended for medium-soft playing. They feature a longer handle, which allows for better rimshots and widens the rods' dynamic range. This may be Wincent's best product, although the rods could be a touch heavier for better control.

Wincent's 22PR multirod model has plastic bristles and is designed for drummers looking to control their volume. While these may be more durable than wooden rods, they felt stiffer than we expected.

Swoosh sticks are perfectly suited for cymbal swells and for playing situations that call for warmer tones with less attack. They offered a comfortable grip and produced a smooth sound, thanks to the well-made felt head. Wincent also makes Dual sticks, which have teardrop drumstick tips opposite the felt head. This pair increases agility and control when the situation requires quick changes from sticks to mallets.

wincent.se



STICK HAMMOCK

Drumstick/Mallet Stand

by Kyle Andrews

The Stick Hammock, which was designed by the world-class drummer Steve DiStanislaio (David Gilmour; Crosby, Stills & Nash; Loggins & Messina), offers a solution for anyone who's ever struggled when switching from sticks to brushes or when trying to grab a pair of mallets

is that sticks can fall out of the rolled-up hammock if it's upturned.

DOES IT WORK?

The nylon hammock holds sticks well, but the stand must be on a flat surface. If the stand is angled at all, sticks will quickly find their way to the floor.

A user-friendly and non-laborious accessory that makes mallet/brush/stick changes a great deal simpler.

for a dramatic cymbal roll in the middle of a song. Symphonic percussionists could also make good use of the Stick Hammock to better facilitate quick changes between implements.

WHAT IS IT?

The Stick Hammock is a lightweight and portable stick/mallet tray that uses a nylon fabric stretched over an aluminum frame. The ballistic-grade nylon top is held by a spring-loaded system that's easy to use and keeps the top securely in place. Four aluminum bars run vertically through the nylon top, which increases stability and helps keep sticks from rolling around. The bars also make it easy to separate different types of sticks.

The product features a pocket in the middle section, so you can tuck your sticks inside, remove the top, collapse the base, roll the top around the base, and be on your way within a few seconds. The only potential problem

You should also be aware of the potential for the tray to be shaken by nearby drums and amplifiers, or if you're set up on a wobbly riser.

There's enough room on the Stick Hammock to comfortably hold five or six pairs of sticks, brushes, or mallets. The stand is adjustable anywhere between 23" and 40", which makes it an easy reach for drummers seated at a drumkit and for standing percussionists. The stand, which is made of aircraft-grade aluminum, features a flat base that's easy to sneak underneath floor tom or hi-hat legs for tight positioning. When folded, the Stick Hammock is super-compact and can be carried in one hand or tossed in a hardware bag for transport. This is a very user-friendly and non-laborious accessory that makes the life of a multitasking drummer a great deal simpler. The only potential downside is the price, which is currently \$155. stickhammock.com



It was Johnny Rabb.

That's why I play Meinl.
He did a clinic at the store
where I was working...
I'd never heard cymbals like
that before.



Barry Kerch
Shinedown

ALESIS

DM10 X Drumset

by Dave Previ



Alesis, a well-known manufacturer of electronic instruments and effects processors, has put out a slightly bigger version of the DM10 Studio drumkit, the DM10 X, which has larger drum and cymbal pads designed to make players feel as if they're sitting behind a full-size six-piece drumset. Let's have a look.

WHAT'S NEW

The DM10 X kit comes with two 10" rack tom pads, two 12" floor tom pads, a 12" snare pad, and an 8" kick tower. The cymbals include two 14" crashes, a 16" ride, and a 12" hi-hat, which is accompanied by a control pedal. All of the cymbals are equipped with inputs to have three striking zones, but Alesis has opted to provide an extra cable for the ride only. If you'd like the crashes to be triple-zone pads,

you'll need to run another cable to the drum module for each cymbal.

In order to increase the durability and enhance the appearance, the DM10 X kit comes with a four-post, chrome-plated rack, outfitted with three boom cymbal stands that fit in the rack posts. (This is

Larger drum and cymbal pads increase the appeal of this already competitive high-end electronic kit.

an upgrade from the two booms and one straight stand included with the Studio kit.) With bigger drum and cymbal sizes, the DM10 X is substantial to sit behind and therefore feels similar to a full-scale drumset.

FEEL

With any electronic kit, most players want it to feel as real as possible. The DM10 X comes with black Mylar drumheads and triple-flange hoops affixed to the trigger pad with tension rods. I loosened and tightened the tension rods on the snare

pad as an experiment, and the only difference I noticed was the pitch of the pad when struck. The sensitivity didn't change, nor did the response of the stick after striking the pad.

Throughout our testing, I experienced almost no cross talk, meaning no matter

VITAL SPECS Here's a quick rundown of the key features of the DM10 X.

- Includes two 10" rack tom pads, two 12" floor tom pads, a 12" snare pad, an 8" kick tower, two 14" crashes, a 16" ride, and 12" hi-hats
- Chrome-plated rack comes with three boom arms for cymbals
- Mylar drumheads create a feel that's close to that of acoustic drums
- 100 preset kits feature a wide variety of sampled acoustic sounds, electronic percussion, and digital melodic instruments

how hard I hit one pad, the other pads weren't triggered by way of vibration. The only time I heard a misfire was when I hit the rack by accident. The pads and cymbals were quite sensitive, and Alesis's patented Dynamic Articulation did a good job of sensing the level of force of each hit and responding with an appropriately dynamic sound.

I quickly became comfortable with the dual-zone drum pads and the triple-zone ride cymbal. Each ride voice in the module contains a bell, a shoulder crash, and a pointed stick-tip hit. I would have preferred some stick-tip sounds from the crashes, as well as a little more volume when I struck with extra force. I also had a bit of initial trouble finding where the choke spot on the cymbal pads was located.

The triple-flange hoops have rubber covering the rims, which helps muffle the sound of rimshots. All drum and cymbal angles are easily adjusted from the mounts on the rack, and the pads kept their positions through vigorous playing. All and all, the entire kit performed very well.

MODULE

The DM10 module comes with a hundred preprogrammed drumkits. The majority of the kits feature real studio-recorded sounds ranging from tight bebop drums to loose, fat rockers. The same goes for the cymbals. You'll find your favorite sounds, old and new, appropriately matched to the vibe of the drum-kits. The rest of the patches consist of various configurations of Latin and African percussion instruments and samples emulating electronic drums, horns, snaps, claps, bells, voices, gongs, and stacks of various other sounds from the digital world.

For play-along practice, the DM10 comes with seventy-four songs to choose from, with the option to mute the drum track or the music. The faders on the left side of the module allow you to mix every trigger output with ease, and there are volume knobs for the main output and the headphone jack.

Within each kit, every individual sound

can be customized to your liking, including expanding or shrinking module drum sizes. But all of the drum samples sounded great right out of the box. You can also easily adjust the sensitivity of the trigger pads so that they respond best to your individual playing style.

As for inputs and outputs, the DM10 has standard MIDI In and Out ports, left and right Main outs, Auxiliary 1 and 2 outs (for monitors), an auxiliary RCA input (for MP3/CD players), and a

USB MIDI port. Once I plugged the USB

cable into my laptop, the DM10 module communicated automatically with my recording software, which made the kit ready to use for MIDI recording within a matter of seconds.

With a list price of \$4,999, the DM10 X is priced below other top-of-the-line kits, while offering high-end features, realistic feel and response, and authentic sounds of acoustic drums. If you're a newcomer to the world of electronic drumming and you want a life-size kit, this one should get a bid.

alesis.com



"The Sword kit is my all around compact drum kit. Cutting through all styles and music situations from vintage to today's modern music with such power and a dynamical range. Its Great looks and sound is most defiant without a doubt a master piece with such pride."

Jotan Afanador (AVENTURA)

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RUSSIAN CIRCLES' DAVE TURNGRANTZ

GEARING UP Drumkit Details, On Stage and Up Close



Drums: Ludwig 2011 Vistalite (limited-production reissue with 1970s red-and-green badge)

- A. 6 1/2" X14 Supra-Phonic snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x24 bass drum

"My beloved vintage Gretsch kit was destroyed in an accident a few tours ago, along with our trailer, van, and other gear," Turncrantz explains. "Nobody was hurt, thankfully, but the impact was so severe that our van got sent 300 feet off the side of the road and through a fence. Sadly, my drums had been the last thing loaded, so they were shattered into pieces.

"I'm obsessed with John Bonham's sound and playing, so I found a sweet vintage Ludwig stainless steel kit and used that to record *Empros*. Then, when I was in Chicago recently, my friend at a local drum shop told me about this red Vistalite kit. So I picked this one up, and I shipped my stainless steel set over to Europe to store and use as my travel kit.

"The Vistalite is the loudest kit I've ever played, which is actually important in this band, because we don't use in-ear monitors and not all venues have the best monitor mixes. It's important that I can hear myself clearly, because Mike [Sullivan, guitars] and Brian [Cook, bass] have seriously loud rigs to compete against. With these drums, I've heard myself perfectly on stage each night."

Cymbals: Istanbul Agop

- 1. 15" Traditional Medium hi-hats
 - 2. 22" Xist ride
 - 3. 24" Xist ride
- "The 24" Xist ride may be my favorite cymbal of all time. The 22" rides, which I use as crashes, are just explosive."

Hardware: DW stands and throne, Trick Pro 1-V bass drum pedal

"The Pro 1-V is the most durable pedal I've ever played. I have a history of breaking footplates, so when I bought this pedal a few years back I also bought a backup. But I still haven't taken the backup out of the box."

Heads: Remo Clear CS tom and bass drum batters, Coated CS snare batter, Clear Ambassador snare and tom bottoms, and Smooth White Ambassador on front of bass drum with Ludwig logo and 6" port

"There's a video by John Bonham's tech Jeff Ocheltree [*Trust Your Ears*] where he talks about how to tune for that Bonham sound using Coated Emperor tops and Coated Ambassador bottoms. I tried that combination in the studio when recording *Empros* with my stainless steel kit, but I wasn't thrilled with the sounds I was getting. So I asked my friend Jon Theodore [former drummer with the Mars Volta], who also has a stainless kit and is another Bonham fanatic, what heads he's used, and he suggested the CS. That was the sound. They sound amazing on the acrylic kit too.

"I don't use any muffling, with the exception of the felt strips on the bass drum heads, so the kit sounds huge, and the CS heads help articulate faster fills and ghost notes. I'll use either black- or white-dot heads, based on what's available when it comes time to restock. There's no aesthetic or scientific reason for having the white dot on the rack tom and the black dot on the floor, as it is right now."

Miscellaneous: TightScrew tension rods and S-Hoop rim on top of snare, Remo Falam Slam pad on bass drum batter

"TightScrews are pretty awesome. They



keep my snare in tune for our entire set, but I can easily tweak my tuning each night to suit the venue without having to worry about the rods slipping once I get the sound I want.

"I usually change out triple-flange rims for die-cast hoops on my snare and toms, but I haven't done that with this kit yet. I'm trying out the S-Hoop on my snare, and so far I'm

digging it. It's supposed to be [characteristically similar] to a die-cast hoop, but it has a flatter, wider surface that doesn't seem to chew up my sticks as much when I play rimshots. I might also try them on my toms."

Sticks: Pro-Mark 5B hickory wood-tip



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MVP: Travis Barker, Vinnie Colaiuta, Gavin Harrison, Neil Peart, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson

MAINSTREAM ROCK: Travis Barker, Alex González, Barry Kerch, John Tempesta, Ronnie Vannucci

ALTERNATIVE: Mike Byrne, Glenn Kotche, Deantoni Parks, Stephen Perkins, Gil Sharone

POP: Vinnie Colaiuta, Tony Escapa, Brian Frasier-Moore, Rexsell Hardy Jr., Abe Laboriel Jr.

METAL: Charlie Benante, Brann Dailor, Tomas Haake, Matt Halpern, Gene Hoglan

PROG: Gavin Harrison, Mike Mangini, Neil Peart, Mike Portnoy, Todd Sucherman

R&B: Chris Dave, Lil' John Roberts, Tony Royster Jr., Oscar Seaton, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson

JAZZ: Terri Lyne Carrington, Gregory Hutchinson, Dave King, Dafnis Prieto, Antonio Sanchez

FUSION: Zach Danziger, Mark Guilliana, Will Kennedy, Jojo Mayer, Nate Smith

STUDIO: Matt Chamberlain, Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Cromwell, Shannon Forrest, Jim Keltner

COUNTRY: Chris Fryar, Chris McHugh, Rich Redmond, Jim Riley, Ben Sesar

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UP & COMING: J.P. Bouvet (Helicopria), Matt Garstka (Animals as Leaders), Garrett Goodwin (Carrie Underwood), Luke Holland (the Word Alive), John Sherman (Red Fang)

PERCUSSIONIST: Roland Gajate Garcia, Taku Hirano, Pete Lockett, Pedrito Martinez, Daniel de los Reyes

EDUCATIONAL BOOK:

Sandy Feldstein and Dave Black, *Alfred's Drum Method Complete*; Benny Greb, *The Language of Drumming*; Claus Hessler with Dom Famularo, *Open-Handed Playing, Vol. 2*; Jose Rosa and Hector "Pocho" Neciosup, *The Art of Latin Drumming*; Todd Sucherman, *Methods & Mechanics*

EDUCATIONAL DVD:

Florian Alexandru-Zorn, *The Brush Secret*; Daniel Glass, *The Century Project*; John "JR" Robinson, *The Time Machine*; Todd Sucherman, *Methods & Mechanics II*; Narada Michael Walden, *Out of Time*

RECORDED PERFORMANCE:

Matt Chamberlain, *Company 23*; Dave King, *Made Possible* (the Bad Plus); Jojo Mayer, *EP4* (Nerve); Deantoni Parks, *Noctourniquet* (the Mars Volta); Dafnis Prieto, *Proverb Trio*

dave turncrantz // russian circles



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THIN LIZZY

LIVE AND DANGEROUS

An apt title for one of rock's most fierce and formidable concert albums.

With *Live and Dangerous*, the crushing aggregate of drummer Brian Downey, singer/bassist Phil Lynott, and lead guitarist/vocalists Brian Robertson and Scott Gorham delivered one of the great albums in rock 'n' roll history. The double live record, which U2, Metallica, and a host of other major artists have cited as influential, captures a band that's hungry, relentlessly musical, and tighter than a snare drum from constant touring.

Though the album includes performances from the *Johnny the Fox* and *Bad Reputation* tours of 1977 and '78, the majority of the material was recorded during one show at the Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park, London, that was also filmed for later release. Throughout, Downey is powerful, dynamic, technical, and tasteful, seamlessly switching from sensitively supporting ballads to shuffling, soloing, and grooving on the hardest of Lizzy's rock songs.

The version here of the oft-covered "Boys Are Back in Town," the group's biggest stateside hit, swings and snaps with a lilt that's never been duplicated. No disrespect to the many artists who've covered the tune, but most versions sound stiff, choppy, and stilted, lacking the innate ability of the Lizzy lineup to shuffle as one.

Another popular track, the title song to the group's *Jailbreak* album, is a wee bit quicker here than the studio version. Downey propels the song with subtle triplet figures and punches on the hi-hats that drive the performance into second and then third gear. A lesson in meter, feel, and grace.

"Sha La La" is the drummer's solo feature. Featuring a locomotive bass drum pattern, the concise, multipart solo is completely within the context of the tune and features fine single- and double-stroke snare work and melodic bass/tom/snare triplets and quadruplets. It's the quintessential Downey showcase and a bona fide tune within a tune.

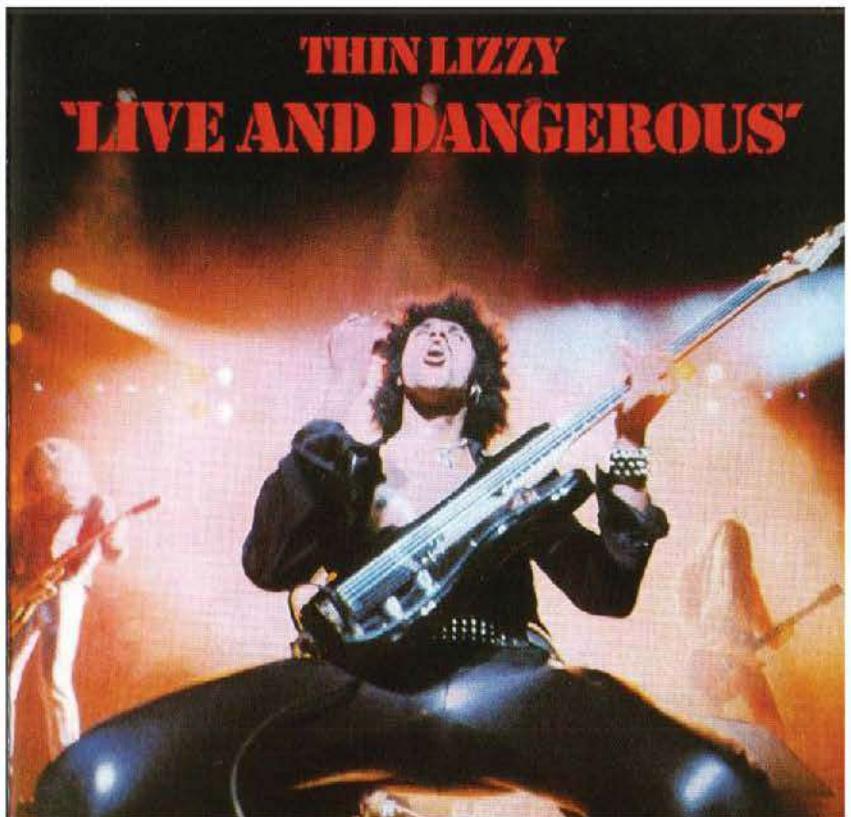
Other highlights include the wrenching ballad "Still in Love With You," on which Downey perfectly defines "laying back" and single-stroke elegance; "Johnny the Fox Meets Jimmy the Weed," a slinky tune that shows Downey's R&B and funk roots, as well as his versatility; "Emerald," a 6/8 workout with a killer 32nd-note hi-hat and bass drum intro; "Massacre," whose complex and surprising arrangement would give Metallica or Dream Theater a run for its money; and the deceptively easy, unique shuffles "Don't Believe a Word," "Suicide," "Baby Drives Me Crazy," and "Dancing in the Moonlight," on which difficult drum parts abound—but *man*,

do they swing.

In opposition to the typical '70s drum sound of single-headed toms, bass drums stuffed with pillows, and wallets taped to snare drums, Downey's beautifully tuned Rogers wood drums (chrome wrapped for lighting effects) sing with wide-open, double-headed warmth and are topped by pristine A Zildjian cymbal sounds.

Ironically, *Live and Dangerous*, which is regularly hailed as one of history's great in-concert rock albums, has long been dogged by accusations of studio overdubbing, calling into question the recording's authenticity and, by extension, the band's live prowess. Downey maintains that the drum tracks are completely unaltered, and he, Scott Gorham, and former Thin Lizzy manager Chris O'Donnell have all suggested that the album is roughly 80 percent live. The entire issue, however, has been made fairly moot by subsequent unadulterated live releases and, perhaps more important, by the DVD release of the Rainbow Theatre concert, which prove that whatever fixes were originally made to the *Live and Dangerous* mix, the band had absolutely no peers in the performance arena.

Jackie Fuller





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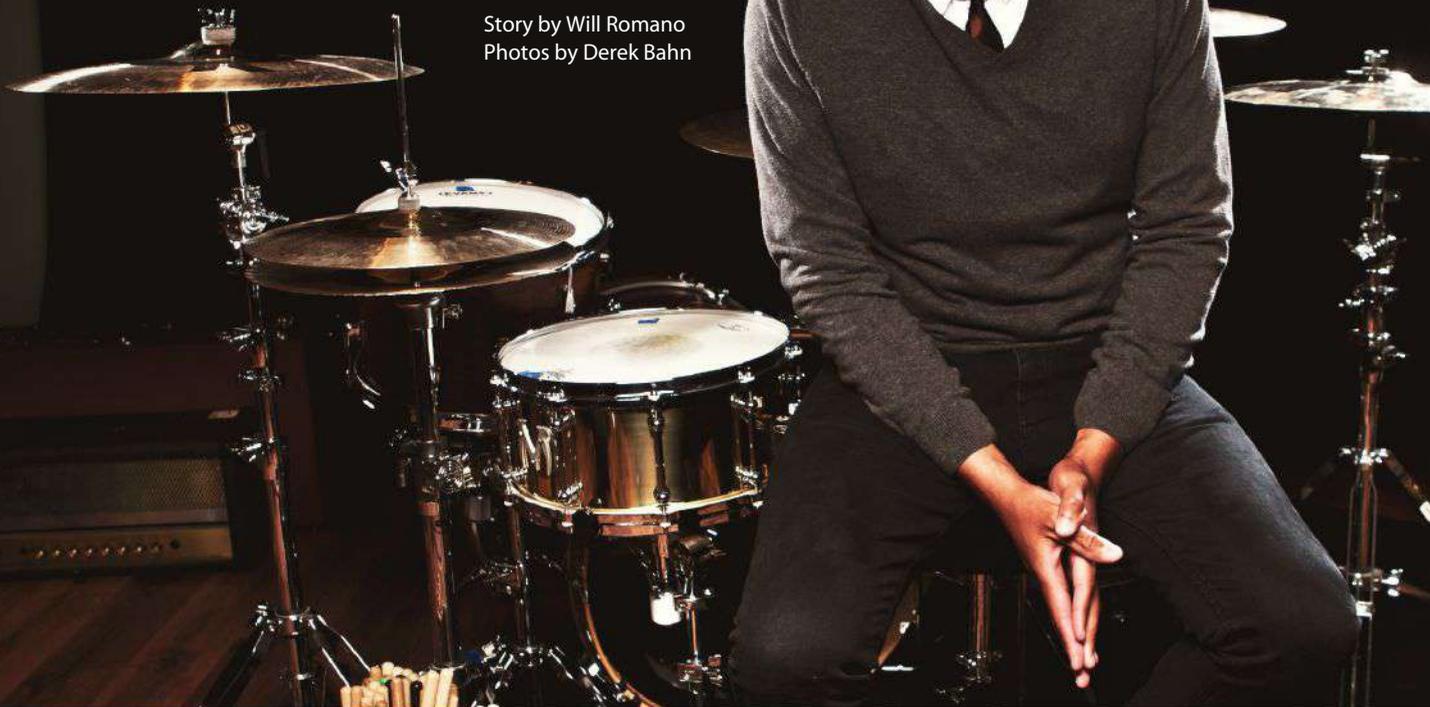
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KOREY HORN

The ska and reggae vet may be exploring new musical paths, **but he remains true to his rhythmic roots.**

Story by Will Romano
Photos by Derek Bahn



As an aspiring drummer, reggae and ska stalwart Korey Horn received a piece of advice from his father, jazz singer Kim Horn, that he's been mulling over ever since: "If you want to be a professional musician, you have to know how to play everything."

Despite the ironclad logic inherent in this music-biz insight, Horn closed his mind to such matters. "I fought my dad on that point," Korey says. "I wanted to be a punk drummer; I wanted to be a ska drummer."

Horn has spent a great deal of his professional career attempting to perfect his approach to ska, reggae, and rocksteady grooves, performing with artists such as the Aggrolites, Hepcat, Rhythm Doctors, and Tim Armstrong of Rancid. In fact, his playing style became so synonymous with Jamaican music that a former bandmate, trombonist Jeffrey "Dex" McFerson, dubbed him "Kingston." "The name just stuck," the drummer says.

Over the years, however, Horn has come to see the wisdom in his father's counsel. In fact, his dad's words have been proven nearly prophetic: The drummer's receptiveness and ability to play different musical styles guided him to his current gig with the northern-soul-esque outfit

Suedehead, whose material has more in common with Otis Redding, Van Morrison, Joe Jackson, the Jam, and Squeeze than with Bob Marley, the Skatalites, or 2 Tone revivalism. "I've worked really hard as a drummer to be who I am, and to be different," says Horn, speaking from a coffee shop in Orange County, California. "I feel like I can do that to the fullest in Suedehead."

Suedehead has been kickin' it old school, hitting the road with the likes of Social Distortion and Flogging Molly and issuing a trio of independently produced four-track EPs, *The Constant*, *(So) Frantic*, and *In Motion*. As of this writing the band is planning an all-covers EP and is demoing songs for a possible full-length platter. "I'm really excited—the most I've been about any band I've ever been in," Horn

says. "It's like we're fifteen-year-old kids again, doing it all ourselves."

Kingston appears on the recently released album *Western Standard Time: Big Band Tribute to the Skatalites*, underscoring the value of his father's advice and the fact that the drummer hasn't forgotten his first love, ska. The album is special on two counts: Horn shares drum duties with his old friend Gil Sharone (*Stolen Babies*, *Wicked Beats* DVD, *MD Pro* Panelist), and his father sings on the disc. "My dad always taught me to remain open to all styles," Korey reiterates. "Sometimes that leads me back to my roots."

MD: How smooth was the transition from the Aggrolites, a ska band, to your new soul-pop group, Suedehead? Did you have to tweak your playing style?

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Horn plays a Masters of Maple Neo-Classic hybrid-shell kit featuring an 18x22 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom, and 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, plus a 6x14 Masters of Maple Type-M snare. "If I'm playing ska and reggae I'll use a 5½x14 Tama hammered copper snare," Korey says, adding that he uses Vic Firth 5A hickory sticks for most gigs and Vic Firth nylon-tip 7A or 8DN models when he plays jazz with his dad. Horn taps an assortment of Zildjian cymbals: 14¼" K Custom Hybrid hi-hats, a 19" K Custom Hybrid crash, a 22" K Constantinople Medium ride, a 17" A Custom Rezo crash, a 19" K Custom Hybrid Trash Smash, and a 16" A Custom EFX crash. He uses a Tama Iron Cobra bass drum pedal, as well as Evans G2 Coated snare and tom batters.

Korey: Yeah. I felt I was stuck in a groove when I was with the Aggrolites, playing a specific style for so long. I've really tried to adapt to whatever band I'm playing in. When I first quit the Aggrolites and I'd go on other gigs, some people would say, "You sound like a reggae drummer trying to play rock." I had to adjust and woodshed.

MD: Why did you leave the Aggrolites?

Korey: It was a gradual thing. Without getting too deep into it, I was not in agreement with a lot of the business deals [handled] by management. Also, near the end of my time with the band, we had toured for two months straight, and then we were booked for a European tour. I did that tour, got home, and just said, "Man, I need a break."

With the Aggrolites it seemed like we were trying so hard to make it, to get somewhere, that we'd do anything to do that. I think because of this, I was looking at life negatively. It was affecting me physically. I said, "I want out of this band, and I don't ever want to come back." So in 2009 I called it quits. I was still dedicated to touring with Hepcat and, soon after that, Suedehead.

MD: It seems as if gigging represented work for you. Do you practice more now that you're in Suedehead?

Korey: You've nailed it on the head. With previous bands it was very much work, and I was into the routine of touring and playing gigs every night. Once I started to play with Suedehead, I got back into practicing, just as I did when I was a teenager. I get out a practice pad and do elementary rudiments and try to improve my stick control. And I'm looking at simple snare drum drills, practicing paradiddles,

RECORDINGS

Suedehead *The Constant*, (So) *Frantic*, *In Motion* /// **The Aggrolites** *Dirty Reggae*, *Reggae Hit L.A.*, *IV* /// *Western Standard Time: Big Band Tribute to the Skatalites* /// **Tim Armstrong** *A Poet's Life* /// **See Spot** *Who Got It?* (1996–2003) /// **Tim Timebomb and Friends** "Just for Tonight"



and single-stroke rolls, six-stroke rolls, and double-stroke rolls.

I also do a lot of listening. These days when I hear music, I'm not necessarily listening to the drums, but to the music [as a whole]. I like to get a feel for how the music flows, instead of, "Okay, this fill goes here and this fill goes like this, and I'm going to play two left strokes and then two right strokes..." I want to get hired for playing my style but also because I bring a certain amount of authenticity to the music.

MD: Do you lose some of your chops if you don't practice regularly?

Korey: Yeah, you do lose your chops. Ever since I was a kid I've loved putting my headphones on and playing on my kit, in my garage or wherever. I'll even take lessons now and then with Evan Stone, who's a jazz drummer in Orange County. He's a guy who'll rip apart everything you're doing—"You're holding the sticks incorrectly," or "You're not sitting up straight." I lost a lot of that focus playing with the Aggrolites.

MD: Do you feel you have to lay off the

kick drum now that you're playing with Suedehead?

Korey: One of the things that my old drum teacher, the late Art Rodriguez [Manhattan Transfer, Tom Scott], taught me was that people dance to your bass drum and clap to your snare. So I think it's okay to play with a heavy foot. People need to feel the beat.

MD: Can you read music?

Korey: Yes, I can read. I don't always use that skill, but, for instance, the Skatalites tribute project *Western Standard Time* was done with sheet music. Since I had a huge orchestra that was playing big band style relying on me, I definitely had to look over the charts. What's really cool about that CD is that there's one vocal track ["In the Mood for Ska"] that my dad, Kim Horn, sings. That's an awesome part of my career, being able to play with my dad. It's definitely brought us close.

MD: What's your advice for younger drummers trying to learn ska patterns?

Korey: I would probably tell anyone starting out to listen to the Skatalites' version of "Caravan" ["Ska-Ra-Van"] or "Guns of Navarone." Try to practice those, but also learn how to play the songs and really listen to the sound of the drums. [Late Skatalites drummer] Lloyd Knibb, if you ever watched him play, you could see that he was playing 8th notes on the hi-hat but was accenting, opening the hi-hat on the "&" or offbeats. His bass drum patterns are not always 2 and 4. Listen to Lloyd, Sly Dunbar, "Horsemouth" [Leroy Wallace]—those drummers are going to contribute to your whole approach to ska and reggae.

MD: Are you currently teaching?

Korey: I don't have any students right now, because I've been so busy, but I really enjoy teaching. Sometimes I feel like, What can I show these guys? But getting students to play beats in time? It just feels good. Having them lay down a groove and seeing their faces when they pull it off is really encouraging.



SMASHING PUMPKINS'

Story by David Ciauro • Photos by Alex Solca



MIKE BYRNE

WORKING ON INSTINCT

BILLY CORGAN HIRED HIM BASED ON A GUT REACTION—THE SAME MEASURE HE WANTS THE DRUMMER TO USE WHEN COMING UP WITH HIS OWN PARTS.

Mike Byrne turns twenty-three this February 6, and three words associated with birthdays prove helpful in introducing the rising star to *MD* readers: wish, gift, and celebration.

Consider it a safe bet that if you're a musician, you at one time or another made a wish for the opportunity to play with one of your favorite bands. Sure, it's a pipe dream, and for anyone who started playing as a kid, it's likely impossible now without the aid of a time machine. But in the summer of 2009, a nineteen-year-old Mike Byrne saw his wish fulfilled.

Perhaps even more impressive, though, is that Byrne was not some child prodigy copping Buddy Rich licks while in diapers. He started playing when he was twelve, which brings us to the second birthday association: gift. Byrne has a frightening amount of raw talent—a natural gift—yet he also possesses a mature poise behind the kit that conveys confidence in his abilities. Still, he's acutely aware that he is far from the peak of his potential. He's hungry to learn and grow as a drummer, and he doesn't seem at all intrigued by the superficial and glamorous aspects of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle. This combination will hopefully set the stage for us to celebrate the music that Mike makes with Smashing Pumpkins (and his side project Bearcubbin') for many years to come.

Byrne has already caught the attention of many *MD* readers, winning the 2011 Readers Poll award for Up & Coming drummer. But our recent conversation with Mike, in which we speak at length about his transition into Smashing Pumpkins and about the band's critically acclaimed new album, *Oceania*, marks the formal introduction of this future star.

MD: Pumpkins leader Billy Corgan has discussed being understandably apprehensive about bringing in a nineteen-year-old to audition for the band, due to the age gap. But once you started jamming, the chemistry was tangible. What was the dynamic after you were officially hired?

Mike: At the very beginning of the process we did have to learn how to work with each other. The band members' ages do create a gap, and we had to figure out our common interests. But over time it became this thing where we literally had three generations of aesthetic to work within.

Billy is into things that stretch way beyond what I'm aware of musically, but he's not necessarily listening to a bunch of underground independent bands from ten days ago that I might be listening to. Jeff [Schroeder, guitarist] and Nicole [Fiorentino, bassist] are both in their thirties, so they have their own taste as well. So it's cool in that regard, because we can pull from a collective of information

stumped on what to play here...what do you think?" And Billy would say, "Nope, figure it out. You have to do this with your own sound and your own style." It was encouraging, and at the end of the day I think it made for a way cooler product, because it sounds like something that is intrinsically us, as opposed to one person's concept of how an entire band should sound.

MD: Your playing on the record doesn't seem constrained at all. Were there times when Billy suggested you tone down any of your parts?

Mike: When I was writing parts, Billy would sometimes turn around and say, "Just be aware that you're going to have to play these songs in an arena."

MD: Meaning it might be best to leave a little more space so the parts translate in a large room?

Mike: Yeah, exactly. So I would go and reformulate a concept. Now, after three years and a few tour cycles, I kind of get what does and doesn't work in an arena.

"There were moments when I was like, 'I'm stumped on what to play here...what do you think?'" And Billy would say, "Nope, figure it out."

You have to do this with your own sound and your own style."

that's a little bit larger than if we were all the same age.

MD: How did that influence the *Oceania* writing process?

Mike: It was a very open-minded process. Billy encouraged everyone to find his or her own voice. He definitely wanted *Oceania* to be a coming-out party for the new lineup's sound. There were moments when I was like, "Okay, I'm

It's such a strange thing what translates when you get into a big space. The slow, simple, powerful fills can light the place up more than crazy oddball chops will.

MD: The production on *Oceania* is big and lively, and the drums sound especially fat in the mix, yet an organic feel is maintained. What was the recording process, both in terms of how you tracked your parts and how you went

about getting sounds?

Mike: We recorded at Billy's studio in Chicago, and there's a huge collection of vintage drums there. On past EPs, we would change out everything for each song, and it would take days to record a song that way. We're kind of perfectionists when it comes to tones, so we don't really get started until everything is exactly the way we want it. But when we went to record *Oceania*, we wanted to find one drum sound that would be perfect for the entire record. We changed out snares a bit, but most everything else on the kit stayed there for the entirety of the recording.

We spent about four days at the top of the record finding the sound and figuring out weird miking techniques, like where we could put mics in other rooms to catch ambience. We did some odd re-amping with PA speakers pointed into a completely separate room while I was playing, to catch the reverb, or we would keep certain doors open so the drums would bleed into other mics that were set up around the studio. It was a pretty intense process to find that sound, but we were all super in love with it once we found it.

MD: Did you record all the drum parts first, or did the band go song by song?

Mike: We tracked the drums first, which took about two weeks, because there were moments when we were still writing

certain parts of songs. Usually there would be a day of final intense arrangement detail, and the next day would be tracking it over and over to get that perfect take. We did the whole record without a click, except for some of the songs that had sequencing. So that made for some long days. [laughs]

MD: It seems rare these days to hear about bands recording without a click.

Mike: We worked really hard to achieve that Black Sabbath mentality, where perfection was not necessarily in the polish of it but more that the band has this organic swing. Especially the first two songs on the record—we just wanted to let those breathe rather than have the listener feel like they're being punched in the face by a metronome.

MD: Your snare sound has a lot of depth but also a ton of presence. How did you achieve that?

Mike: The snare tunings changed slightly to suit each song, but we did do a lower-pitched [overall] tuning, which meant I had to really stick everything the whole record. We would track a sluggish-sounding snare and then re-mike that snare by doing the old Beatles trick where you put a speaker on top of the snare drum and mike the snare from underneath, isolate the snare track, and essentially just send the pulse of the snare track into the head so it would rattle the snares, giving you an

isolated track of just the snares. Then we would blend the tracks together. It's a good sound, but in general the snare drums we used just sounded good out of the gate.

Because we wanted to get this impossibly great drum sound, what we ended up doing was recording the drums without the cymbals, and then I played the cymbals separately and dropped them into the drum tracks.

MD: Queens of the Stone Age has been known to use that technique.

Mike: Exactly, the Joey Castillo thing.

MD: Your ride cymbal sounds great as well. What kind of ride is that?

Mike: The ride I used for 90 percent of the songs was a K Constantinople Flat ride, which was super-articulate yet had a warm, subtle, shoegazey undertone that doesn't really grab your attention but still has a good presence and fills the space nicely. It kind of lets your mind focus on the whole of the music.

When we initially wrote a lot of the songs, I was playing jazzier ride patterns, but I think it sounds cooler when there's this constant hypnotic wash. I didn't want to take away too much rhythmically by throwing a lot of bell tricks in there. We're actually doing a lot more of that now, though, so I'm shooting myself in the foot by saying that. [laughs]

MD: So you didn't use a click for most of the record, but live you're playing the new album in its entirety with an accompanying video-mapping production done by Sean Evans, who did Roger Waters' *The Wall* tour. Will you be playing to a click to keep everything in sync?

Mike: Yeah, the front half of the set is always the same, playing the new record in its entirety, and the back half will change depending on the night. We are really adamant about getting this new record in front of people.

As for the light show, Billy and I had that same thought when we first went into the idea of creating the giant visual component, because we wanted to play to something in sync, but we didn't want to neuter the band's feel. I only get a click start before most of the songs, unless there's hard sequencing on it—then I'll play to the click for the entire song. But it's basically a click start followed by the window where we play off the click, and then the next song gets a click start, and the set operates in blocks like that. So for most of the show I'm not playing to a click.

MD: For the songs with sequences, do you find that you have to alter your feel at all?

Mike: I like the experience of playing to sequences in general, and when you're playing to synths and stuff it's nice to



MIKE'S SETUP

Drums: Gretsch USA Custom

A. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 hand-hammered USA metal snare

B. 9x12 tom

C. 16x16 floor tom

D. 16x18 floor tom

E. 18x22 bass drum

Live, Mike has also been using 6x8 and 7x10 toms above his hi-hats and a 12x14 tom over his floor toms.

Heads: Remo Coated Vintage Emperor snare batter, Coated Ambassador tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 on bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" K Mastersound hi-hats

2. 19" K Custom Hybrid China

3. 19" K Thin Dark crash

4. 22" A Custom Ping ride

5. 10" K Custom Dark splash on top of 19" A Custom Rezo crash

6. 20" K crash/ride

Hardware: Gibraltar Stealth rack system and 9600 series stands

Sticks: Vater Los Angeles 5A wood-tip



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have that constant pulse running. I think I do tend to revert to a more rigid, syncopated feel, though, when playing against those arpeggiators and stuff, just by basis of the fact that I'm hyper-aware of where the time is at the moment. When we're playing in loose time, I lay back a bit for that rock mentality. With the click it's not necessarily more mechanical, but I do tend to play within the feel of the sequences.

MD: Since you're playing the entire record sequentially, that means every night you open with "Quasar," which features some blazing chops. What's your pre-show warm-up to get ready for such a demanding first song?

Mike: It's definitely a blistering way to start the night. There's this weird double-stick right-hand pattern thing I do, because I'm a bit goofy with my left hand, so I do a lot of inverted paradiddle-diddles to warm up my right hand. I also do singles, and I play a lot of out the [Joe Morello] book *Master Studies*, taking everything slow and getting faster.

It's one of those things, though, where no matter how much I warm up, the first few songs of every night I'm

adjusting to the adrenaline or change in atmosphere when I get on stage. So there's always going to be those first few songs where it feels a little stickier than the rest of the set. The trick is making that unapparent.

MD: So we began by talking about the dynamic of the group while writing and recording, but what has life been like on the road for a multigenerational band such as this one?

Mike: Regardless of our age differences or the various worlds we come from, we are very lucky that we're four people who have a good amount in common, so it's really a band that functions as a band, as opposed to being four people that only play well together.

It's encouraging to be surrounded by good people, because nobody has a problem or is out doing weird things that make everybody else uncomfortable. It's been a cool, mellow trip.

MD: So you're not inclined to live up to any of the rock-star clichés while on the road?

Mike: Nah. We're not party animals. We typically spend our downtime record shopping and sightseeing, and I honestly like it better that way.



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ANTHONY KING	RAY LUZIER	THOMAS LANG
ALDO MAZZA	"SPANKY" MCCURDY	SAMMY MERRENDINO
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"Papa Jo is responsible for so much on the drums that's taken for granted today," 2013 MD Pro Panelist Kenny Washington says, "whether it's the hip cymbal spang-a-lang that you hear on a Kenny Clarke, Louis Hayes, or Tony Williams record, the cool hi-hat you hear on a secret-agent movie soundtrack, or Bernard Purdie, David Garibaldi, and Dennis Chambers funk'n' it up. It's all from Jo, and we all owe him plenty of change."

PAPA JO JONES: The Bridge

Simply put, jazz drumming eras could arguably be viewed as pre-Papa and post-Papa. Such was the immeasurable contribution of Jo Jones, whose elegant touch, feel, and sound marked a connecting bridge to our modern sense of jazz swing.

Jonathan David Samuel Jones was born in 1911 in Chicago, where he was captivated by the dancers and drummers of vaudeville shows and traveling circuses. By age thirteen, he'd jumped aboard the vaudeville circuit as a singing, dancing, and drumming triple threat. Here, the vivacious performer learned enduring lessons of showmanship.

Through the late '20s the youngster traveled with Walter Page's Blue Devils and the Bennie Moten Orchestra. Recording his first sides in 1931 with Lloyd Hunter's Serenaders, Jones was already showing a deft, organic approach to the kit, as opposed to the more clunky "traps" style common in the day.

Joining pianist Count Basie's band in 1934 in Kansas City, Jones began a long partnership that spawned one of the classic sounds in jazz and ushered in his ascension as one of history's most influential drummers. Citing the great debt owed to this innovator, Max Roach eulogized at Jones' funeral, "For every three beats a drummer plays, he owes Joe five. He is the greatest drummer who ever lived."

In 1937 the Count Basie Orchestra relocated to New York, where Jones further refined his smooth and relaxed yet irresistible pulse. His seamless swing was reinforced by like-minded bandmates Freddie Green (guitar), Walter Page (bass), and Basie, a unit dubbed the All-American Rhythm Section. The confident, sometimes irascible drummer drove the band with his trademark broad smile, launching the unit to massive success with its dance-hall hits of the '40s.

Papa Jo is frequently credited for perfecting the transition of the swing-pulse focus from the bass drum to the upper structure of the kit, primarily the hi-hat and sometimes the ride cymbal. Although it's been argued that he "invented" the modern ride swing feel, other drummers of the day also employed the cymbal focus. But Jones brought an unparalleled smoothness and touch that delivered an even continuum, giving all four pulses equal meaning and defining the modern swing beat.

While other big bands insistently pushed the pulse with a conscious chugging on accented beats, Jones (along with the All-American Rhythm Section) delivered a fluid forward motion with less obvious demarcations of downbeats and barlines. Instead, here was the "effortless" magic carpet ride of four-feel swing. Modern Jazz Quartet

pianist John Lewis noted, "You heard the time, but it wasn't a ponderous thing that dictated where the phrases would go."

Using the cymbal focus, Jones further freed up his bass drum and toms for strategic accents and setups. On many recordings he still employed an all-fours bass drum, but it was played subtly, serving as a subliminal enhancer rather than an obtrusive "definer."

Above all, Jones' signature remains his expressive, voice-like hi-hat work. Jo manipulated the rhythmic ebb and flow of the hats, exploring their sweeping, legato possibilities as never before. With the tiny metallic pair, he could masterfully transport an entire big band. As the great Kansas City bandleader Jay McShann observed, "His rhythm was light and natural. It was easy to feel, it got you going.... It was somewhere between tight and loose."

To hear the amazing command of Jones' "simple" hi-hat patterns with Basie, listen to "One O'Clock Jump" (1937), where his spare hits and accents speak volumes. Or check out "Jumpin' at the Woodside" (1938), where, with nary a hit or fill, Jones' irresistible hats could transform the dourest wallflower into a jitterbugging fiend. Or experience "Cherokee (Parts 1 and 2)" (1939), in which the minimal, infectious open/closed cymbals gradually build the band's energy through peaks and valleys for six-plus minutes. Jones applied the same concept to brushwork, as heard on "9:20 Special" (1941).

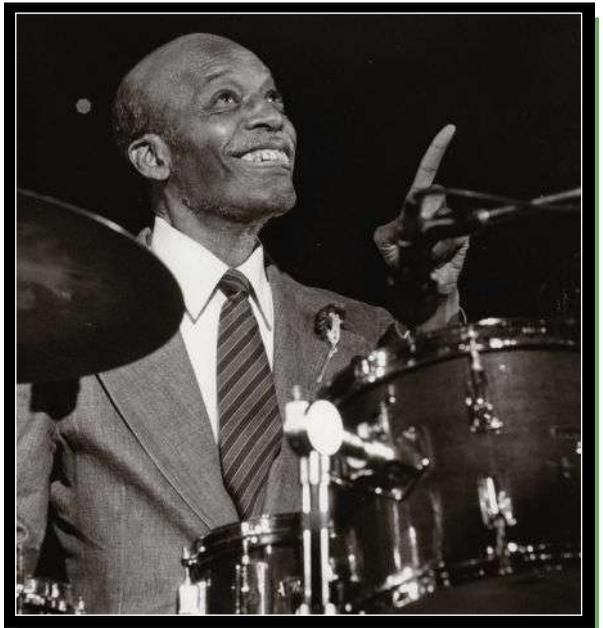
Papa's powerful minimalism was equally evident in his setup and fill choices. The ultimate example may be the bluesy jazz classic "Goin' to Chicago" (1941). Setting up the famous brass shout, Jones launches it with a single snare downbeat and then fills the next phrase space with only three cracking 8th notes. The effect is a knockout.

After retiring in 1948 from his long, historic Basie tenure, Jones occasionally reunited for special tribute concerts, including a 1954 Newport Jazz Festival set where he also served as the festival's house drummer. Late in his career, Jones focused on smaller groups, including a unit he led

featuring vibes player Milt Hinton and pianist Joe Bushkin, and a trio with Ray Bryant on piano and Tommy Bryant on bass. He also released several albums as a leader on Everest Records, and in 1955 he reunited with the All-American Rhythm Section on the double LP *The Jo Jones Special*. In 1957 he toured Europe with Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald.

Outside the Basie canon, Jones recorded prolifically, including tracks with Billie Holiday, Ben Webster, Lester Young, Illinois Jacquet, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Teddy Wilson, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Art Tatum, Jimmy Rushing, and Red Norvo. His 1976 LP, *The Main Man*, features an octet including Basie alumni and plenty of dazzling drum solos. And on *The Drums* (1973), his unique solo love letter to the instrument, the master plays and reminisces about early influences.

Later in life, Jones could still command center stage. Participating in a 1973 Central Park concert featuring an all-star lineup of largely younger drummers, the elder



statesman was slated to close the show. He strode upon the stage with only a stool and a hi-hat. Drummer Charli Persip was a witness: "He sat down and proceeded to wipe everybody out...with a hi-hat! It was beautiful."

Despite battling cancer in the next decade, Jones gigged occasionally and also memorably triumphed at a 1984 Carnegie Hall concert honoring the passing of his beloved Count Basie. The great drummer died in September of the following year.

Jeff Potter



White's Noise

Jim White,
drummer for the
noted Australian cult
band the Dirty Three,
explores the gray areas
of instrumental indie
rock with an ounce
of subtlety and
pounds of invention.

by Will Romano



Danielle De Piccolotto

"Do you think that people project meaning onto drums in the way they do other instruments?" poses Jim White of the Australian post-rock instrumental trio the Dirty Three, casting the image of a grizzled, bearded sage from inside his Brooklyn, New York, apartment. "People say, 'Serve the song.' But what is a song? Are we not part of it? There are a lot of assumptions about the drums that don't have to be made."

As a member of the Dirty Three for the last twenty years, White has often, and easily, subverted backbeat patterns in favor of a kind of lyrical rhythmic style. His mercurial drumming explores the nuances of the music he's performing. Tapping a small cadre of implements, including brushes, mallets, Pro-Mark Hot Rods, and standard sticks, Jim creates a haunting, swirling "white" noise of free-flowing beats and well-placed accents, which undulate throughout the group's hypnotic and often meditative music. In addition, White places pieces of percussion on his kit to extract a variety of textures.

"I brought tambourines, a woodblock, and a cowbell simply to produce some other sounds," White says. "I put the tambourines and other percussion instruments on the drums and the cymbals and mounted one on the hi-hat. On some songs they're used throughout. Sometimes I'd move them around and on and off as needed. I could have fixed them on stands, I suppose, but I like how they resonate when on the drums and cymbals. I also like the controlled chaos they bring with them by being unhinged."

Controlled chaos is an apt phrase to describe the Dirty Three's music: The band seems to bring its songs to the tipping point but never allows them to fully derail. The sonic tension (and release) the trio builds within the framework of its compositions causes the listener to reflect on a range of emotions, from inconsolable grief and crushing homesickness to open-country joy and heroic self-empowerment. Within this context White's drumming and Warren Ellis's soaring and sometimes savage violin work combine to adopt the traditional role of lead vocalist in the spiraling word-

less epics "Sue's Last Ride," "Deep Waters," and "I Offered It Up to the Stars & the Night Sky," from records such as 1996's *Horse Stories*, 1998's *Ocean Songs*, and 2000's *Whatever You Love, You Are*.

And White is not shy about taking the reins in other musical settings as well. For his recent work with the Greek lute player Giorgos Xylouris (sometimes known as Psarogiorgis) and on the 2007 album *You Follow Me*, with singer/songwriter/guitarist Nina Nastasia, the drummer floods the sonic foreground with a rush of rhythm, skillfully skirting backbeats and often subtly and ingeniously mirroring what's being played on guitar.

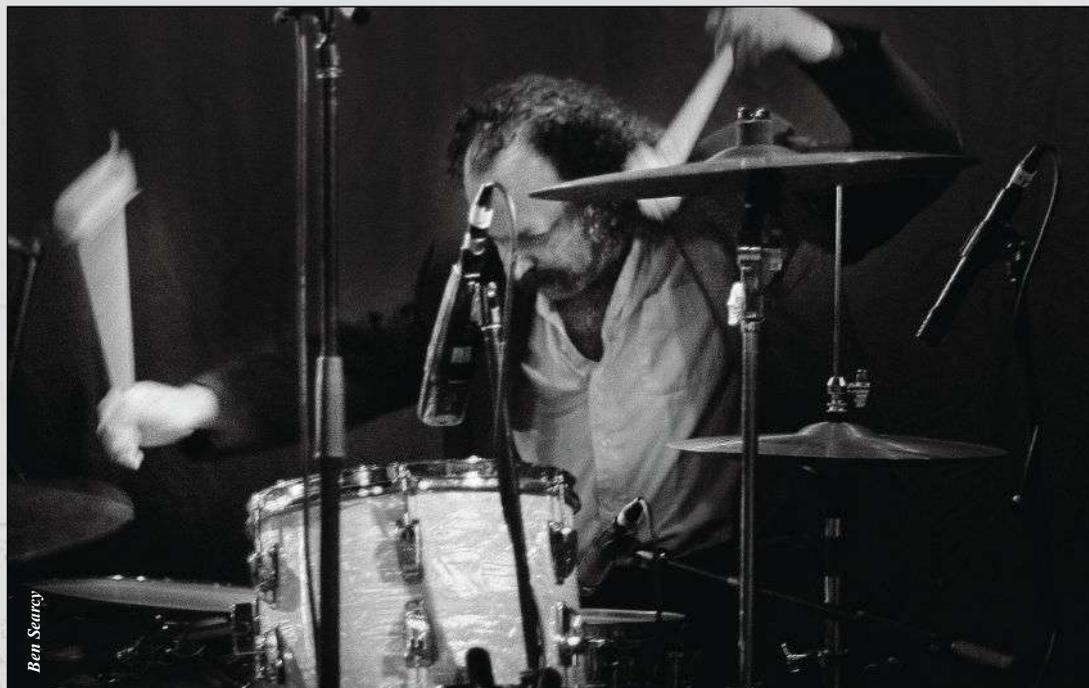
At first blush, the listener might perceive White as circling his own orbit around the music with reckless disregard for his collaborators. Upon further inspection, however, we realize that White is really locked in, like a tractor beam, drawing our attention to various intriguing musical changes by translating to his compact kit snippets of melodic ideas and entire lead guitar/lute lines.

It's obvious from speaking with White

define playing, the drummer's musical collaborators and champions often wax poetic. "The reason Jim's style worked so well for my record *Easy Come, Easy Go* is because it's so jazzy," says the legendary chanteuse Marianne Faithfull. "The thing is, Jim is not a jazz drummer. He's almost a jazz drummer. Some people don't get that about his playing. They think he's sloppy or somebody who doesn't really know what he's doing. But it's so not that at all."

Admittedly, there's something almost childlike, even Dada-esque, about White's fearless creativity that has inspired influential and iconic musical figures to sing his praises. Faithfull, Nick Cave, Chan Marshall (Cat Power), Glenn Kotche (Wilco), Bonnie "Prince" Billy (aka Will Oldham), and PJ Harvey simply go nuckin' futs over the Aussie.

"Jim is one of the freest and most original musicians I've ever seen," says Harvey, who invited White to record drums and percussion for her 2007 record, *White Chalk*. "We couldn't take our eyes off of him. Seeing him play gave us more



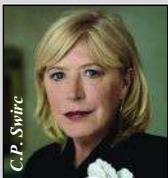
that he's especially proud of the work he's done with Nastasia, and of the important role he played in the making of *You Follow Me*. "I said to Nina, 'What if the drums did all of the accompaniment for the record?'" recalls White, who plays a four-piece setup. "I knew drums wouldn't provide the melody, but what they can provide is a kind of harmony. Nina got it, understood what I meant, and then wrote songs accordingly."

When describing White's difficult-to-

confidence to be freer, I think, and in turn helped the album to be very much the same."

White's multidimensional and sometimes cerebral approach seems closer in intent to that of an avant-garde drummer or hard bopper, yet it's sufficiently removed from jazz drumming as to be something else altogether. (White lists a range of influences, from Coltrane foil Elvin Jones to New Orleans drummer Albert "Gentleman June" Gardner.) Jim's

PROPS FROM PEERS



MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Jim has a very unusual style of drumming. To be honest, it's not usually what I really like. I like real backbeat, Charlie Watts-type stuff. That's my favorite drumming, and I've played with some great drummers, including Martyn Barker, the drummer in my European touring

band. Then I heard Jim and I just loved it, that very relaxed, loopy sort of thing. Yet Jim doesn't go off the beat. It's so brilliant, and it changes the feel of the song. As a singer, I don't like being exactly on the beat, and Jim has mastered this kind of "falling off" thing.

Also, Jim has sounds in his head that are very hard to replicate within the modern sphere. I think that's why he uses vintage drums with vintage skins. He seems very particular about that: They must be stretched at moonlight, sewn by virgins, with spells muttered over them at midnight. With Jim White, drumming is a dark, deep, delicious, esoteric art.



GLENN KOTCHE

My first introduction to Jim's playing was when he lived in Chicago, right at the time I moved back after college. I was lucky enough to be in this improvising collective [Boxhead Ensemble], double drumming with him, which had a huge impact on me. There were several

things about his playing, and subsequently when I've seen him perform live, that were eureka moments for me. Seeing him play with a stick in one hand and a mallet or brush in the other, it made perfect sense. It struck me as a [Jim] Keltner approach, where he's putting the needs of the song first. If that means you use a brush first and then go to a stick and then a mallet and back to a stick, so be it. It's whatever the music is dictating.

The other thing that struck me is Jim's use of motion. That just kind of walloped me. When he plays a ride cymbal, it isn't just about the stroke. He's using a full circular motion between beats at very slow tempos. His arms never stop moving, and that's how he keeps time. And don't get me started on the preparations he uses on the drums. Watching Jim do all this stuff, I'm sure it's helped to embolden me to do the same.



POLLY JEAN HARVEY

I first encountered his playing around 1995, when I was on tour with my record *To Bring You My Love*. I'd gotten to know the Dirty Three a little bit and invited them to open for us. We did quite a few dates together, and I got to see Jim play night after night. All of us, my band, would watch the Dirty Three, largely because of the magnetic charisma Jim has as a player.

When I saw Jim play I knew that I'd like to record with him, but it wasn't until I had written the album *White Chalk*, which was a real breakthrough for me in terms of writing, that I actually invited him to do so. The album took me into an entirely different realm as an artist, and it broke a lot of old patterns that I felt were constraining me. So I thought it was absolutely the right time to record with Jim.

If somebody asked me to describe what Jim does, I would never say he's a drummer. The word doesn't even come into my mind. I see him as a magician. It's almost as if a spell is being cast when he plays. And Jim never plays the same thing twice. I remember when we were working on *White Chalk* and we'd tell him, "That was really great. Can you just do it again, but when you hit the chorus switch to this," telling him to do something else. But he would never, ever play the take like he had played the one before. Jim doesn't dwell on anything. It's absolutely pointless for him to dwell on anything that he's done before, and that's why he's so special. I think we should all live our lives, let alone play an instrument, like that.



Ben Searcy

wispy, sweeping, scrambling brushwork has widened the sonic scope of the songs he's played with the Dirty Three, including pieces such as the wistful slow burner "Ashen Snow" (yes, that warbling sound you're hearing is a real, honest-to-goodness Mellotron), "You Greet Her Ghost," and "Sometimes I Forget You've Gone," from the band's first studio effort in seven years, 2012's *Toward the Low Sun*.

Undoubtedly, the ergonomics of White's movement around (and behind) the kit have shaped his phrasing, touch, and attack. Jim twitches, twists, and turns on his throne as his right hand plays

fast ostinato ride cymbal patterns and his left roams around freely. His semicircular arm movements further feed his conceptual ideas. With his limbs in constant motion, White establishes an organic sense of time, affording him the opportunity to strike (as well as easily cast off) the percussion equipment he's laid on top of the skins and cymbals and to quickly switch back and forth between different implements without missing a beat.

"I don't feel like I have to start playing with one implement and finish with the same one," White says. "It gets down to this idea of the length of the notes or beats I'm



Eve Sussman

Jim White with dancer Claudia de Serpa Soares in Portugal

RECORDINGS

The Dirty Three Dirty Three; Sad & Dangerous; Horse Stories; Ocean Songs; Whatever You Love, You Are; She Has No Strings Apollo; Cinder; Toward the Low Sun /// **Nina Nastasia & Jim White** You Follow Me /// **PJ Harvey** White Chalk /// **Marianne Faithfull** Easy Come, Easy Go /// **Tren Brothers** The Swimmer, Tren Brothers EP /// **Nick Cave** The Secret Life of the Love Song/The Flesh Made Word /// **Cat Power** Moon Pix, Jukebox /// **Smog** A River Ain't Too Much to Love /// **Bonnie "Prince" Billy** The Letting Go /// **White Magic** Dark Stars /// **Venom P. Stinger** What's Yours Is Mine /// **Kim Salmon** Hey Believer /// **Nick Cave and Warren Ellis** The Proposition soundtrack



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playing. I don't play, and don't want to play, staccato notes with brushes."

It might not be an obvious comparison, but it's an appropriate one: Fusion guitarist Allan Holdsworth has spent his career trying to remake the guitar as a "less percussive" musical tool, chasing clean, non-distorted sustain in homage to his favorite instrument, the saxophone. White operates in much the same fashion on the drumkit: His musical quest is to perform fluid rhythms and redefine the role of the drums.

"I find I can achieve a kind of sustain through brushes, because they give you a tool to build tension and then release it," Jim says. "Mallets work in similar ways."

Surprisingly, it was a technical glitch that sparked, in part, what White refers to as his use of "melodic phrasing" with brushes. Just prior to the recording of the Dirty Three's 1998 album, *Ocean Songs*, guitarist Mick Turner was experimenting with effects pedals in his other project with White, Tren Brothers. "It was something like a delay," the drummer says, "but because of a limitation of the pedal he was using, he couldn't seem to catch the phrasing correctly and the timing was

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

White plays a variety of vintage kits, but his mainstay is a 1950s Gretsch. This setup features a 15x20 bass drum, a 9x13 tom, and a 16x16 floor tom, plus a 5 1/2x14 Ludwig snare. Jim plays Istanbul Agop cymbals, including a 22" ride, an 18" OM crash, and 15" Special Edition Jazz hi-hats. He uses Vic Firth 5A wood-tip or 7A Rock wood-tip sticks, Pro-Mark Hot Rods (medium), Vic Firth Heritage "purple handle" brushes, and Vic Firth T1 or T3 timpani mallets.

slightly off. When Mick and I played together, it was just the two of us and this delay sound—an uncontrollable space. You think, *I wonder what that space is going to do today. What am I going to make it do?* So that's how I developed the brush fluttering. [White demonstrates how he elevates his arms and quickly turns his wrists from side to side.] With this fluttering I could play a phrase and fill in some space and not worry about the timing of the delay."

An even earlier constraint, an actual physical limitation, similarly helped to mold White's inimitable style. The Dirty Three, formed in the early 1990s, played regularly at a Melbourne bar, the Bakers Arms Hotel in Abbotsford, two sets a night for sixty bucks. The venue's space, however, was so unsuited for the three-piece band that White couldn't even fit a bass drum near the staging area. "I was only using a hi-hat, cymbal, floor tom, snare, and one cymbal," the drummer says. "The first couple of shows we played, Warren and Mick plugged into one amp. We could fit everything for the show in the boot—or trunk—of the car. In a sense, my style has developed because of the sound of the drums and my setup. I mean, at that time I was playing with one hand what could be defined as kick patterns on the floor tom."

The trio would create material the night before a performance and then unleash it on an unsuspecting audience. Ellis, the great showman he is, would stomp the stage with arms flailing, scream into his violin pickup, and regale crowds with bizarre, rambling monologues. Guitarist Turner performed the underappreciated but crucial role of holding the fabric of the music together, playing lulling arpeggiated notes and strumming chords. White developed a style that was at once invasive and supportive.

As the guys became a more solid unit, they began recording music on a reel-to-reel four-track tape machine. They'd go on to cut eight full-length studio records, including *Toward the Low Sun*, each one as inspirational and impressionistic as the next.

"I was at a crossroads before we formed the Dirty Three," says White, whose success

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as a musician afforded him the opportunity to leave Australia in 1995 and live in different cities all over the world, including London, Chicago, and New York. "My career and playing style weren't coming together. I thought, *Oh well—music didn't work out*. You know what I mean? I was trying really hard. Then there came a point where I was letting go of all that intention, and all the intention started to come out with the Dirty Three."

This is most evident on a couple of releases, including, quite appropriately, Bonnie "Prince" Billy's 2006 album *The Letting Go* (of which White says, "I tried to make small sounds, not really wanting to make the drums sound like a kit") and

Toward the Low Sun. For White, the latter is a culmination of his and the band's work. "All of the elements that define the Dirty Three are present on the album," Jim says. "I think it's also a fair representation of my playing."

Although a certain measure of elasticity is still present in the Dirty Three's music, equating the band's looseness with spontaneous composition, or aimless jamming, would be a huge mistake. "I think the general form of all the tunes is decided upon during writing and rehearsing the material," says Casey Rice, who mixed and co-engineered *Toward the Low Sun*. "Virtually everything you hear on the album outside of overdubbed stuff is a

continuous take from start to finish. There was no click used at any time during the sessions; it's just the sound of a band playing their music."

"There are only three instruments going on at once," White says. "There's no voice, which can take up an enormous part of the sound and the listener's attention. There's no bass player. It's always a struggle as far as who's going to look after that bottom end. How is it going to work?"

The bottom end is looked after quite well, it turns out, given White's approach and his love of vintage drum equipment, which the drummer has procured over the years to help foster his resonant and ambient sound. In a very literal sense, White rummages through refuse to draw out musical magic.

"On *Toward the Low Sun* I used a Gretsch kit I bought at a garage sale in Chicago for \$300," Jim explains. "It's actually one of my favorite kits, and it's in London right now. I have different kits located in different cities, in storage. One of them is an old Ludwig from the 1960s. I have a 22" Slingerland bass drum that still has the calfskins on it. It sounds beautiful; I think it's from the 1920s. It has the vintage crab-shell woodblocks, you know? So cool. The bass drum pedal has this big floppy woolen ball on it. Initially I played it with a modern pedal, but it sounded horrible. When I used the original pedal against the calfskin heads, there was the sound. The vintage equipment sort of reinforces this idea I've developed to use a bass drum with the two heads and no holes in it. It's very open sounding, and there's room for that in our music."

White explains that many of his musical choices over the years have been guided more by feel than by an overriding ambition to consciously apply his amassed knowledge of the drums. It appears he is not attempting to unlock the mysteries of the universe through playing a faster paradiddle or dissecting his work via written tablature. He'd much rather dabble in a bit of research and development than be a strict technician.

"That's a compliment," White says, flashing a mischievous, toothy grin that peeks through his thick thatch of facial hair. "I've studied drums and learned how to read, thanks to my early teacher, Frank Corniola. I've practiced all the rudiments. I have a good foundation. But maybe it's sometimes detrimental to know everything about the music you're playing. That's not how I approach playing music and not how I approach the music we do as the Dirty Three. I don't want to think about music in black and white."

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Intricate arrangements. Catchy hooks. Soaring melodies. Seattle prog/indie rock outfit Minus The Bear's unique sound is rooted in technical prowess. Driving it all, with power and style, is drummer Erin Tate. He's played a wide variety of kits over the years, but none compare to his Tama Starclassic Bubinga/Birch. Erin tells us their "sound engineer was blown away by the tone" and adds "they just chop through the music and are a blast to play."

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THE KILLERS' RONNIE VANNUCCI

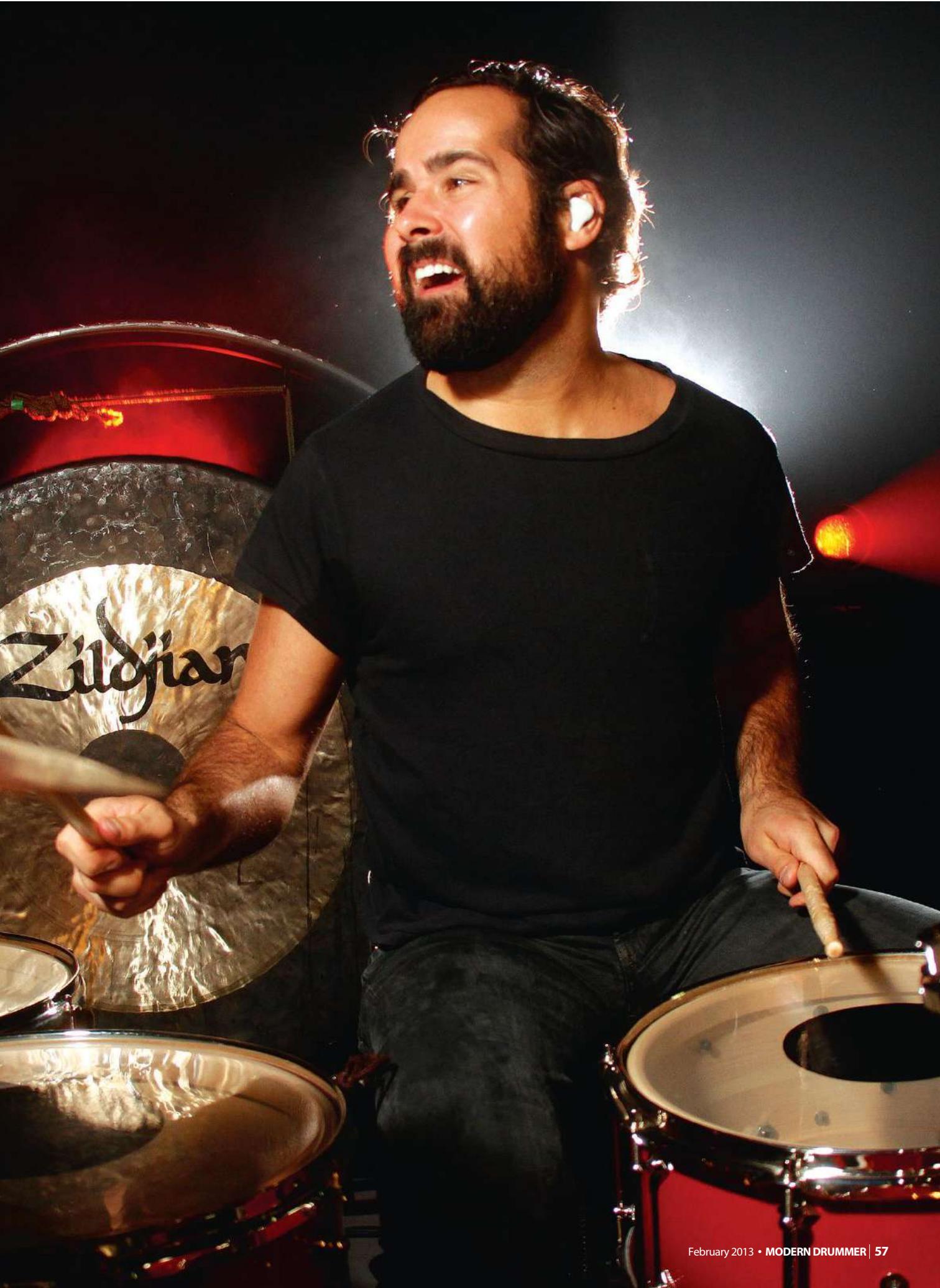
EPIC DRUMMING, DYNAMICS, AND DANCE

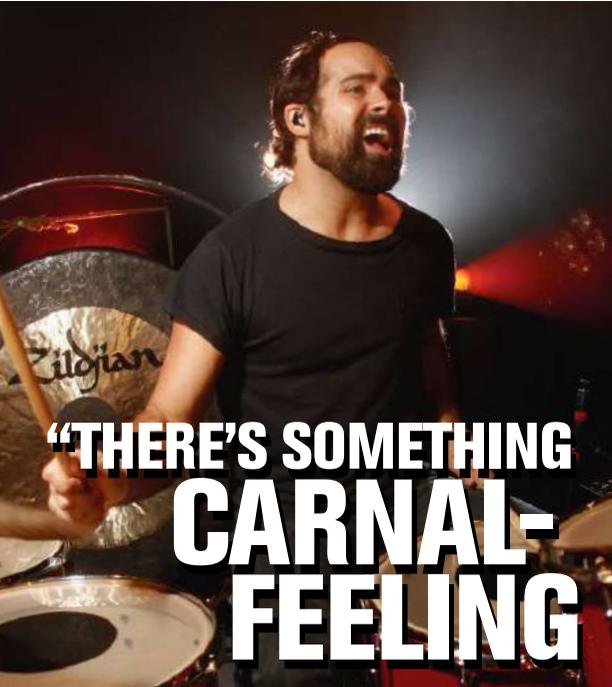
Striding into a New York City hotel, Ronnie Vannucci resembles a dangerous character out of a movie about the Gold Rush or the Civil War. With his jet-black hair, chiseled features, and penetrating gaze, the six-foot-one drummer could easily play a character like Wyatt Earp—or Jesse James. Seeing how Vannucci and his band hail from Las Vegas, perhaps the last remnant of what once was America's Old West, and how the drummer's playing is as epic as a classic Hollywood western, the profile he cuts in person seems absolutely appropriate.

Storming his drums on such Killers hits as "When You Were Young," "The World We Live In," and "Human," among many others, Vannucci brings true rock 'n' roll grit to songs often based on dreams gone wrong or memories of better times. An American original, Vannucci has rethought the drumkit for rock, further enabling his ability to infuse the Killers' music with hard-charging rolls, goliath fills, tom-thumping war cries, and 2-and-4 backbeats that suggest an unusual combination of John Bonham and Levon Helm—a ferocious punch of a pocket that can reach titanic heights and as quickly fall back to a pure and simple pulse.

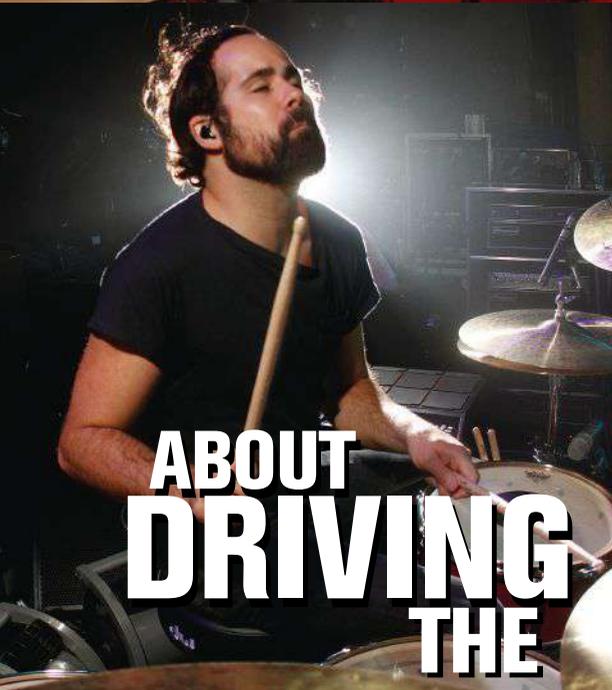
Battle Born, the Killers' fourth album and finest effort to date, finds Vannucci with guns a-blazing. Produced by a handful of the best minds in the music business, the recording focuses excellent songwriting by Vannucci and bandmates Brandon Flowers (vocals), Dave Keuning (guitar), and Mark Stoermer (bass), on such gems as "Flesh and Bone," "Heart of a Girl," "A Matter of Time," "Here With Me," "Miss Atomic Bomb," and first single "Runaways." These songs run high on emotion, fueled by Vannucci's simple drum setup and gargantuan cymbals. Ronnie's approach is all about power and skill, blood and guts, and playing for the music.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Rahav

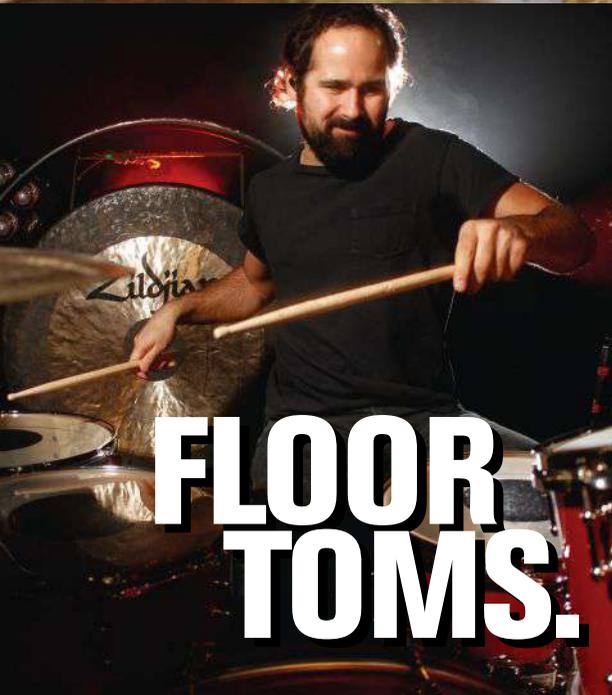




“THERE’S SOMETHING
CARNAL-
FEELING



ABOUT
DRIVING
THE



FLOOR
TOMS.

MD: Your drumming with the Killers epitomizes the qualities mentioned in the title of this story. You perform those cathartic “Born to Run” moments so well, and then you easily switch gears to more intimate dance beats or ballad moods. The work you do with your own band, Big Talk, represents yet another dynamic. What’s the key to successfully performing these different vibes?

Ronnie: The key is listening and figuring out what best serves the song. We worked with a lot of different producers for *Battle Born*. I love experimenting and working with people to achieve a sound. I’m not talking specifically about drum sounds. It’s nice to be able to look at different dynamics, and perhaps that’s why you hear the different levels in different parts of the song. I just want to serve the song as best I can.

MD: You’re very studio savvy. For *Day & Age* you recorded the drums in your own studio. How did the ability to do that change your perspective?

Ronnie: It definitely made me more conscious of what the microphones were picking up. I play a certain way, and that’s what I want to hear. Whether I’m playing drags on the snare drum or riding the floor tom, I play at a dynamic level that matches the song. If the song is very delicate, I’m going to play lighter, and if it’s harder I’ll do that. I don’t want to go in after the fact and do snare drum rides on the console. I want the engineer to stick a microphone in there and capture the performance. I will do that until I am blue in the face.

MD: You have an unusual cymbal setup, where you use crashes for hi-hats along with some very large crash cymbals.

Ronnie: I use ride cymbals for crashes. My main ride is a 24” Light ride, and all the other cymbals are 22”. It’s great—you can dig right into them, dance on them, throw your arm into

them.... They’ve got a huge dynamic range.

Obviously, I would play differently on a different set of cymbals. Even when playing guitar, I adjust to what I think that sound should be. In other words, if I’m playing a Les Paul compared to a Rickenbacker, they are totally different sounds, and you’ll have a different sensitivity to whatever instrument you’re playing. Whether it’s bigger hi-hats, smaller hi-hats, or a deeper snare, you’re going to play differently. Give me a nice tight snare and a bunch of smaller toms, and I’ll probably try to do my best imitation of gospel chops. A lot of threes!

MD: Why do you like such large cymbals for hi-hats?

Ronnie: I don’t really enjoy a glassy-sounding cymbal. Some 14” hi-hats sound glassy. They may not sound like that by themselves, but once you add a layer of guitars and bass, the only frequency that really comes out of those cymbals is a frequency that I find annoying. I have this beautiful pair of early-’50s A Zildjian 15” hi-hats, one of my favorite pairs. I recorded all of *Sam’s Town* with those hi-hats. But at the end of the day, we were only able to bring out a specific frequency. I still hated the sound. So I overdubbed all the hi-hats with my voice. I want that “chick, chick, chick.” I spent a few hours doing it.

But when it came time to do this stuff live, I thought, *How am I going to get that sound?* I tried 16”, 17”, and 18” cymbals, including this beautiful 18” Zildjian ride from the 1940s. I put that on the bottom and a K Constantinople crash on top. That was all over this record. I switch off between that and a 17” K Constantinople suspended cymbal, which is a heavier model, on the bottom, and a 17” K Constantinople crash on top. That’s what I’ve been playing the last couple shows.

MD: You play a pulsing 16th-note

hi-hat pattern on “A Matter of Time.” When you’re using such large hi-hats, do you consciously play lighter because they’re so much larger than what’s typical?

Ronnie: I don’t think so. A lot of times they sit better with the complexion of the drumset, at least with my cymbals. If I had a normal pair of hats I would have to select a really dark, muted sound. In some ways the large hats are actually quieter, because they don’t take up what I think is an annoying frequency range. I get a nice big “chick” out of these hi-hats.

Sometimes you get that air-pocket thing, and it cancels out all the chick. But normally I get a nice, pronounced chick sound.

MD: In the “Bones” video you’re playing various dynamic snare rolls. Do you ever play buzz rolls?

Ronnie: I tend to prefer open rolls. I like to do doubles, and I used to swing everything. A lot of what I do is triplet based, even in 4/4-type scenarios. It just makes things a little more graceful and classy. So if I’m playing a 4/4 pattern, I might play triplet patterns over the top of that.

MD: In your drumming you can really hear that rocking 2-and-4 motion, like Bonham meets DJ Fontana meets Hal Blaine.

Ronnie: When I was a kid, my family didn’t have enough money for a babysitter, so the record player became my babysitter. They would slap a pair of cans on me and say, “Listen to these records.” So I grew up listening to older records: Paul Simon with Steve Gadd, Steely Dan, the Beatles, Hendrix, the Who. Mitch Mitchell was my favorite. Then I had private lessons and majored in music at UNLV, where I studied orchestral percussion and played snare in marching band for two years.

But Mitch and Bonham and Keith Moon and all these guys, they were sort of lead drummers, and I liked that. I was naturally predisposed to the idea of the lead drummer. Mitch had such a

dynamic style, being able to play heavy and light at the same time. He had that finesse that it seems not a lot of drummers have anymore. Ginger Baker is another one.

MD: I interviewed Ginger Baker once for *MD* and implied that Mitch Mitchell was more of a true jazz drummer. He said, “What? I am the jazz drummer!”

Ronnie: Ginger, stop being a dick and let Mitch have it!

MD: The Killers are all about the songs, so the concept of lead drumming doesn’t apply so obviously.

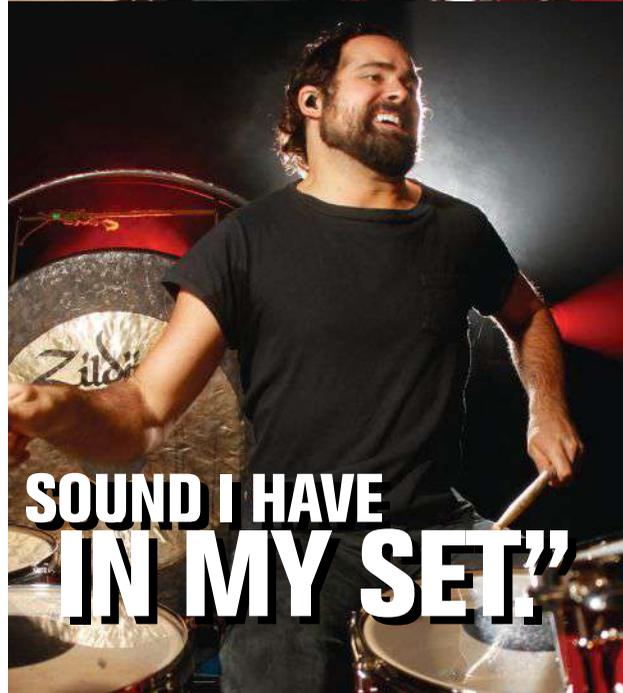
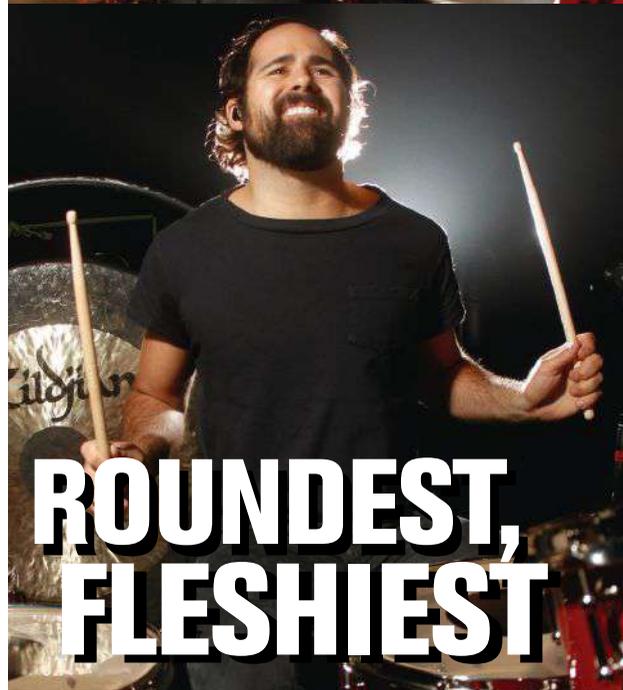
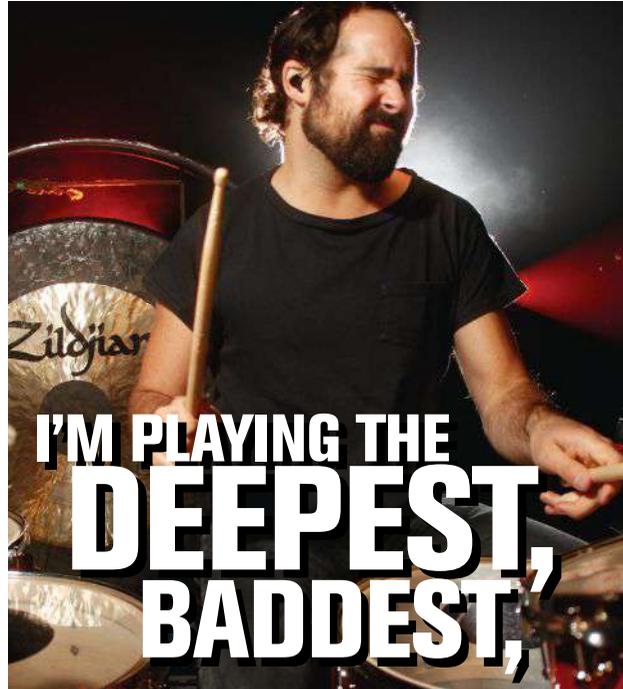
Ronnie: Yes, I’ve definitely become more of a fan of “the song” over the years. Non-drummers aren’t going to identify with way-out drum fills. A hundred years from now people are going to be concerned with the song, and I’d rather be a component and a proponent of that.

MD: There is some lead drumming, a long fill, on “A Matter of Time.” It’s complex and goes over the barline.

Ronnie: [sings fill] Yes, there’s some flam stuff in there. There are a few moments where that song has a big break and it needs a little fire. There’s a couple like that, like “Heart of a Girl,” which is a slower song and was recorded entirely live. It’s simpler. It’s almost harder to play simple drumming than something that other drummers are going to jack off to later.

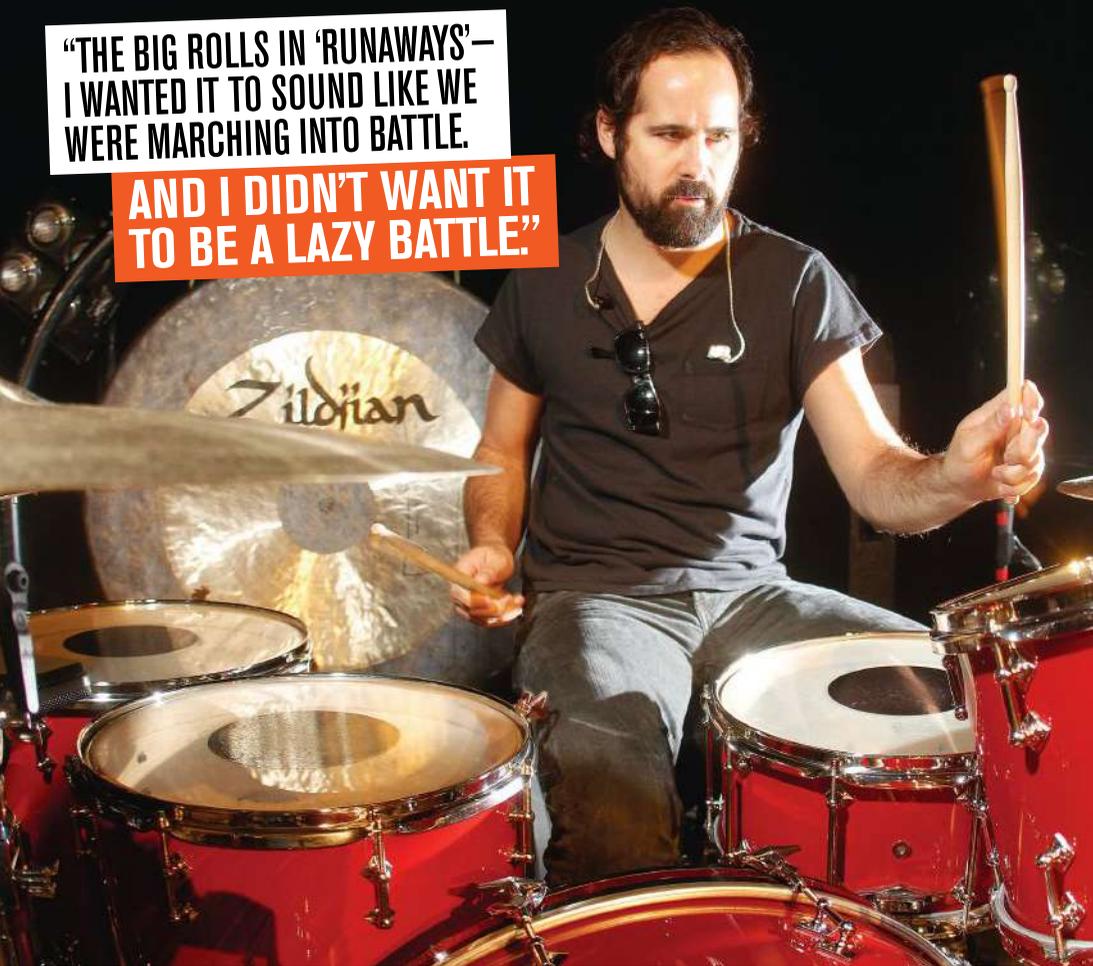
MD: On the self-titled album by Big Talk, a couple of the songs sound like Jim Gordon drumming with Harry Nilsson, like on *Son of Schmilsson*—that big, fat, warm drum sound. Is that the same set you play on Killers records?

Ronnie: Yes. That’s the Johnny Craviotto kit, a prototype set that Johnny let me keep, because I wouldn’t give it back. The shells are three-ply maple/poplar/maple, with the “baseball bat” bearing edges. It was my idea to make the edges as round as the edge of a Louisville Slugger, so the head is making more contact with



“THE BIG ROLLS IN ‘RUNAWAYS’— I WANTED IT TO SOUND LIKE WE WERE MARCHING INTO BATTLE.

AND I DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE A LAZY BATTLE.”



the shell. Most of these 45- to 60-degree bearing edges, you basically hear the head as the striking point; the shell becomes just the resonator. I wanted to make sure the head and the shell shared more of a relationship.

I played old Slingerlands on the *Big Talk* record, and those edges are inconsistent, but they're almost flat. There's so much shell touching the head, and that really lends itself to that sound. These shells feel better to play into. The drum is a membrane; the drum is part of the membranophone family. A little college kicking in there! [laughs] These bearing edges allow me to dig in, and it makes me play better.

MD: Does that give you more rebound?

Ronnie: Not necessarily. But I do feel like I'm sharing more of a relationship with the instrument. Generally Craviotto employs the 45-degree bearing edge, like most shells are. Some shells have a 60-degree bearing edge, which is a very thin, very resonant edge. But I don't find resonance a problem with any bearing edge. It's more what you want your shell to do. Do you want it to resonate, or do you want to hear

the wood? Craviotto is steam-bending single plies of walnut and mahogany and poplar and ash. Don't you want to hear the characteristics of the wood? So make that relationship more visible—that was my thinking.

MD: What is your relationship with the click on the new album?

Ronnie: Depends on the song. Some songs are more rigid, where you follow the bouncing ball. But naturally I am more behind the click. It's so annoying when somebody is on top of the beat—you couldn't get more white. I like for a song to sound like it's not recorded to a click. Sometimes, in order to sell a certain part of the song—for instance if it's a bass line—if it's super on top of the beat, it won't sound as groovy. So you

have to leave it to an approximation sometimes. The big rolls in “Runaways,” for instance, might be behind the beat. I wanted it to sound like we were marching into battle. And I didn't want it to be a lazy battle, so it's more driving.

MD: Did you do any tempo mapping?

Ronnie: No, and you can tell—everything is all over the place! I'd much rather listen to a drummer that has a couple “whoop-de-dos” if it's right for the song, rather than make all the beats perfect.

MD: Some younger drummers use the click in every setting. They think of it as their friend.

Ronnie: But what about playing to the other people in your band? [laughs] What about your bass player? It all comes down to what kind of

player you are. If you only hear the click and the subdivisions of the click and that's all you play to, you're going to be sterile. You're going to play perfectly, but you're not going to have any *heart*. Live, I will use the click as an approximation when counting off songs, and then I'll look over to my drum tech and give him the signal to kill it. “I got it—kill it!”

MD: What kind of click did you use in the studio?

Ronnie: [Producer] Brendan O'Brien favors the Tenori-on, an electronic device. It produces rhythms that are more musical and comforting to play to than a mechanical click, where you feel like a lab monkey. We programmed it to hit the accent points of the song.

INFLUENCES

Smashing Pumpkins *Siamese Dream* (Jimmy Chamberlin) /// **The Who** *Live at Leeds* (Keith Moon) /// **Fiona Apple** *When the Pawn...* (Matt Chamberlain, Jim Keltner) /// **The Jimi Hendrix Experience** *Electric Ladyland* (Mitch Mitchell, Buddy Miles) /// **The Beatles** *White Album* (Ringo Starr) /// **Ben Folds Five** *Whatever and Ever Amen* (Darren Jessee) /// **Soul Coughing** *Irresistible Bliss* (Yuval Gabay) /// **The Police** *Live!* (Stewart Copeland) /// **Van Halen** *1984* (Alex Van Halen) /// **Led Zeppelin** *Complete* (John Bonham)

RECORDINGS

The Killers *Hot Fuss*, *Sam's Town*, *Day & Age*, *Battle Born* /// **Big Talk** *Big Talk*



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RONNIE VANNUCCI

MD: One of your trademark grooves consists of accenting the “&” after 2, then striking 4, often in a bridge or chorus. You do it on “Flesh and Bone” and “Miss Atomic Bomb.”

Ronnie: My drum part isn’t finished until the vocal is finished. I’m holding it down, but I look at the drumset as a multitude of players, not just one player. I focus on vocal phrases that will give me an opportunity to back up, reiterate, or set up the phrase. It’s important for the drums and the vocals to share a relationship to get the message across.

MD: Also on “Flesh and Bone,” there’s a section with a straight-four bass drum and 8ths on the floor tom. When does riding the floor tom work better than a 2-and-4 pocket groove?

Ronnie: It’s about what space you want to take up. And it’s also a feeling. There’s something more carnal-feeling about driving the floor toms. The song is about flesh and bone; what are you made of? It’s not a sweet little la-di-da song—I’m playing the deepest, baddest, roundest, fleshiest sound I have

in my set.

MD: Do you tend to develop drum parts quickly?

Ronnie: Pretty quickly. We usually do a demo, then we’ll adjust the motifs. I’m not just listening for the drums. I’ll listen to guitars and melody or vocal lines. Sometimes I’ll overdub the drums at the end of the tracking session, over the first drum pass. I did that on “Bones” and “The World We Live In.”

MD: Will you record a follow-up to *Big Talk*?

Ronnie: I would like to. That happened during a two-year band break. I wanted to decompress after eight years of touring. Two weeks in I found myself going crazy, so I wrote some songs and recorded them. I wanted to make a record that you can pull off live and still sound good, but be blind drunk doing it! But my skill set on guitars and bass and vocals only goes so far.

MD: What do you practice now?

Ronnie: I like to practice very simple grooves and record myself with videotape. I’ll hit record and listen to myself and watch my hands to see exactly

what I’m doing right and wrong. If I’m feeling comfortable, it usually looks comfortable. Play and forget you’re recording. Then look at it and review it.

Some drummers really destroy their drumheads; some play off center on the head. There are different nodal points. I’m usually dead center on the snare drum and slightly off center on the floor toms. If you strike the floor toms dead center, you won’t get as much tone as when you hit them off center. And sometimes I’ll play all over the snare drum, to make it bark a little more.

MD: You’ve created a unique voice on the set. Was finding that as much about the musicians you play with as the drumming itself?

Ronnie: That can be a simple question or a complex question. You can’t find your voice unless you’re speaking. What you have to say is based around the people you’re playing with. What are you saying musically? What’s the message? What’s the purpose of your speaking? The best way to become the best musician you can be is to listen. And listen not just to yourself but to what’s happening around you, and be mindful of it. It will get you into rooms you’ve never played in before. You’ll develop your style and the way you play just by listening. You’ll find your voice by listening to where the music is going.

MD: So don’t isolate yourself musically.

Ronnie: You can’t. Drummers are butt naked out there. We have our tricks where we can play it cool, but at the end of the day it’s four moving parts, five if you count your head. That’s why I have the gong, just in case I want to do a head butt! The drums are such a physical instrument, and it’s hard to control your cool level. A guitarist can put his foot on the monitor and look at the cute blonde in the front row. But we are up there exposed, and it’s a great thing because you can’t cover up what’s inside. It’s hard to disguise your personality on the drums, even if you’re stoic like Charlie Watts; that’s his musical way. That’s why the layman loves the drums, and he doesn’t even know why.



Drums: Craviotto maple/poplar/maple with “baseball bat” bearing edges

- A. 6 1/2x14 snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 16x18 floor tom
- E. 15x24 bass drum

Sticks: Zildjian Ronnie Vannucci signature model

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 18" hi-hats (Constantinople crash top, 1940s A Zildjian bottom)
- 2. 22" Constantinople Light ride Low with rivets
- 3. 24" K Light ride
- 4. 22" K Constantinople Renaissance ride
- 5. 22" A Swish Knocker
- 6. 40" gong

Heads: Remo



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HEX

PHYSICAL HAZARDS OF THE THRONE

13 Exercises to Minimize the Wear and Tear of Drumming

by John Platero

Drummers play thousands—maybe even millions—of strokes throughout the course of their careers. With that amount of repetitive activity, mechanical wear can occur, which can then cause pain or injury. Over the years I've heard drummers complain of back pain, neck pain, and tendonitis. Like any other athletes, drummers need to be aware of their bodies and take preventive measures to keep themselves healthy.

Over time, repetitive motion of any intensity can deteriorate joints, strain muscles, or create tendonitis. The longer, harder, and faster you play, the greater the mechanical wear. Since all movement originates from the spine, this is where we'll start. (Some of these exercises can be performed at home with no equipment, while others will require basic weights and exercise machines found in most commercial gyms. We also suggest performing them under the guidance and supervision of a certified trainer, to prevent injury and to ensure the best results.)

THE SPINE AND CORE

The spinal column is a stack of bones that

protects your spinal cord. Other than at the top two cervical vertebrae, between each bone is a cartilaginous disc that acts as a sponge or shock absorber to help us with the forces of movement and gravity. A Swedish doctor named Alf Nachemson discovered that when we sit, there is 30 to 40 percent more intradiscal pressure, compared with standing. When we sit and play drums, we need greater muscular support. Therefore we must address the muscles that help support the spine, the core.

You can train the core in a variety of ways. The abdominals and obliques lie on the front of the body and cause the spine to flex forward. But since drummers sit for long periods of time with their spines flexed, we're going to exercise mostly in a standing position. Perform all of the standing exercises with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend slightly at the knees to activate the quadriceps, which engages the iliotibial (IT) band, a long piece of connective tissue that assists in stabilizing the spine via the gluteus maximus. Unfortunately for drummers who sit to play, the glutes are shut off. If the spine isn't

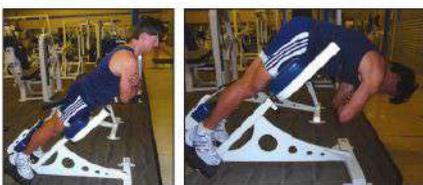
held straight or upright during play, then most of the muscles in the back (spinal erectors) are also shut off. When neither the glutes nor the erectors are firing, it's referred to as a naked spine. Over time, rotating around a set of drums with a naked spine can cause disc problems.

PERFECT PRACTICE

The goal with the exercises in this article is to activate the deep musculature of the spine. Practicing the movements slowly allows the neuromuscular system to make a better recording of the movement. With all of these exercises, make sure your posture is upright, your upper back isn't rounded, and your head isn't tilted forward or backward. Also keep in mind the law of facilitation, which states that when an impulse passes once through a given set of neurons to the exclusion of others it will tend to do so again, and each time it traverses this path the resistance will be smaller. If you train with incorrect posture, your body will remember that posture, while perfect practice makes perfect performance.

POSTERIOR TRUNK EXERCISES

The muscles that are usually weak for most drummers are those on the posterior (back) of the trunk. Here are some exercises to do in order to address that area.

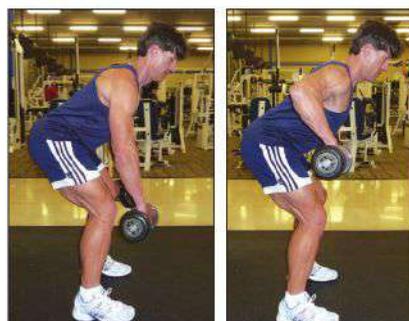


45-DEGREE HYPEREXTENSION BENCH

If you have access to a Roman chair or hyperextension bench, you can try this exercise. With the back of your calves hooked to the pads, keep your feet pointing straight and hold your body straight as a board with your arms crossed. To progress, extend your crossed arms outward and bend forward. Inhale as you come up to the starting position. Once you're at the top, breathe normally. Do 15 to 25 repetitions.

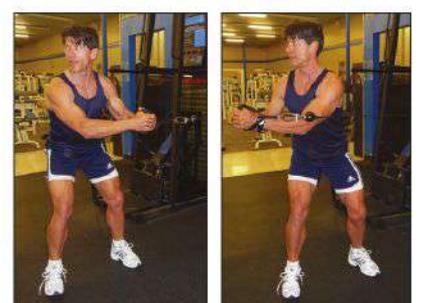
BENT-OVER ROW

From a standing posture, bend over at the hips, with the chest up, upper back straight, and head in alignment, until you reach near parallel to the ground. Using any kind of weight (dumbbell, barbell, cymbal stand, bucket of water, etc.), row upward for 15 to 25 repetitions. Exhale as you pull. You may do this with both hands at the same time or alternate hand to hand.



STANDING ROTATION

With your feet apart, knees bent, and butt out, grab the cable or resistance tubing with one or both hands and rotate in a variety of directions (high to low, low to high, side to side, etc.). Stick to one motion at a time and do 15 to 25 repetitions of each. Do the exercises slowly. Allow the entire body to rotate slightly, and exhale as you pull.



SUPERMAN

Lying face down on the floor, lift your hands and legs off the ground as if you were flying like Superman. Do 10 to 15 repetitions, holding at the top of each repetition for 3 to 5 seconds. Inhale as you come up to the position.



UPPER- AND LOWER-BODY EXERCISES

For all of the following moves, keep the weight and intensity fairly moderate. Remember that you're awakening muscles and preventing mechanical wear, rather than building muscle. Perform 15 to 25 repetitions of each, and don't forget to keep good spinal alignment.



LAT PULL-DOWN

Sit with good posture and bring the bar downward toward your chest while thinking of bringing your chest toward the bar. Always monitor the wrists when pulling weights. The elbows should be pointing toward your back pockets, and the wrists should be in line with the forearms, which is in the same line as the cable pulling the bar upward. Inhale on the way down, and exhale on the way up.

SQUAT WITH A ROW

Grab a cable or resistance tube in each hand. Facing the cable or tubing, extend your arms and squat. Then pull the cable or tube as you ascend from the squat. This exercise will help integrate the upper body with the lower body. Inhale as you descend, and exhale as you ascend.



HAMSTRING CURL

This exercise can be done with one or both legs. It can also be done on an incline, depending on the type of equipment you have available.



DORSIFLEXION

This exercise works the muscles in the front of the lower leg. It will help alleviate some of the tightness from the calves. You'll need a dynamic axial rotation device, aka DARD, to perform this exercise, or you can sit on the edge of a bench with a dumbbell balanced between your feet.



REVERSE CURLS

With an overhand grip, curl a barbell upward. Exhale on the way up.



STRETCHING

Sitting on the throne for hours at a time will cause some tightness in the pectoralis major (chest), the iliopsoas (hip flexors), and the calves. Here are some ways to stretch those muscles.



CHEST STRETCH

Wedge yourself in a doorway with your forearms braced against the doorframe. Gently lean into the stretch and hold for 30 to 40 seconds. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

CALF STRETCH

Stand on the edge of a step, curb, or stage. Gently let your heels drop. Be careful not to let the ankle cave, or else you'll be stretching ligaments instead of muscles.



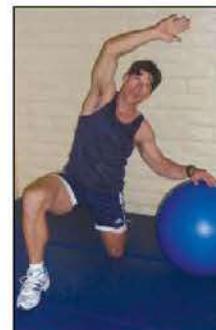
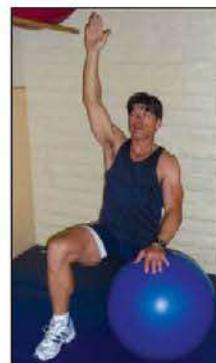
FOREARM STRETCH

Interlock your fingers in front of you and extend your arms outward so your palms are facing away from you. Then raise your hands over your head.



HIP-FLEXOR STRETCH

To do this stretch, get on one knee. With the opposite hand, reach as high upward as you can. Now slowly lean toward the knee that's on the ground. Gently lean into the stretch and hold for 30 to 40 seconds. Repeat 3 or 4 times.



It's important to stretch daily, especially before and after gigs. The resistance exercises can be done three or four times a week. And don't neglect some form of cardiovascular exercise. Dance or play sports a few times a week to build your cardiopulmonary system.

John Platero is the director of education for the National Council for Certified Personal Trainers and the author of *Yes, You Can! Fitness After 40: A New Beginning*. He is an award-winning cyclist and has played drums with Cher, Bo Diddley, Frank Gambale, and Robben Ford. For more info, visit johnplatero.com or nccpt.com.



Dexterity in Odd Rhythms

Quintuplet Variations by Aaron Edgar

In this article we're going to cover how to feel quintuplets using an Indian counting system. There are many different variations, but the syllables I like to use are *ta*, *ka*, *din*, *ah*, and *gah*, which are easy to pronounce and can be strung together very quickly once you're comfortable with them.

Start without using a metronome and put emphasis on the first syllable, *ta*, as it's landing on the quarter-note pulse. This is the most important note of the quintuplet, so if you don't have that landing solidly on the pulse, nothing you do is going to feel solid.

Ta Ka Din Ah Gah Ta Ka Din Ah Gah

Now turn on your metronome and set it at a slow tempo. Don't worry about speed; precision is key. Play along with your quintuplet counting, using alternating single strokes.

R L R L R L R L R L

Before we move on to the variations, it's important to be able to play all of the examples into and out of subdivisions

that you're more comfortable with, like 16th notes. You can add the bass drum and hi-hat on quarter notes to help reinforce the pulse.

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

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

What follows is every rhythmic variation within a single quintuplet grouping. Practice these the same way as you did Example 1. Play each as an accent within the quintuplet, and keep both hands on the snare for now. Be sure to vocalize the entire quintuplet and continue to put emphasis on the first note, *ta*. Add the bass drum and hi-hat underneath to help you feel the pulse.

Also be sure to practice each example into and out of a measure of 16th notes. If you work only the fives on their own, you'll have no perspective on how they relate to other subdivisions.



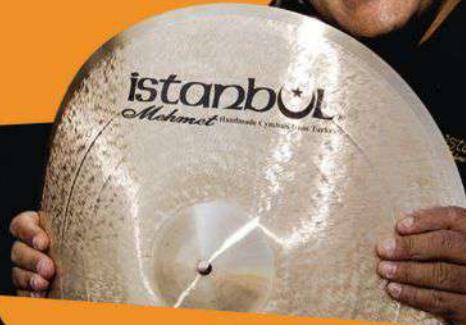
Aaron Edgar is a Canada-based musician/clinician who teaches privately and on Drumeo.com. For more info, visit aaronedgardrum.com.



Jonathan Moffett

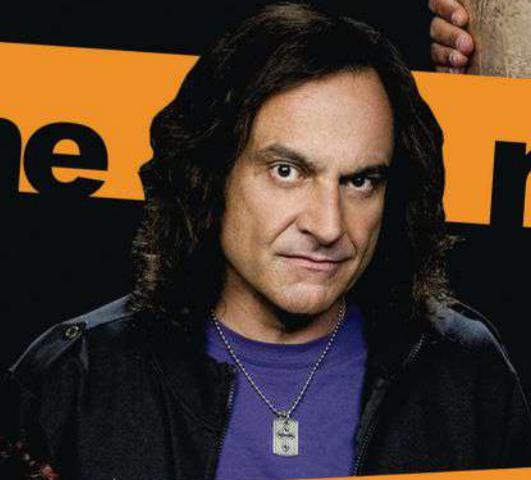
Rick Latham

Join



Horacio El Negro Hernandez

the movement

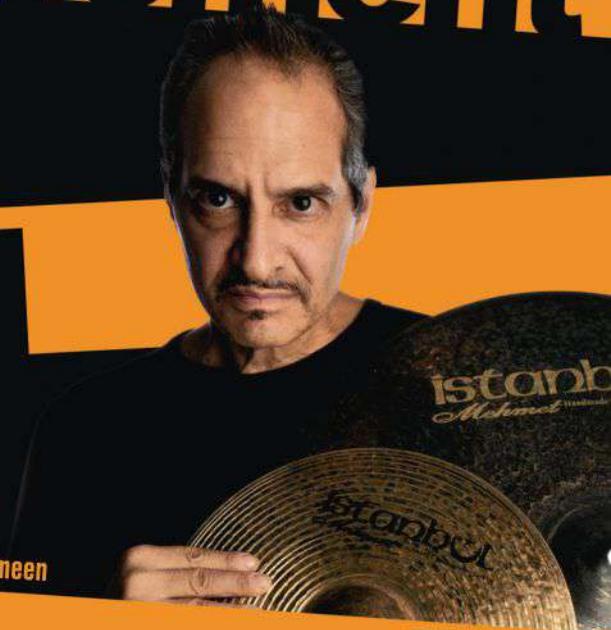


Vinny Appice

we did



Carmine Appice



Robby Ameen

we're serious

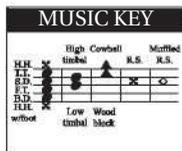
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Timbales

The Roots of the Latin Drumset by Arturo Stable



The essence of playing the drumset in Latin American music consists of orchestrating the different percussion parts from the original styles. Before the drumset was incorporated into Afro-Cuban music, it was the “pailas,” aka Cuban timbales, that fulfilled that role, so it’s no surprise that the various patterns performed on the timbales were primary sources of inspiration for drumset players. In fact, Cuban drummers who have made an impact on the international scene, such as Ignacio Berroa, Horacio Hernandez, and Dafnis Prieto, are all great percussionists as well.

There’s an unofficial Cuban protocol in learning Afro-Cuban styles for the drumset where all drummers study the percussion parts that parallel what they play on the kit. Unfortunately, that approach hasn’t been fully incorporated in other countries, where drummers learn Latin styles only through written patterns or through reproducing ideas performed by their favorite players. This article is designed to help bridge the gap between what’s traditionally played on timbales and what’s commonly played on the drumset in Afro-Cuban music.

Cascara, Bell Patterns, and Breaks

There are two very important elements that justify why drummers should learn traditional timbale patterns. First, there’s the cascara and 6/8 bell patterns that come from the rumba tradition. These are the main ride cymbal rhythms used by most Afro-Cuban drummers. Second, all of the main percussion breaks in popular Afro-Cuban styles, such as son, guaracha, danzon, and cha-cha, were originally performed on the timbales. Understanding the different rhythmic, dynamic, and timbre possibilities of the timbales will result in a more authentic delivery when you apply that information to the drumset.

A Little History

The origin of timbales is in Europe, tracing back to orchestral timpani that were brought to Cuba by French orchestras after their migration during the Haitian revolution of the late 1700s. By the end of the 1800s, after a series of transformations, a close version of today’s timbales was in use.

Back then, animal skin was used for drumheads, and the drums were often tuned in fourths. The first recognizable style performed on the timbales was the danzon, which is a combination of three rhythmic patterns—baqueto, paseo, and abanico—that alternated according to the form of the song.

Baqueto



Paseo



Abanico



Timbale Masters

The modern timbale style has been formed by a handful of players. Although there were well-known timbale players before him, I would like to start by mentioning the great Guillermo Barreto (1929–1991), a Cuban percussionist and drummer who played with jazz icons such as Nat King Cole and Stan Kenton and is also credited for adding a crash cymbal to the timbale setup. Barreto participated on many recordings, including *Los Amigos: Featuring Cachaito López* and *Cuban Jam Sessions in Miniature: Descargas*, two highly influential Afro-Cuban albums.

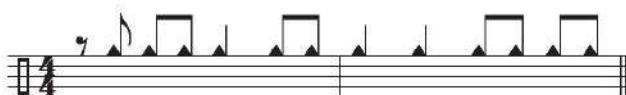
A common timbale pattern from Barreto’s era, and one that’s still widely used in traditional Cuban music today, is cascara. This rhythm was later used in combination with both son or rumba clave. It can be played on the shell, cowbell, or wooblock.



Another master of the timbales is Jose Luis Quintana (1948–), who’s also known as Changuito. Quintana was the timbale player for the popular and influential band Los Van Van for more than twenty years. He is the creator of the songo style, and he’s become the most influential timbalero of all time. Here’s a variation of songo for the drumset.



We can't discuss timbales without mentioning Ernesto Antonio "Tito" Puente (1923–2000). Tito was not just a timbalero; he was an icon of Latin culture, a bandleader, a showman, a composer, an arranger, and an inspiration for many percussionists. Even though he didn't create any new rhythmic or musical styles, his extensive recording and performing career contributes to the international exposure of the timbales like no other player's. A bell pattern used by Puente and many other mambo and salsa players goes as follows:



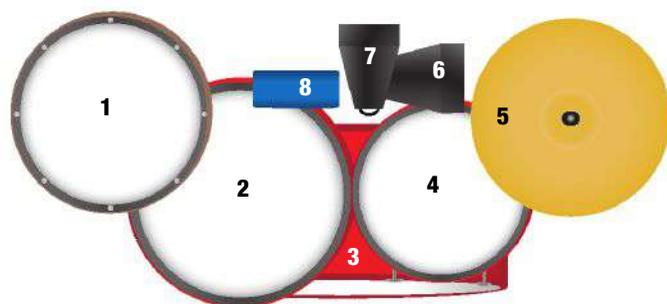
The late '80s and the '90s saw many new ideas come to the timbales. Popular bands in Cuba started to change instrumentation by adding power to the horns, which transformed the percussion section. Now, instead of a traditional timbalero, bands started using drummers who played a combination of drums and timbales. Some players added a wide array of cowbells, which allowed them to create complex melodic lines within the patterns. At the vanguard of this movement was Calixto Oviedo (1955–), a virtuoso musician who developed his style with the band NG La Banda. Calixto is currently living in Sweden.

Here's a contemporary timbale/drumset pattern that can be used in modern timba music.



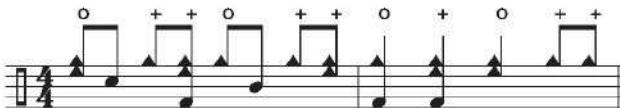
Other noteworthy drummers who have incorporated timbales into their kits include Jimmy Branly, Samuel Formell, Hilario Bell, Conrado "Coky" García, Mauricio Herrera, and Angel Pututi Arce. The list of great timbaleros includes Orestes Vilató, Manny Oquendo, Amadito Valdés, Nicky Marrero, Jorge Najaro, Marvin Diz, Ralph Irizarry, and Emilio Del Monte.

Here's a diagram of the setup I use when playing timbales. You'll see that it combines elements of a traditional timbale configuration (hembra and macho timbales, cowbells, and woodblocks) with pieces of a drumset (bass drum, snare, and crash).



- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 14" snare | 5. 14" crash cymbal |
| 2. low timbal (hembra) | 6. Toca Bongo cowbell |
| 3. 20" bass drum | 7. Toca Cha-cha cowbell |
| 4. high timbal (macho) | 8. LP woodblock |

Here's a transcription of a contemporary timbale pattern that I use often.



For listening, I recommended checking out the following albums, all of which feature excellent timbale playing.

Cachao, *Descargas en Miniatura*

Juan Formell y Los Van Van, *Aquí el Que Baila Gana*

José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda, *Échale Limón*

Tito Puente, *Master Timbalero*

Marvin Diz, *Habla el Tambor*



Cuban-born percussionist **Arturo Stable** has performed with Dave Samuels, Esperanza Spalding, Paquito D'Rivera, David Sanchez, Giovanni Hidalgo, Miguel Zenón, and the Caribbean Jazz Project. He is the chair of the hand percussion department at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and his latest album, *Cuban Crosshatching*, features Lionel Loueke on guitar, Seamus Blake on saxophone, and Edward Perez on bass.



Polyrhythmic Coordination

Part 4: Six-Note Base Rhythm by Ari Hoenig

Last time (November 2012), we continued our study of two-hand polyrhythmic coordination by playing a five-note base rhythm with one hand while adding one to eight evenly spaced notes over the top with the other hand. This month we're using a six-note base rhythm in the left hand.

Practice these polyrhythms the same way as before, playing each bar at least four times before moving on. When you've reached the eight-note right-hand rhythm, go backward until you return to one note per bar. You can also jump randomly from one right-hand rhythm to another. If you haven't mastered the first three parts of this article series, you might want to check them out first for clearer instruction on how to practice the ideas.

When you get to the five-over-six measure, notice that the spaces between the second and fifth notes of the five are the same distance from the second and sixth notes of the base rhythm. The third and fourth notes of the five are also the same distance from the fourth note of the base rhythm. Understanding these relationships is very helpful in playing these modulations at faster tempos, when it becomes too fast to hear the subdivisions.

You'll see similar spacing relationships when you get to the seven, between the second and seventh notes of the seven and the second and sixth notes of the base rhythm, as well as between the fourth and fifth notes of the seven and the fourth note of the base. Also note that the final measure, eight over six, is the same as the more common four-over-three polyrhythm.

Start by practicing the polyrhythms with your metronome at 60 beats per minute.

1

Think: 2

3

4

5

6

7

8

How to Figure Out Any Other Polyrhythm

In this series of articles we've used base rhythms of between one and six notes per measure, and then we've superimposed one to eight notes on top of each. To conclude, I want to explain how you can superimpose any rhythm evenly over any base number.

1. Write out the base rhythm in quarter notes, with plenty of space between notes. Then write in the time signature. For example, a base rhythm of eleven would be written in 11/4.

2. Between the quarter notes, add the number you want to superimpose over the base, written as 8th or 16th notes. For instance, if you want to try four over eleven, write four 16th notes within each of the eleven quarter notes.

3. Circle the first note, count forward the same number as the base rhythm (including the one you circled), and then circle the next note. Continue until you reach the first beat of the next bar. The total number of circled notes should be equal to the rhythm you wanted to put over the base.

Here's what four over eleven would look like:



As always, these exercises are meant to better you technically before they can better you musically. Don't be in a rush to apply them during a gig. Understanding the vocabulary and being able to recognize the different polyrhythms when you hear them is more important than being able to play them on the drums. This knowledge will make you a better musician and will help you develop the ability to react to what you hear in a practical and musical way.

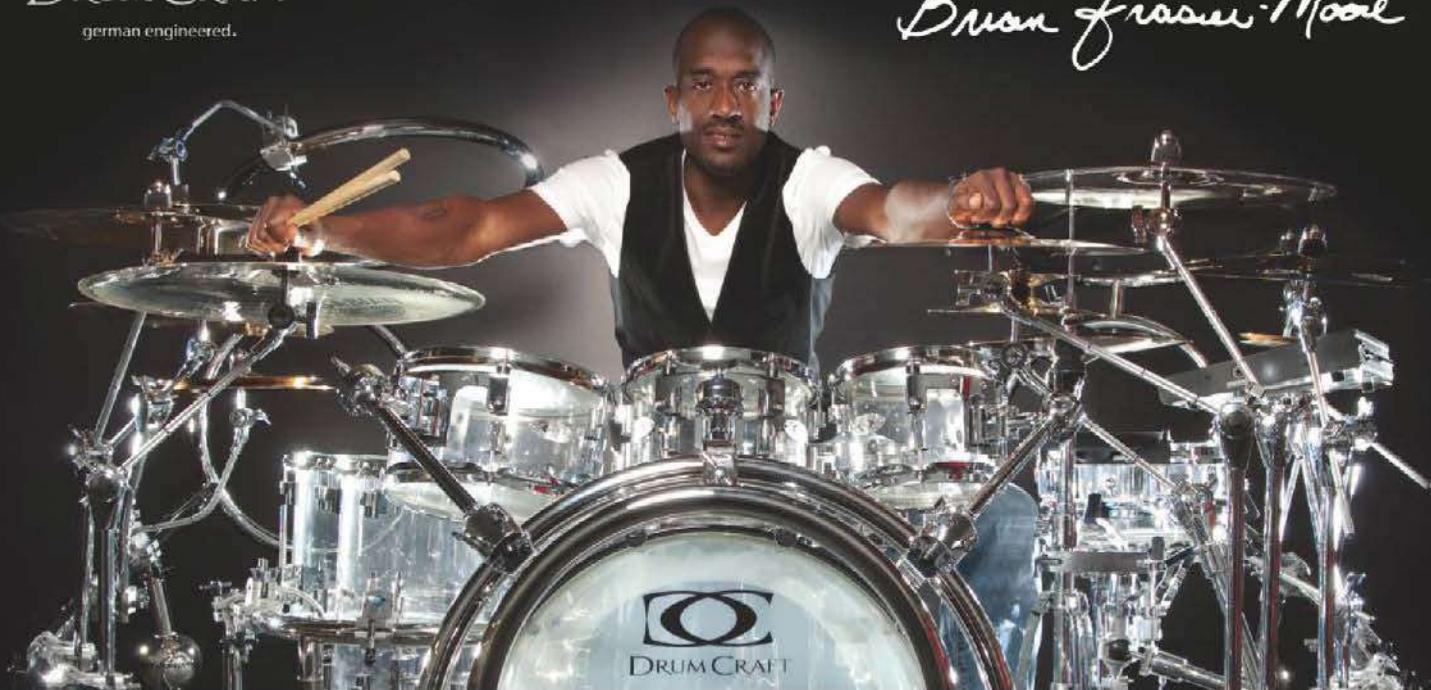


Ari Hoenig is a New York City-based drummer/composer/bandleader and a faculty member at New York University and the New School in Manhattan. He recently released a quartet album (*Lines of Oppression*), a method book (*Systems*), and an educational video (*Melodic Drumming*), all of which are available at arihoenig.com.




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Further Beyond the Barline

2/4 Hemiolas in 3/4 and 6/8 by Germán Baratto

MUSIC KEY

C.C. R.C.
H.H. T.T. S.D. F.T. B.D.
Ghost note

Welcome to my second article discussing an approach to improvisation that will allow you to play longer and more interesting solo phrases in a variety of styles. As in the first part, which appeared in the April 2011 issue, the goal is to develop the facility to play ideas that are rhythmically and melodically interesting.

This study starts with an accent-grid exercise in 2/4 that will help you create barline-crossing hemiolas (superimposed contrasting feels) when you play the patterns in other time signatures, like 3/4 or 6/8. First practice each measure of the grid in 2/4 until it feels comfortable.

When you achieve a good level of confidence with the grid in 2/4, play it in 3/4 and 6/8.

Stickings

You can also apply different stickings to the grid, including double strokes and paradiddle inversions.

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

Different stickings will offer more possibilities to move the patterns around the drumset, like playing broken doubles between the ride cymbal and snare.

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

You can also build a groove that implies four over six by using a paradiddle sticking.

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

Hand/Foot Applications

The next example shows how to play a hand/foot combination based on the first measure of the grid. This pattern is more complex because it uses four voices (snare, rack tom, floor tom, and bass drum) in a cycle that repeats every eight notes.

You can double every note in the previous pattern for a fuller and more involved sound.

Here's how to play that same pattern in 4/4.

Using the same grid measure as before, let's try a different hand/foot combination and then orchestrate it around the kit and phrase it in 4/4.



Germán Baratto holds a bachelor's degree in arts from the University of Puerto Rico and a master's degree in jazz studies and percussion from Middle Tennessee State University in Nashville. He currently works as a percussion artist-relations coordinator and percussion product specialist for Meinl USA.



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Part: 4: Dance-Rock by Donny Gruendler



MUSIC KEY			
	open	R.C.	C.C.
H.H.	○	×	✱
S.D.	■		
B.D.	■		

In the last three play-along articles (July and October 2012 and January 2013), we focused on developing the proper performance technique, groove vocabulary, and sound to play alongside Top 40, pop-punk, and synth-metal tunes. In this month's installment, we're taking a look at a dance-rock chart titled "Hella Drums." (MP3s and PDFs are available at moderndrummer.com.)

This tune has a twenty-four-bar AAB form, with each letter representing an eight-bar phrase with a particular melody, chord structure, and groove. The A section features a two-bar straight-8th groove with a tightly closed hi-hat and an occasional opening on the "&" of beat 4.

A Light, tight closed HH:

The B section uses the same drum pattern, but now the hi-hat is opened slightly on each 8th note, for a looser, more sloshy sound.

B Light, sloshy half-open HH:

Performance Notes

The bass drum pattern should be played very forcefully, with a staccato articulation and a dynamic of forte (loud). You can accomplish this by using the plastic side of the beater and burying it into the head. Use your entire leg and foot to make each stroke.

Unlike in the previous play-alongs, where the snare was hit with rimshots, you'll want to play in the center of the head for this song. Many drummers use the center-of-the-head stroke because it provides an open, full, and round tone. When the drum is miked, this stroke can sound even more powerful than a caveman-like rimshot. By avoiding the high-end attack produced by a rimshot, the microphones and compressors are better able to do their work. The engineer can turn up the snare in the overall mix without adding the piercing qualities of a standard rimshot.

Most drummers think it's easier to strike the snare in the center than it is to play a rimshot, but it actually takes a great

deal of accuracy and concentration. This stroke is less forgiving than a rimshot and can sound very uneven when not executed properly. Be sure to hit the drum in the exact same location for each backbeat. And you might want to consider flipping the stick around so that you're striking with the butt end, which will produce an even bigger, fatter sound.

In the A section, we're going to use a new articulation on the hi-hat by playing with the tip of the stick on top of the cymbals. The 8th-note pattern should be played evenly, at a dynamic of mezzo piano (medium soft). Using the tip of the stick on the top cymbal will give you a very precise, controlled sound. The hi-hat opening on the "&" of beat 4 should be played as an accent and should be followed immediately with a foot stroke on the downbeat.

A

To articulate the sloshy hi-hat sound in the B section, play the 8th notes evenly and forcefully at a dynamic of mezzo forte (medium loud). Use the middle shoulder of the stick, about an inch below the tip. Not only will this differentiate the sound of the grooves between sections, but it will also add a bit of excitement as the song builds.

Talk-Down

The song's twenty-four-bar AAB form is preceded by a four-bar drum intro, which uses the same groove as the A section. Since the drums start the tune, be sure you're playing solidly, in terms of both sound and time, from the first bar, or else the song and the groove will sound unsettled.

In order to build properly into the B section, play a slight crescendo on the hi-hat in bars 13 through 16 of the A section.

There's an ensemble figure on the fourth beat of the second ending of letter A and in the fourth bar of letter B. This figure should be orchestrated between the snare and crash cymbal.

A slight variation occurs in the last A section, which consists of a synth-and-drums breakdown. This part should also receive a unique sonic and rhythmic treatment. One option is to play the ride cymbal and alter the bass drum pattern on beat 3.

A Breakdown

Making Music

You could play thousands of intricate groove variations and fill permutations in this chart. But the most important thing to focus on is making it all the way through the song by playing musically appropriate grooves with stylistically correct sounds. Best of luck, and have fun!

Intro ♩ = 115

The chart consists of several systems of musical notation for guitar. Each system includes a melodic line with notes and rests, and a rhythmic line with slashes. The sections are labeled as follows:

- Intro:** A melodic line with a tempo marking of 115. It features a sequence of eighth notes with stems up and down, followed by a final note with a fermata.
- A:** A melodic line with a repeat sign. It contains the same sequence of eighth notes as the Intro.
- B:** A melodic line with a repeat sign. It contains the same sequence of eighth notes as the Intro.
- Fill:** A melodic line with a repeat sign. It contains the same sequence of eighth notes as the Intro.

Measure counts are indicated below the rhythmic lines: 1 (8) and 2 (16). The chart concludes with a "Fade out" instruction.



Donny Gruendler is the director of performance programs at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and the creator of Hudson Music's download series *Seeing Sounds* and *Private Lessons*. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.





Yamaha D-22

1960s U.S. Mercury gold agate set



1968 brown willow pearl Yamaha snare

'60s and '70s Japanese Imports

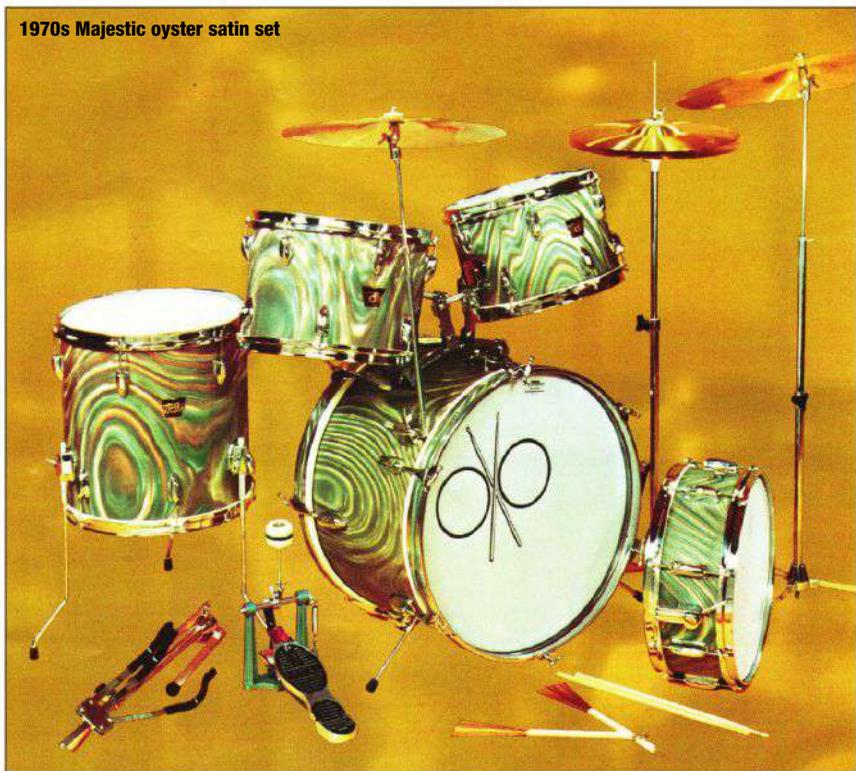
The Origin of the Entry-Level Drumset and Beyond by Mark Cooper

My father purchased my first drumset for me in 1971. It was an old, beat-up silver sparkle Kent kit made in New York in the late '50s. While it served this thirteen-year-old drummer quite well for a while, I soon longed for a brand-new pearl-finish set. With the 1973 Kent catalog in hand, I ordered a new instrument from what I assumed was the Kent factory in Kenmore, New York. A few weeks later, a couple of large boxes arrived on my doorstep, with the words "Hoshino Trading Company" boldly printed on them. I excitedly tore them open and realized that this new Kent kit was not what I'd expected. Instead of a maple-shell, American-made drumset, it was a generic, low-quality import with no badges or identifying marks other than the words "Made in Japan."

A NEW NICHE

Many of the popular drumsets and percussion accessories that are sold in the United States and Canada today are manufactured in Japan and Taiwan. Drum companies like Yamaha, Pearl, Tama, and others have dominated the industry for years, but it wasn't

1970s Majestic oyster satin set





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SHOP TALK

always this way. Ludwig & Ludwig, Slingerland, Leedy, and Gretsch were the leading drum manufacturers for the first half of the twentieth century. During the late '50s and early '60s, however, the music scene was changing. The American and British popular music explosion inspired more and more young people to form bands, which created high demand for affordable instruments.

In 1964, a complete top-of-the-line Ludwig drumset cost around \$700. For a young beginning drummer, that was quite a lot of money. While most drum companies did offer slightly less expensive sets, many aspiring drummers had to settle for secondhand instruments. Sensing this need for affordable drumsets, Japanese companies began building drums that could be exported and sold for a fraction of the cost of American models. In 1954, the Pearl Musical Instrument Company of Japan began exporting drums to American distributors. By 1961, the company was churning out thousands of drumsets.

Around the same time, another Japanese company, Hoshino Gakki, began exporting inexpensive kits under the name Star Drums. (The Star name would later change to Tama.) Both Pearl and Star produced drums under various other brand names, including Majestic, Apollo, Dixie,

Del Ray, U.S. Mercury, and Whitehall. These "stencil brands" often reflected the distributor's name. American distributors like C. Bruno & Son, Zim-Gar, and Saint Louis Music sold these kits alongside larger brands, and the drums began appearing in Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs.

AT FIRST GLANCE

These imported Japanese drums look quite similar to those produced by Slingerland, Gretsch, Ludwig, and Rogers. Most of the lugs, hoops, and strainers closely resemble those of American-made drums. In the early '60s, Hoshino went so far as to duplicate Slingerland's Radio King extended snare-strainer assembly, and its drum catalogs looked very similar to Slingerland's.

Japanese drumsets in the '60s came in a wide variety of exotic pearl finishes. Multicolored tiger stripes, swirling three-dimensional patterns, and many other wild designs gave these bargain drumsets a bold, distinctive appearance.

But while the drums may have looked gorgeous, their beauty was mostly skin deep. In order for them to be offered at such a low price, the construction quality in most cases was poor. Instead of the higher-quality maple and mahogany that American companies used for drum shells,

the Japanese firms built drums from very thin, inexpensive plywood or luan. The metal components, such as snare strainers, stands, and other hardware, were often very low in quality.

YAMAHA APPEARS

In 1967, Nippon Gakki launched Yamaha drums. Instead of producing cheap, low-quality imitations of American kits, Yamaha produced professional-level instruments. These drums, called D-Series, were constructed of 6-ply select birch and featured high-quality metal hardware, including die-cast zinc lugs and reliable snare strainers. The company pioneered the use of an "air bag" system that applied uniform pressure to the staggered joints of the wooden plies, which created a perfectly formed drum shell.

While Yamaha drums were available in just a handful of pearl finishes, the wrap material was of top quality and was applied perfectly. A complete Yamaha drumset, without cymbals, retailed for around \$400. The company also offered the cheaper C-Series set for \$250. These new drums were marketed all over the world, and Yamaha was setting new standards in Japanese drum manufacturing. Pearl and Hoshino would soon follow suit.

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SHOP TALK

AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS RESPOND

Aware of the new competition coming from Japan, some American drum companies introduced lower-price models. In 1968, Ludwig began producing 3-ply Standard drums in a vast array of beautiful and exciting finishes, along with less expensive hardware. Less manpower was required to build these drumsets, so they could be offered for considerably less than professional models. A typical four-piece Ludwig Standard kit sold for \$365 in 1968. These drums are quite collectible today.

The Rogers Drum Company also saw the wisdom of producing more affordable instruments, and in 1967 the R-360 line was introduced. These drums were designed partly by Rogers engineer Joe Thompson and then built in Japan by Yamaha and assembled in the U.S. They were essentially Yamaha birch shells with some Rogers components, including lugs and strainers. R-360, and the later R-380, drumsets were of very good quality. The production cost was kept to a minimum with inexpensive foil badges and Yamaha stands, pedals, and mounts.

UPPING THE ANTE

The quality of imported drums began to improve dramatically, and by 1969 Pearl was producing some very nice, distinctive models. The President series featured fiberglass shells, and by 1970 the kits came with much sturdier hardware. Pearl's Professional series shells featured 9-ply wood with an inner coating of fiberglass for added projection. The company's continued advancement in construction quality and unique shell materials attracted several famous endorsers, including swing legend Louie Bellson and *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy.

Hoshino's Star developed a bit more slowly, and while the company was attempting to compete with Yamaha and Pearl, it was still producing old-fashioned import drums with modest hardware upgrades. Hoshino did offer an advanced metal snare called the King Beat, which was a copy of Rogers' Dyna-Sonic with a special extended snare frame. Hoshino also imitated the famous Rogers Swiv-O-Matic tom holder, called Fre-O-Matic.

It wasn't until 1974, when Hoshino changed the company name to Tama, that its quality greatly improved. Soon Tama led the way in hardware development and was the first company to offer a boom cymbal stand and other heavy double-braced stands.

With bold advancements in design, innovation, and quality, Pearl, Tama, and Yamaha were giving American drum companies a run for their money by the '80s. The tables had turned, and drum makers like Ludwig and Rogers were incorporating many of the innovative new ideas of Japanese drum manufacturers.

COLLECTOR APPEAL

Because a huge number of import sets arrived in the U.S. over a twenty-year period, many of them have survived and are becoming more and more collectible. The colorful and sometimes bizarre pearl finishes are largely responsible for the increase in collector interest. Yet vintage Japanese drumsets can be found for \$150 to \$500, so they're quite affordable. Yamaha kits from the late '60s have wide appeal, due to their quality of construction. But possibly the most sought-after and beautiful '60s-import drumset is Apollo's Starfinder, which features chrome-finish, all-metal shells and Ludwig-style lugs.

With the proper heads and tuning and some hardware updates, many of these old import drums sound great, producing very warm and round sounds.



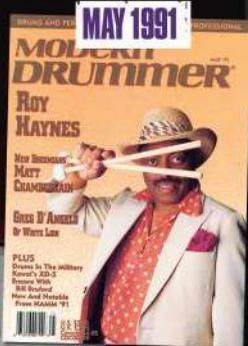
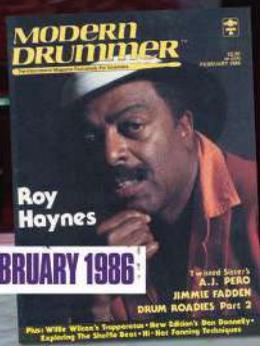
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sonorusa.com



DREAM Crop Circle Drum Accessory

The Scott Pellegrin Crop Circle is a new product from Dream's Re-FX series of effects made from recycled B20 bronze cymbals. The 2"-wide and 14"-diameter circle cropped from a larger cymbal has four pairs of attached jingles and can be placed on a snare, tom, or cymbal. The accessory is said to be lightweight and easy to use. List price is \$49.

dreamcymbals.com



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New Solus headphones feature a dual-color design and a thick braided cord for on-the-go convenience. They also come equipped with built-in volume control as well as a DJ switch, allowing users to change from mono to stereo. Solus headphones list for \$100.

wickedaudio.com

MEINL Derek Roddy Signature Serpents Hi-Hats and Timbas

Meinl's Byzance 13" Derek Roddy Signature Serpents hi-hats are hand hammered from B20 bronze. The pair includes an extra-dry cymbal and a brilliant-finish cymbal, and either one can be used as the bottom or the top.

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meinlcymbals.com, meinlpercussion.com





SPAUN Scymtek Cymbals

Spaun's new Scymtek cymbal line includes Classic (shown), Modern, Xtreme, and Vented series. The Classic series is said to be dark, warm, and expressive and features deep lathing and traditional finishes. Modern models offer a bright, shimmering, and full-bodied sound and have tighter lathing and a brilliant finish. The raw, unlathed bell, tighter lathing, and brilliantly finished bow of the Xtreme series is said to provide an aggressive, powerful, and loud sound. With holes placed around the perimeter, Vented crash cymbals create a hybrid voice that balances between a China and a traditional crash. Scymtek cymbals are handmade, hand-hammered, and crafted in Turkey from B20 bronze. scymtek.com

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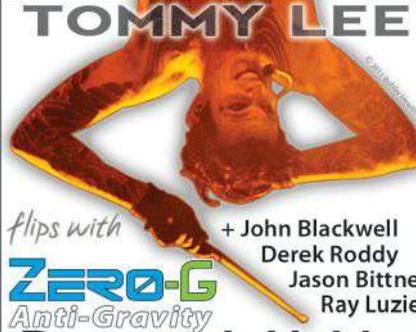
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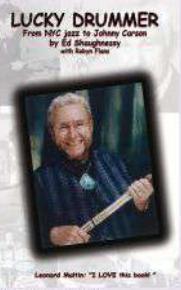
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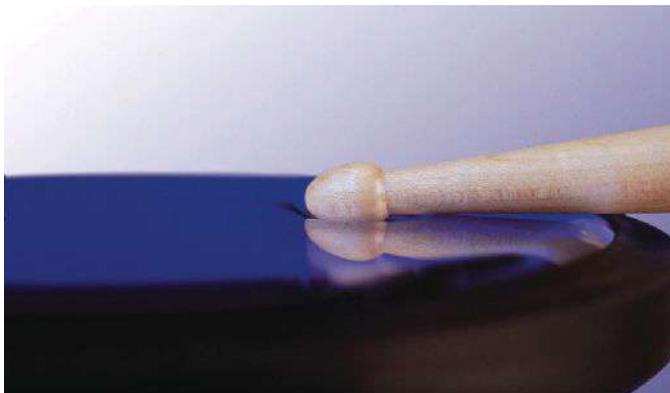
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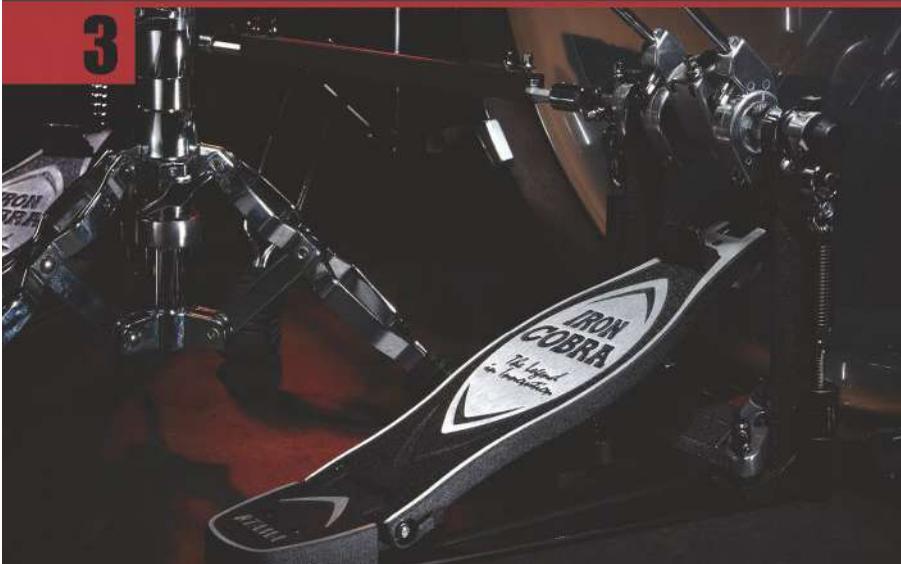
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NAMM can be pretty frustrating for gear junkies. "Closed to the public?" Hey! What about the musicians who buy and play these instruments? An armed insurrection isn't in the cards this year, but we wanted to say how much we at Tama appreciate those of you who check in during the show through Tama.com, Facebook, Twitter etc. to find out what's new with our drums and our artists.

1st PRIZE

- SC Performer B/B 5pc shell kit
List: \$3,230.⁷⁵
- Starphonic Brass snare
List: \$923.⁰⁶
- Speed Cobra double pedal
List: \$644.⁹⁸
- Speed Cobra HH stand
List: \$383.³²
- 3-HC73BWN (boom stands)
(List: \$153.⁰⁰ each)
List: \$459.⁰⁰
- 1-HS700WN (snare stand)
List: \$178.⁰⁰

2nd PRIZE

- S.L.P. G-Bubinga Snare
List: \$583.³²
- S.L.P. G-Maple Snare
List: \$549.⁹⁸

3rd PRIZE

- Iron Cobra 900 double pedal
List: \$644.⁹⁸

1. To enter visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Tama Drum Company Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2013, AND ENDS MARCH 31, 2013. 4. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on April 10, 2013. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about April 12, 2013. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Hoshino USA, Inc., and their affiliates are ineligible. 6. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada; Florida; and where prohibited by law. 8. One prize awarded per household per contest. 9. Prizes: Grand Prize: One (1) winner will receive a Tama SC Performer B/B 5 piece shell kit, (1) one Starphonic Brass snare drum, (1) one Speed Cobra double-pedal, (1) one Speed Cobra hi-hat stand, (3) three boom stands, and (1) one snare stand. Approximate retail value of prize: \$5,819. Second Prize: One (1) winner will receive (1) one each Tama S.L.P. G-Bubinga snare drum and S.L.P. G-Maple snare. Approximate retail value of prize: \$1,133. Third Prize: One (1) winner will receive (1) one Iron Cobra 900 Double-pedal. Approximate retail value of prize: \$644. Approximate retail value of contest: \$7,596. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 11. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Tama Drum Company/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

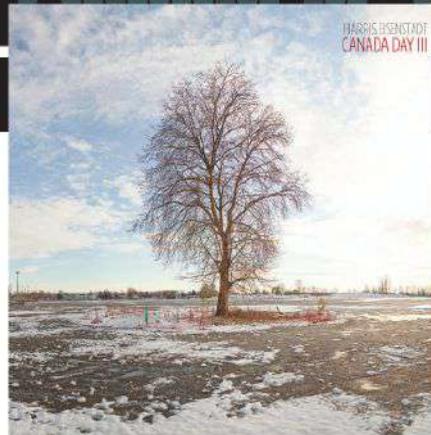
TAMA.com

RECORDINGS

HARRIS EISENSTADT *CANADA DAY III*

Like the best mystery yarns, these reflective compositions unravel deliberately, subtly revealing their compelling logic.

Not based in melody yet melodious, not based in strict forms but smartly structured, the compositions on drummer/leader **Harris Eisenstadt's** *Canada Day III* take surprising arcs. Eisenstadt's playing—orchestrated, colorful, airy yet propelling—flows from a composer's mind. The richly timbred quintet *Canada Day* includes vibes, trumpet, tenor sax, and bass, and each instrumentalist solos judiciously, serving the ensemble momentum. Vibraphonist Chris Dingman is particularly crafty in shading harmonic tension and release. An engaging left-of-center pleasure from an artist to watch. (Songlines) **Jeff Potter**



MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD *FREE MAGIC*

Fans yearning for an extra helping of acoustic MMW à la 1991's debut, *Notes From the Underground*, should dig the trio's latest.

This new live offering from select dates in 2007 strikes the intriguing balance

of groove playing and no-rules exploration that has been Medeski Martin & Wood's hallmark for two decades. **Billy Martin** throws down everything from up-tempo, Mingus-style waltz swing ("Blues for Another Day") to inventive unaccompanied solos where he digs into the nooks and crannies of his kit and deep bag of percussion ("Where's Sly?"). And while the group has never really kowtowed to its (partially!) dance-loving jam-band audience, *Free Magic* contains several instances of good ol' funky stuff. Check out the outro vamp of "Doppler," where Martin switches from a snare backbeat to a displaced rimclick and back again, keeping it all tight but loose. And so we can more easily study the trio's dynamics and interplay, the superb recording is clear and dry, only adding to the re-spin factor. (Indirecto) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

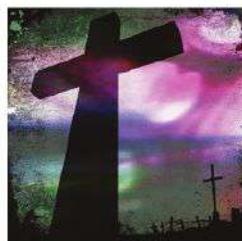


MYSTICAL WEAPONS *MYSTICAL WEAPONS*

This is what happens when creative people are given free rein to indulge in whatever they fancy.

The improvisational duo of Sean Lennon and Deerhoof drummer **Greg Saunier** digs ambient soundtrack music, Zappa-esque modern classical, noisy avant-

rock workouts, and pretty much everything in between. The tracks are so brief that ideas arise, are commented on, and are dispensed as quickly as they appear, giving Saunier a chance to show his eclectic skill set. On "Gross Domestic Happiness," the drummer begins with some free playing, moves into a bouncy kick drum and cowbell pattern, and closes out with a forceful, crash-heavy dirge that suits the epic, choir-like music perfectly. The real eye-opener should be what these two mavericks will do together on a stage. (Chimera Music) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

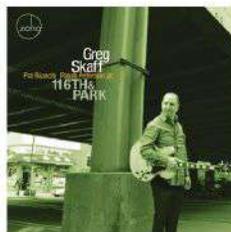


DOWN DOWN IV, *PART I: THE PURPLE EP*

The Southern-tinged metal supergroup emerges like the Creature From the Black Lagoon.

On "Levitation," the first track on Down's new EP, a hypnotic riff and a down-in-the-grit rhythm section make you bang your head and grimace

in eager preparation for some ill-advised destruction—basically what all good heavy music should do. Drummer **Jimmy Bower**, a veteran of Eyehategod and Crowbar and an influential member of the Southern metal scene, always provides the perfect groove—centered around a thumping kick and cracking snare—without stepping on any toes. Highlights include the energetically catchy interplay with Phil Anselmo's vocals on "Witchtripper" and the shifting moods and gradual unfolding of "Misfortune Teller," which feel as inevitable as the tide. (Down Records) **Billy Brennan**



GREG SKAFF *116TH & PARK* **Powerhouse drummer Ralph Peterson plays the "challenger" role in an organ trio setting.**

This is jazz guitarist Greg Skaff's third successive exploration of the classic B3/guitar/drums format—but with a difference. Although Skaff's fat-toned hollow-body sound and swing feel

are rooted in tradition, his concept is subtly informed by the modern, along with hints of funk, Brazilian, and even a brief nod to flamenco. The popping guitarist wields impressively nimble chops but avoids needlessly blowing licks from top to bottom. Instead, his solos are purposeful and non-repetitive. Organist Pat Bianchi is a soulful complement to Skaff, and **Ralph Peterson** supplies a hard-swinging, rough-and-tumble groove, mischievously stirring things up with deftly placed, explosive comments that spur the band to take chances. Peterson and Skaff previously communed as bandmates behind both Stanley Turrentine and Bobby Watson, and their simpatico shows. Smooth yet never complacent, this trio keeps the ideas rolling. (Zoho) **Jeff Potter**

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MICE PARADE CANDELA

A drummer-led group aims its arrow squarely at the intersection of art and rock.

Drummer/multi-instrumentalist **Adam Pierce** leads this indie band through an array of catchy, song-based tunes and experimental arrangements highlighting a stylized sense of craft and musicianship. On "Pretending," Pierce opens with some soft left-hand doubles that he

moves around the kit, before settling into a rolling toms-and-snare rock figure that overcomes the music. "Contessa" is all odd bars with an "In Your Eyes"-style flow during the chorus, while "Las Gentes Interesantes" features Pierce grooving with snares off, before the track veers into a Latin offbeat ride section complete with a trumpet solo. And dig the end of "Currents," where the drummer interjects fluid press rolls that wind the song down effectively. *Candela* might be a classic case of drumming serving the songs, but when the material references a leader's ever-expanding musical worldview, serving the song can be that much more fun. (Fat Cat) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



BENNY GOODMAN ORCHESTRA FEATURING ANITA O'DAY *BIG BANDS LIVE*

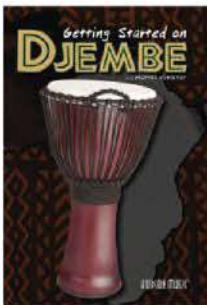
One from the vault shines a light on an under-considered swinger.

Restored from live German broadcasts, this outing features the crack ten-piece unit that Goodman led

through an extensive 1959 European tour. Guest vocalist O'Day is exquisite, vibraphonist Red Norvo delivers solo peaks, and Goodman is elegant as always. Drummer **John Markham** provides the crisp, on-top, bouncing swing that Goodman favored. And his snapping brushwork is irresistible. In the midst of a career high, the drummer followed this tour with a Sinatra stint. The underrated Markham also worked with greats such as Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, and Charlie Barnet and was later prominent on the San Francisco jazz scene. Let's take proper note. (Jazzhaus) **Jeff Potter**

MULTIMEDIA

RATINGS SCALE



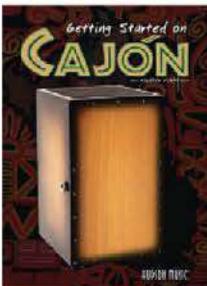
GETTING STARTED ON DJEMBE AND GETTING STARTED ON CAJON

BY MICHAEL WIMBERLY

BOOK/DVDS LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE \$14.99 each

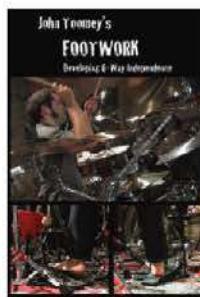
Hudson has a few new offerings for those interested in learning to play djembe and cajon, two of the most popular ways to accompany singer-songwriters these days. Drummers can definitely pick up more paying work if they can handle one or both of the folkloric instruments, so the timing is right for these titles.

Each book/DVD combo includes a brief account of the instrument in question, including its history and cultural roots. *Getting Started on Djembe* also includes a nice explanation of the differences between rope-tuned and tension-rod (or mechanically tuned) instruments. Both books cover the necessary terminology



and other details that beginning players need to know and are full of black-and-white pictures that show the proper holding and playing techniques—elements that are often misunderstood by new players and are a wise inclusion. Concise descriptions of hand position and how to achieve characteristic sounds round out the first half of each book. While around only thirty pages each, these volumes are packed with good information and don't overwhelm readers before they get to play their new instrument.

Both *Getting Started on Djembe* and *Getting Started on Cajon* include nicely produced DVDs that feature the author walking students through each of the topics and rhythms covered in the books, and more. The djembe DVD covers six traditional West African rhythms as well as modern applications with and without playing implements such as broomsticks. The cajon DVD includes traditional rhythms and modern styles such as rock, shuffle, hip-hop, funk, and swing, along with several play-along tracks in MP3 format. A discography of recommended listening allows students to hear the author and others play djembe and cajon in practical settings, with artists including Steve Coleman and the Paul Winter Consort. At \$14.99 each, these rich book/DVD packages offer handy access to two very popular instruments, with friendly, easy-to-understand instruction from a professional percussionist. (Hudson Music) **Ben Meyer**



FOOTWORK: DEVELOPING 6-WAY INDEPENDENCE

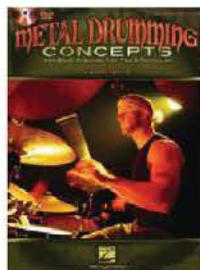
BY JOHN TOOMEY

DVD LEVEL: ADVANCED \$20

Part performance video and part instructional breakdown, *Footwork* helps drummers dive into the intricate but palette-broadening worlds of foot clave and multi-pedal auxiliary percussion.

The Nashville-based John Toomey executes hip solos demonstrating limb coordination and advanced independence, as in the Afro-Cuban 6/8

groove where he displaces the accent of a left-foot cowbell, or the dotted funk piece featuring great offbeat tambourine hits. Multiple camera angles show Toomey's feet dancing among various pedals (or heel/toe-ing two pedals at once for kick/cowbell or hats/aux-kick combos), and the drummer details sets of rudimentary "builder" exercises so you can learn to apply the concepts in a practical sense (i.e., at a gig!). In-studio play-along footage and live concert clips illustrate how Toomey makes sense of being a drummer and a percussionist simultaneously, and it all starts to seem approachable, until you remember there are parts for your hands. A bonus interview with coproducer Johnny Rabb is included. (johntoomeydrums.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



METAL DRUMMING CONCEPTS: VITAL BEATS, EXERCISES, FILLS, TIPS & TECHNIQUES

BY ANDOLS HERRICK

BOOK/DVD LEVEL: ALL \$16.99

Andols Herrick, who spent many years behind the kit for the metal band Chimaira, covers the ground that drummers who play heavy music must tread, including double bass creativity and developing blast beats. Along with the accompanying DVD,

patterns are created step by step ("Building the Beat") until you have your work cut out for you in the closing section of each chapter ("Putting It All Together"). Herrick also expounds on his personal philosophies, including the differences between practicing and rehearsing and executing hand exercises inspired by fitness-world methods like interval training, which alternates periods of work and rest. Chimaira's song "Pictures in the Gold Room" is broken down in the Time Signature Manipulation section, and a couple of chapters focus on unique fills using cymbal and hi-hat choking. The book also features alternate examples not found on the DVD. (Hal Leonard) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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Neil Peart



MARK EGAN

He spends most workdays collaborating with drumming royalty. Longtime rhythm mate **Karl Latham** raps with the bass legend about what he's picked up in the company of drum mastery.

Mark Egan is one of the most highly regarded bassists in the history of electric jazz. Performing and recording with many of the prominent drummers of our time—a short list would include Steve Gadd, Jack DeJohnette, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Steve Jordan, Billy Cobham, and Dave Weckl—he’s gained rare insight into the thought processes of our instrument’s most advanced practitioners. We asked Egan to comment on what he feels are the masters’ common elements.

Mark: I think to be a great drummer it takes the dedication to study the techniques and feels of the great lineage of drummers and incorporate these ideas into your own sensibilities and styles of playing. It takes a very serious commitment of study and practice.

The common element that I have experienced with all these great drummers is their sense of groove, time feel, and conceptual flexibility. They all express the time feel in an individual way that is timeless, and

they’re all team players. When I listen to drummers like Philly Joe Jones, Jack DeJohnette, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, John Bonham, Ringo Starr, Steve Jordan, Steve Gadd...they’re all committed to the groove. They all listen and touch the drums in a different way.

MD: What advice can you offer drummers in terms of attaining these attributes?

Mark: Beyond developing a total command of your instrument, which is a lifetime goal, it’s important for drummers to listen and be flexible with the music at hand. A drummer should think like a composer or arranger while he or she is playing, and sculpt the drum parts to fit the situation. I love it when a drummer orchestrates an approach to a composition and thinks and plays in terms of textures and development. An example of this would be very selectively using cymbals only in certain places in a song, to create a different texture.

A drummer with a great groove and the flexibility to listen and interact with the

entire ensemble is a drummer that I enjoy playing with. I also feel that a drummer’s dynamics can be very powerful and a great tool for the development of a song. It’s a challenge to play softly and still have a burning groove. A great rhythm-section exercise is to experiment with playing as softly as possible and gradually increasing the volume until you’re as loud as possible. This gives you an awareness of the range of volume that’s possible.

It’s all about the groove, overview, complementing, listening, and reacting. Technique is important in order to be able to execute your ideas, but without groove and creativity, it’s meaningless.

Listen to and study the roots and masters of jazz, Latin, Afro-Cuban, funk, and R&B drumming. It’s important to play along with recordings of the masters and to try to come as close as you can to the original. I also think it’s important to find a great teacher to study with—really surrender and be a diligent student. And it’s important to

play with a band to develop your skills.

I've been in playing situations where I've had to completely go with an inflexible

ing the various time feels present in a group of musicians. Do you have advice for drummers on how to find the best way to

“Common to all great drummers is a transcendence of technique and dedication to the groove, which starts when a tune is counted off.”

drummer's feel. This goes against everything I've learned as a creative musician, which is to be reactive, in the moment, and a team player. The bass and drums have to fit together like a hand in a glove.

MD: Having appeared on hundreds of recordings in every style of music imaginable, what are you hearing that makes a great jazz drummer swing, a great rock drummer rock, a funky drummer be funky, and so on?

Mark: It seems to me that the common thread with all great drummers is their feel, concentration, uncanny sense of time, transcendence of technique, and dedication to the groove, which starts when a tune is counted off. It goes beyond the instrument and is an extension of the player's spirit. I can remember playing with the master percussionist and drummer Airtio Moreira and listening to him play a groove on a matchbox with his fingers or create a whole symphony of rhythm with tambourine and voice. I've heard him play without any instrument at all—just playing rhythms on his chest—to a standing ovation. All this tells me that the groove comes from within.

MD: I've noticed from playing with you in different situations that you possess a remarkable flexibility when accommodat-

ing groove with bass players and other musicians who may have different time feels from their own?

Mark: For me it's all about listening, supporting, and reacting. I've spent countless hours experimenting with drummers, both during my Miami University days and my time in New York since the mid-'70s. I've learned that you have to be aware of the entire sound and not just your own sound. Everyone feels the time in a different way, and that's natural. A drummer should have the overview to hear that someone is laying back or rushing and be able to adjust his or her time feel to help that player fit into the groove.

When a time feel or a tempo is started with a song or groove, it sets a time frame in motion, like the gears of a human clock. The gears are a constant, and it's our duty as musicians to add soul or feel. The most important thing is for the entire group to listen and move together. When you listen to James Brown, Miles Davis, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, or all of the Motown music, there's no question about the groove. It's timeless.

MD: Your latest recording, *Truth Be Told*, features Vinnie Colaiuta on drums. When I told you that my first impression was how “loosey goosey” Vinnie sounded, you knew

exactly what I meant. I think many listeners would be surprised at the elasticity in the time that the two of you create together.

Mark: Vinnie and I were reacting to each other, to the songs, and to [keyboardist] Mitch Forman and [saxophonist] Bill Evans. I wanted this recording to be on the edge yet relaxed. I wrote several drum solo sections specifically for Vinnie to do his amazing thing—which he did in a huge way.

Vinnie is another drummer with amazing technique and a very creative approach. But he can transcend the technique and go places that you just wouldn't imagine. It was a loose feel because Vinnie was always listening and going for different ideas while at the same time grooving ridiculously. I remember breaking out laughing at the end of takes at the session because Vinnie played so strongly.

MD: There are many “Vinnie moments” on the CD. I find that when drummers attempt advanced ideas that they've heard Vinnie play, they often do so at the expense of the groove and time. How do you think it's possible for him to stretch the limits without ever sacrificing the groove and time?

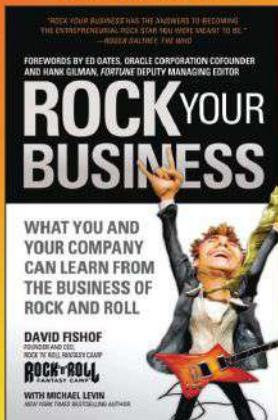
Mark: He's a magician, an extremely talented musician with what seems like limitless technique and an uncanny sense of time. But again, what I've learned from knowing and playing with extremely accomplished players is that they have all put their time in on the instrument.

To read more of Egan's impressions of Vinnie, as well as of Jack DeJohnette, Dave Weckl, and ten other world-class drummers he's worked with, go to moderndrummer.com.



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2012 MONTRÉAL DRUM FEST

The twentieth-anniversary edition of the Montréal Drum Fest was held this past October 20 and 21. *Modern Drummer* drove up from New Jersey and made it to Pierre-Mercure Hall much later than anticipated (damn you, ancient GPS unit!) but just in time to catch Keith Carlock's closing performance on day one. As tough as it was to have missed the earlier sets, Carlock's presentation was just what the doctor ordered following our long and frustrating road trip. And after a good night's rest, we were jonesing to enjoy the second day's lineup. For this year's photo essay on the event, we focus our camera on two established stars and two dynamos who seem poised for more widespread recognition.

KEITH CARLOCK

These days Carlock is playing at a supremely high level, technically and artistically. Chops? Sure, he has them in ridiculous supply, and he gets to flex them in a solo context like this. But what stuck with us long after the performance was over weren't Keith's complex fills, but rather the way he plays with equal measures of assuredness and flexibility. Carlock's stock in trade is so beyond technique that we can rest assured the drummer will never be without a gig. Oh, and that bass drum sound, so gritty yet so full of tone? We can still hear it woofing in our head as if Keith is playing in the office for us now.

GERGO BORLAI

The Hungarian drummer, who plays with the A38 Trio featuring keyboardist Scott Kinsey and bassist Gary Willis, among other artists, can be very muscular and very precise, which he demonstrated while playing along to tracks. He can switch gears pretty dramatically, though, and get creative with a melodic, sensitive vibe, as he proved with an extended unaccompanied brush solo.

MONTRÉAL DRUM FEST LINEUP

Saturday, October 20

Tony Royster and the Roland V-Drums Finalists
Brad Park
Magella Cormier and Eric Boudreault
The Drumbassadors
(René Creemers and Wim DeVries)
Pedrito Martinez Group
Dave Weckl
Keith Carlock

Sunday, October 21

Yamaha Rising Star Showcase
Richard Irwin Trio
Gergo Borlai
Joel Rosenblatt
Joey Heredia Trio
Damien Schmitt
Stanton Moore
Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Trio



DAMIEN SCHMITT

What personality! We weren't quite prepared for the sheer energy the Jean-Luc Ponty/Alain Caron drummer brings to a performance. Let's put it this way: When we later learned that Schmitt was a serious contender on the French TV talent show *The Voice* and that he's a multi-instrumentalist who's been recording seriously since age sixteen, it all began to make sense. What doesn't make sense is how he can be so talented in so many areas. When Damien tears around his multi-tom setup, it's with *blistering* control, but it's not clinical. If classic fusion drumming lives today, it's with players like him.



HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ

At this point, can anything new be said about El Negro? The Afro-Cuban trendsetter proved his mettle within and beyond Latin jazz circles long ago, developing a true global concept on the instrument with artists as far-flung as Dominican pianist Michel Camilo, American progressive-world-music enabler Kip Hanrahan, Spanish superstar vocalist Alejandro Sanz, and Turkish pianist Fahir Atakoglu. At the 2011 Modern Drummer Festival, Hernandez took the idea to the *nth* degree with his eleven-piece New World Order ensemble; here he took a significantly different tack, playing in a trio setting with brothers Robi and Louis Botos, on keyboards and bass respectively. The siblings, who emigrated to Canada from Hungary, are an ideal foil for Horacio, who rightly recognized the heaviness of the trio's *simpatico* the first time they played together. The group's closing performance at the 2012 Montréal Drum Fest was profound; let's hope this is a direction Hernandez continues with in the future.

Text by Adam Budofsky • Photos by Ronn Dunnnett



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SPEAKING THROUGH SILENCE

Mick Frangou, from the Hackney borough of London's East End, has a unique gig that gave rise to a unique setup. "I'm in a band called Minima that performs live accompaniments to silent film," Frangou explains, "and a lot of cinemas in the U.K. tend to have very limited space for a full band. So I needed a kit that had a small footprint but still contained a one-up, two-down tom layout. This kit fits in just fine."

The maple Canopus outfit, in crimson fade finish, contains a 12x15 bass drum, which,

Frangou says, "is not a converted floor tom; it's specifically designed to be a small, compact, deep-sounding kick more akin to a [low-tuned] 18" drum. It's not massively loud, so for some gigs I plug an XLR lead into the socket retrofitted to the kick's air vent, as I have a May system with an AKG D112 mic inside the shell. So the kick can be as loud as I need it to be." The rack tom measures 9x10, and the floor toms, on legs, are 11x12 and 13x14.

"I can't begin to tell you how much fun this kit is to play and how easy it is to lug around,"

Frangou says. "And it sounds just like a beautiful, full-size maple-shell kit but with a classic vintage sound."

One of Frangou's secret weapons is his Zildjian 22" Swish Knocker, with twenty rivets, a cymbal based on one owned by the master big band drummer Mel Lewis. "I find I can use it to accompany mist or fog images in the films we play to," Mick says, "and the sound of smashing glass, the splash of men throwing themselves into the sea, gunshots, the sound of fire...well, the list goes on."

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to kitofthemonth@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit of the Month" in the subject line of the message.



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