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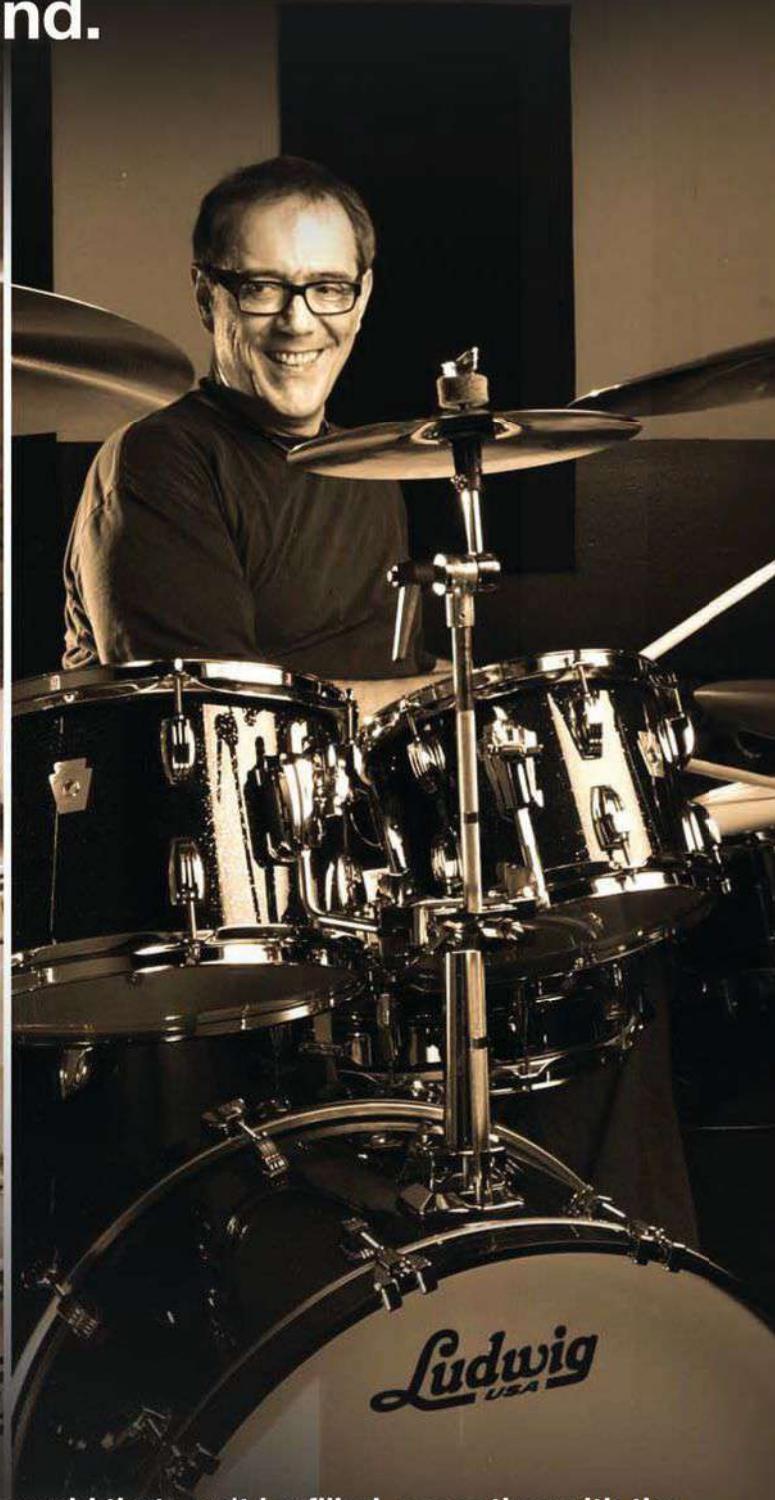
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-Vinnie Colaiuta



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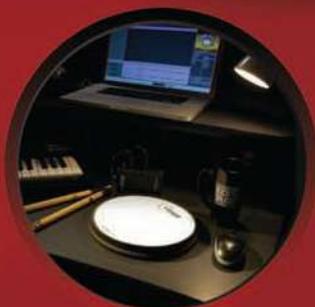
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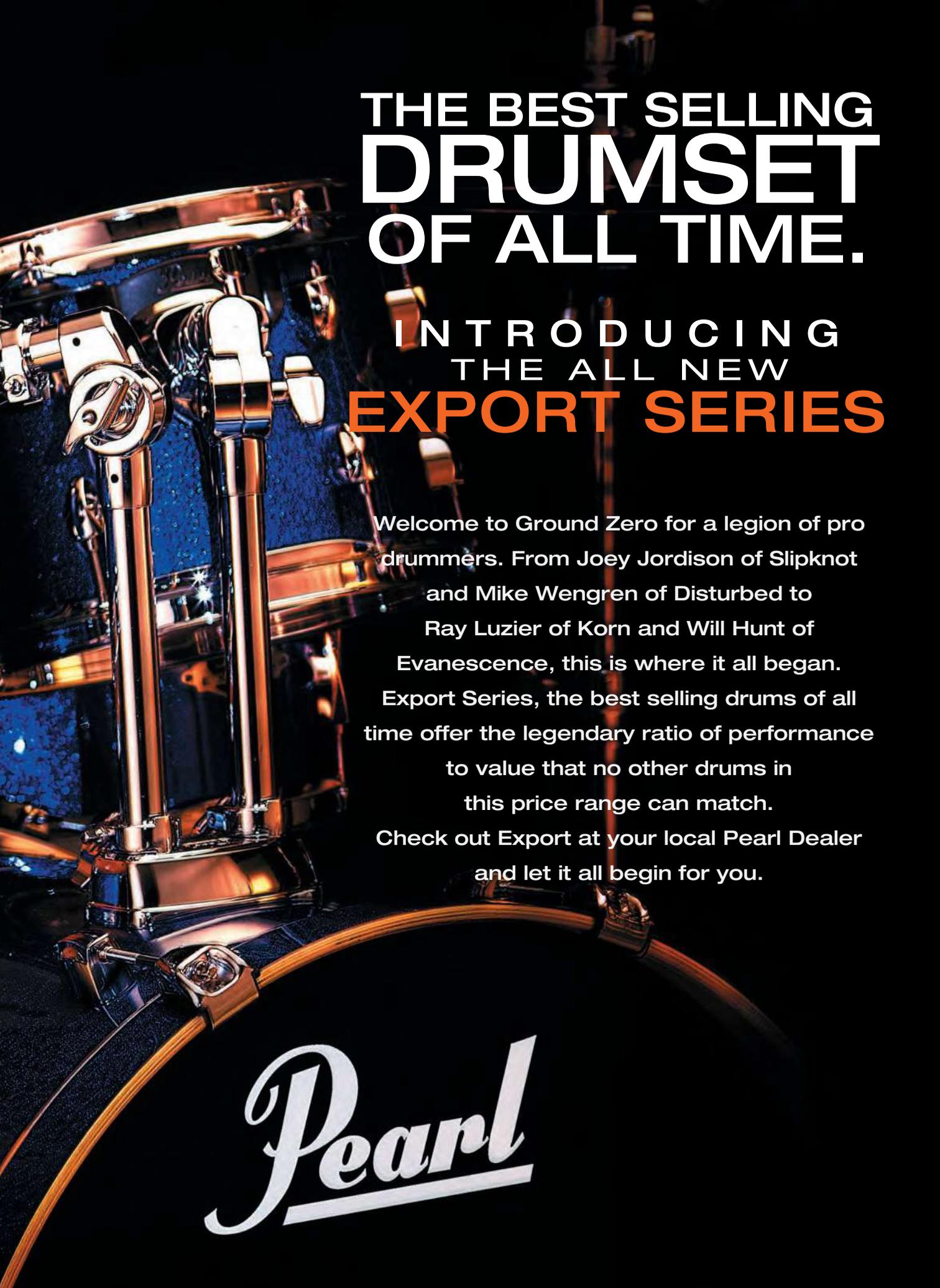




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On the Cover

42 **Ray Luzier** by Mike Haid

The “new” guy? Not so much. In fact, Korn has enjoyed the talents of this supremely hard-working shredster for six years now, and before that, David Lee Roth tapped his talents for eight. One thing’s for sure: Luzier’s passion behind the drums is as intense today as it’s ever been.

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28 **Woodshed** **Dylan Wissing** by Joe Gorelick

At his own Triple Colossal Studios, this New Jersey–based drummer has cranked out tracks for top R&B and pop stars, including Alicia Keys, Drake, and Kanye West. Here, we get a tour of his space and walk through a typical recording session.

30 **Encore** **The Power Station** by Ken Micallef

An unlikely 1985 alliance between a veteran rock crooner, an iconic new-wave band, and an R&B drummer par excellence resulted in one of the heaviest, funkier albums of the decade.

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MD Pro Panelists Kenny Washington and Dafnis Prieto help make one of our toughest drumming challenges a little easier.

34 **Steven Drozd
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The Flaming Lips have always gone about things a bit differently from everyone else. This month, the group’s dynamic drumming duo shed light on the making of their latest artistic triumph, *The Terror*.

76 **First Person**

Deep listening makes for deep drumming—at least that’s the argument that drummer and Meinl USA artist relations manager Chris Brewer makes here. Listen up, iTunes junkies!

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Unless you’re already familiar with this fascinating player, you’ve probably never seen—and definitely not heard—the unique percussive world he’s created for himself. Stratospheric rhythms from the salt of the earth.

92 **What Do You Know About...?**

Frank De Vito by Jeff Potter

“The late ‘50s into the ‘60s was a golden era—I wasn’t ‘number one,’ but I worked a lot.” The combination of realism and work ethic that the L.A. studio vet conveys with that statement is just the type of attitude that has kept him employed for more than half a century.

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Live the Dream!

It feels like such a short time ago that I was wishing *MD* readers a happy summer, and here we are already at the beginning of autumn. Time flies when you're having fun!

I hope you had the chance to get out and see a few live shows this summer; there were certainly some great acts on tour. Look for our Facebook post "What were your favorite concerts from the past summer?" and let us know who you dug the most.

Since my last editorial, the *MD* team has been planning some very cool projects, some of which will happen in 2014 and some that are right around the corner.

First off, we've decided to put the MD Festival on hold for now. After twenty-plus years, we simply want to try something different, and to that end we've partnered with David Fishof and the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp for our first joint venture. The event will take place November 8 through 10 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Now, we know that some of you may be thinking, *Are they crazy—I can't afford that!* But before you jump to any conclusions, know that we're pricing this event to be much more affordable than any in the camp's fifteen-year run, within reach of as wide a group of drummers as possible. Considering the completely unique experience you'll have, we're sure you'll agree that it's really a bargain.

As you can imagine, we're *extremely* excited about this event. *MD* has been a cosponsor of the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp for a good ten years now, and I have personally attended and performed there. I've even become friends with some of the campers and musicians who have returned multiple times.

This year's camp, as usual, is going to feature some of the world's greatest drummers, including Russ Kunkel, Hal Blaine, Jim Keltner, John "JR" Robinson, Alan White, Denny Seiwell, and Joe Vitale. Also in attendance will be first-call guitarists Danny Kortchmar and Waddy Wachtel and bassist Lee Sklar, plus equally talented singers and instrumentalists (more names to come). And the camp isn't just for drummers or fans of drumming; any other types of musicians—and anyone who just wants a chance to witness once-in-a-lifetime performances and stories—is welcome. I could go on for hours about the wonderful times I've had at the camp, but I'll leave it at this: Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp is a *must* for every musician. But don't just take my word for it—go to rockcamp.com to hear first-person testimonials and view videos of the event.

In addition, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Steve Walter, who owns the Cutting Room in New York City, where in the past we've filmed interviews with top drummers like Liberty DeVitto, Sandy Gennaro, Peter Criss, Carmine Appice, and Dino Danelli, which you can view at *Modern Drummer's* YouTube channel. We're going to continue filming interviews at the club, and we're also going to start sponsoring live performances there. The first show—Modern Drummer and the Cutting Room Present an Evening With Aaron Comess and the Spin Doctors—will be held this coming November 23. For details, see page 75 of this issue.

Thank you for your past and continued support of special *Modern Drummer* events like the MD Fest and the upcoming Fantasy Camp. Maybe one day soon we'll be fortunate to meet some of you in person. Stay tuned to moderndrummer.com for all *MD* activities, and enjoy the new issue!



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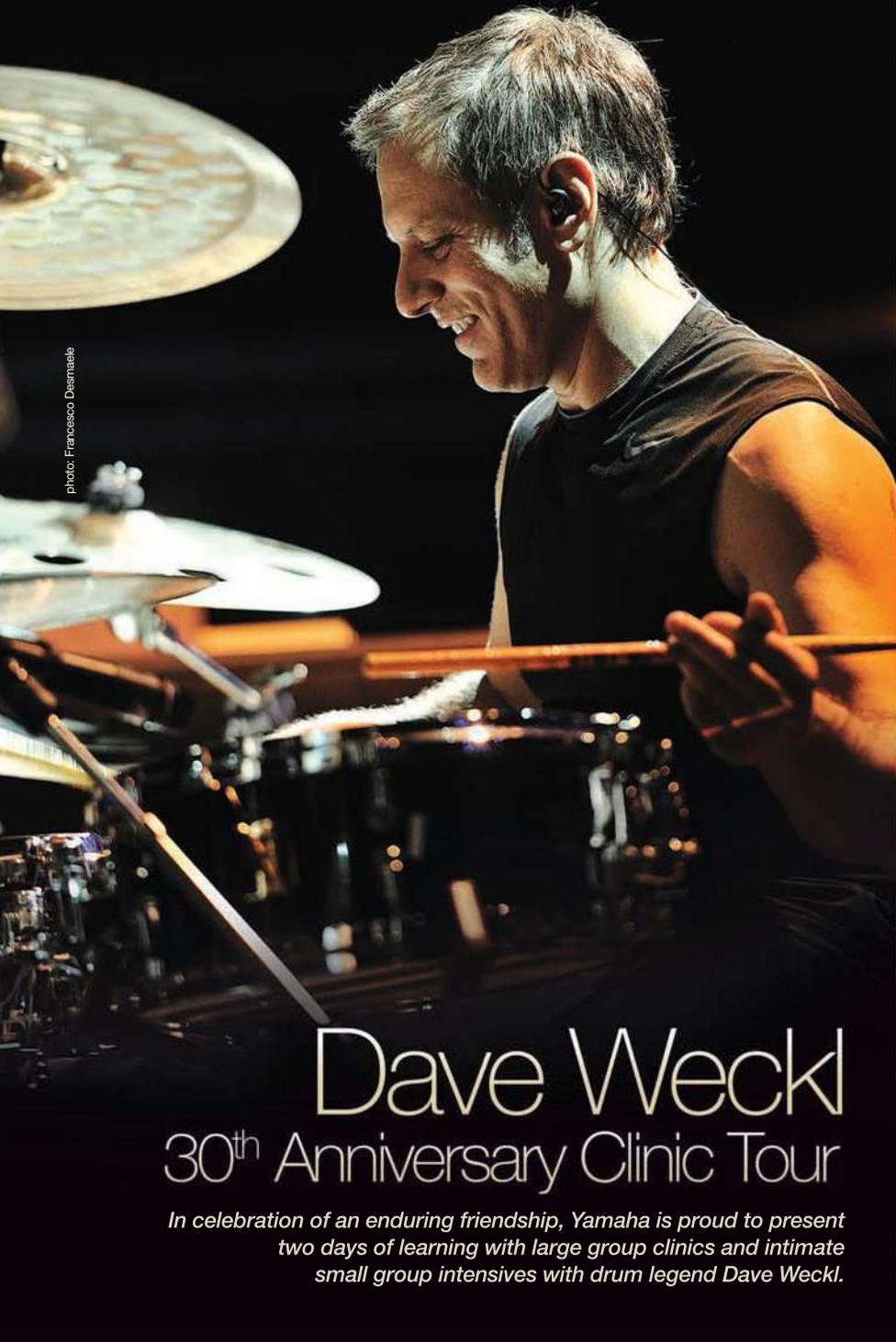
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Dave Weckl 30th Anniversary Clinic Tour

In celebration of an enduring friendship, Yamaha is proud to present two days of learning with large group clinics and intimate small group intensives with drum legend Dave Weckl.



In a career spanning more than four decades, Dave Weckl has built a reputation of integrity, creativity, and innovation. That reputation extends across the music industry – to musicians and music fans worldwide.

Yamaha invites you to join us in celebrating 30 years of uncompromising collaboration with Dave. Beginning in November, we will bring the first U.S. leg of Dave's international clinic tour to the Midwest. Each stop will feature Dave's two-day educational program including a large group clinic (open to the public) on Day One and an intimate drumming intensive limited to 20 participants on Day Two. Both programs feature Dave performing and teaching on the new Yamaha Live Custom Series drums.

For clinic information and to register for the small group intensives, please visit www.DaveWeckl.com. Additional dates and locations will be announced.



Clinic Dates

11/6/13	6:00PM	Memphis Drum Shop	Memphis, TN
11/8/13	6:00PM	Guitar Center	Nashville, TN
11/11/13	6:00PM	Guitar Center	Louisville, KY
11/13/13	7:00PM	Sweetwater Sound	Fort Wayne, IN
11/15/13	3:00PM	PASIC - Clinic	Indianapolis, IN
11/16/13	8:15PM	PASIC - Concert	Indianapolis, IN
11/18/13	6:00PM	Guitar Center	Country Club Hills, IL
11/20/13	6:00PM	Guitar Center	Madison, WI
11/22/13	6:00PM	Cascio Interstate Music	New Berlin, WI

One-Day Intensive Dates*

11/7/13	9:00AM	Memphis Drum Shop	Memphis, TN
11/9/13	9:00AM	<i>to be announced</i>	Nashville, TN
11/12/13	9:00AM	<i>to be announced</i>	Louisville, KY
11/14/13	9:00AM	Sweetwater Sound	Fort Wayne, IN
11/19/13	9:00AM	Vic's Drum Shop	Chicago, IL
11/21/13	9:00AM	<i>to be announced</i>	Madison, WI
11/23/13	9:00AM	Cascio Interstate Music	New Berlin, WI

**Please contact Steve Orkin at questions@daveweckl.com to register*



For Live Custom info, please visit 4wrd.it/LCDWMD
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CARTER BEAUFORD

I just read the Carter Beauford article from the July issue. It was very, very good. He is my inspiration and the reason I continue drumming. I have his kit replicated to a tee. Just wanted to write in and say thanks again for covering Carter and for everything that MD does for the drumming community. I'm a *Modern Drummer* junkie!

Adam Parker

Just wanted to extend a huge thank-you to your author Ilya Stemkovsky for the wonderful article on Carter Beauford. Ilya did a fantastic job and asked such insightful questions, really taking me deeper into the world of my all-time favorite drummer. We at Berklee love *Modern Drummer*! Thanks again for the great work you do. I look forward to more of Ilya's work.

Matt Iorlano, associate director of customer service and quality assurance, Berklee Media

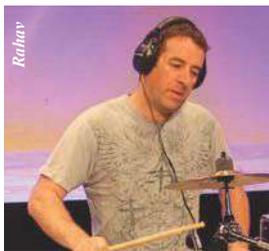
NOT SO GLAD ABOUT AN AD

Geez! I seem like such an old fart in writing this, but I have to complain about the latest Man Drums ad. So, we're going to sell drums by showing a woman pressing her breast against a fine-looking snare? Really?

I work in the media, and I know you need ad money to support the publication. The axiom "the advertiser is always right" applies. But I think you went over the line by accepting that ad. Having an ad like this in *MD* cheapens the image of your otherwise very classy publication.

I am not an owner, but with back issues stacked several feet high in my basement, I am a stakeholder in *MD*. Thanks for letting me vent!

Joe Tymecki



JIM RILEY ON ENDORSEMENTS

I really appreciated Jim Riley's honest words of advice ("The Endorsement Game," *Concepts*, August 2013). The timing of the article was perfect as well. I'd like to respectfully and honestly

approach the companies I trust and have played for years with my info and résumé of current work. Jim's article has given me some key points to check and watch for as I reach out. Thanks!

Drew Scheuer

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UPDATE

BOB D'AMICO

Once a backseat driver, Sebadoh's beat maker now commands the band's rhythms from the throne.

D'Amico and his Sebadoh bandmate Jason Loewenstein performing as Circle of Buzzards

Bryan Zimmerman

Call it a multidimensional form of musical chairs. As a young drummer, Bob D'Amico used to hang out in parking lots and cruise suburban streets in Suffolk County, New York, while blasting the indie-rock sounds of Sebadoh from the car stereo. Twenty-plus years on, D'Amico, now forty-three, has evolved from idolizing the pioneering lo-fi act to occupying its drum chair, plowing through the group's repertoire with equal measures of iron fist and finessed touch.

"The guys have never really told me what, or how, to play," D'Amico says. "I was a big fan of the band, so a lot of times when we play the old songs, I know what patterns and fills to include. It's ingrained in me."

Prior to replacing founding drummer Eric Gaffney in 2011, D'Amico recorded and performed with Sebadoh bassist Jason Loewenstein in the Fiery Furnaces and as half of the noise-rock duo Circle of Buzzards. The push and pull of this well-oiled rhythmic machine permeates Sebadoh's latest two releases—2012's *Secret* EP and this year's *Defend Yourself*, the band's first full-length album in fourteen years.

Throughout *Defend Yourself*, the Brooklyn-based drummer successfully navigates a diversity of styles, from alt-country to lo-fi rock. D'Amico even stealthily shifts into 5/4 on the instrumental

track "Once," which he managed to do without raising any red flags from his compatriots. "I was thinking, *I wonder if these guys are going to notice that the song is in an odd meter*," D'Amico says. "I was out in the woods, camping, when I thought up that odd-time rhythm. When I got back to the cabin and onto the computer, I started using the beat-box functionality in GarageBand software and saved my work."

Outside the Sebadoh universe, D'Amico has been busy hunting and foraging for new musical challenges, such as those presented by the genre-bending project Saqqara Mastaba, with his Fiery Furnaces bandmate Matthew Friedberger. Fluctuating between synth-drone rock, drum 'n' bass, and symphonic techno art-pop, Saqqara Mastaba (the name references the stepped pyramids of Ancient Egypt) highlights D'Amico's ability to construct compelling rhythm tracks. "My kit was recorded with one microphone in my basement," Bob says, adding that he exchanged audio files

with Friedberger over a span of about four weeks to complete the recordings. "And the beat-box-like stuff you hear is just me plunking away on a MIDI-controller keyboard with TR-808 preset sounds in GarageBand drum tools. Nothing is looped. It's all manual."

At press time, D'Amico's DIY approach continues: The drummer is in the midst of solidifying the recording details for his solo project, *No Chief*. "I was looking for a female vocalist, and I think I've found one," he says. "I sent her my music and hoped she wasn't repulsed by it. She agreed to meet me, so apparently she wasn't. [laughs] I hope to get that off the ground soon."

Will Romano



ON TOUR

Matt Cameron with Pearl Jam /// **Shannon Leto** with Thirty Seconds to Mars /// **Chris Hartz** with Passion Pit /// **Jeremy Spencer** with Five Finger Death Punch /// **Eric Slick** with Dr. Dog /// **Aaron Sterling** with John Mayer /// **Steve Gorman** with the Black Crowes

ORRI PÁLL DÝRASON

Sigur Rós takes steps to turn up the heat with its new music, starting with the drums.



Lilja Birgisdóttir

Sigur Rós's latest album, *Kveikur*, finds the Icelandic band amping up its famously dreamy soundscapes, last heard on 2012's *Valtari*, with a more aggressive approach to Orri Páll Dýrason's linear, combustible blend of aggro Latin rhythms and treated samples. Dýrason says that after the recent departure of longtime keyboardist Kjartan Sveinsson, the band sought new horizons. "We wanted to have more bashing and driving, more bass and drums, to get out of our comfort zone," he explains. "I sampled glockenspiel, gongs, and celeste, and often placed cymbals on the heads of my snare and floor tom. It makes it sound trashy when I play them like that. And it's easy to play bell parts if the bell is [on a sample pad] right in front of you."

Dýrason recorded his parts for *Kveikur* on a Gretsch USA Custom kit consisting of 14x26 and 18x18 bass drums, a 10x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom, plus a 6.5x14 Ayotte snare drum. This was complemented by an unusual cymbal setup that included a 1970s-era Paiste Formula 602 Flat ride that functioned as a giant bell, and hi-hats consisting of a Sabian 18" Virgil Donati Signature Saturation crash on top and an 18" AA El Sabor crash on the bottom. "Those are not struck so much," Dýrason says, "but they are less 'metal sounding' and clunky when I step on the pedal."

As usual with Sigur Rós, Dýrason recorded the drums to analog tape, not Pro Tools. "I always speed up the tape and play the drum parts faster than they are

meant to be," he reveals. "Then I slow down the tape and the guys record their parts to that. I like the sound of slowed-down drums. It's kind of squishy—and deeper, of course. I've always done that. And it's really good for shakers and maracas too!" Sigur Rós is currently on tour in Europe, including stops at the O2 Arena in Dublin and Wembley Arena in London.

Ken Micallef

NEWS



AN INNOVATOR PASSES

Latin-jazz drummer Steve Berrios died this past July at the age of sixty-eight, at his home in Manhattan. Berrios had a distinguished career, featuring work with the influential Afro-Cuban percussionist Mongo Santamaría, jazz legend Max Roach, and Latin-jazz pioneer Tito Puente. For more on Berrios, visit moderndrummer.com.



DRUMS ALIVE!

Photographer Jay Blakesberg, whose work has appeared in *Modern Drummer*, *Rolling Stone*, *Guitar Player*, and other top music publications, is releasing his seventh coffee table book, *Jam*. The book features

more than 300 live shots of the Grateful Dead, Phish, the Dave Matthews Band, the Roots, the Flaming Lips, Wilco, and many other acts, as well as exclusive artist quotes about their influences and experiences performing live. *Jam*, which can be preordered now at amazon.com, will be available on October 15.



STEVEN FISHER NAMED MARKETING MANAGER FOR YAMAHA ELECTRONIC DRUMS

The Yamaha Corporation of America recently announced the appointment of Steven Fisher to the position of marketing manager for electronic drums. Fisher's primary responsibility will be to advance the market for the company's DTX line. Before joining Yamaha, Fisher spent more than twenty years with the Roland Corporation U.S. and performed with Maynard Ferguson, Dizzy Gillespie, and Blood, Sweat & Tears, among others.

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CDs

Dream Theater *Dream Theater* (Mike Mangini) // **HBS** (Ben Shepherd) *In Deep Owl* (Matt Cameron, Matt Chamberlain, Joseph Braley, Greg Gilmore) // **Jonny Lang** *Fight for*

My Soul (Barry Alexander) // **Quasi** *Mole City* (Janet Weiss) // **Pelican** *Forever Becoming* (Larry Herweg) // **Kenny Garrett** *Pushing the World Away* (McCleenty Hunter, Marcus Baylor, Mark Whitfield Jr.) // **Kings of Leon** *Mechanical Bull* (Nathan Followill) // **The Julie Ruin** *Run Fast* (Carmine Covelli) // **Scar the Martyr** *Scar the Martyr* (Joey Jordison) // **The Mission** *The Brightest Light* (Mike Kelly) // **Atomic Bride** *Electric Order* (Chris "Couts" Coutsouridis) // **Gov't Mule** *Shout!* (Matt Abts) // **Gwar** *Battle Maximus* (Brad Roberts) // **The Devil Wears Prada** *8:18* (Daniel Williams) // **Nirvana** *In Utero* 20th Anniversary Edition (Dave Grohl)

DVDs

Peter Gabriel *Live in Athens 1987* (Manu Katché) // **The Smashing Pumpkins** *Oceania: Live in NYC* (Mike Byrne) // **Black Label Society** *Unblackened* (Chad Szeliga) // **Devin Townsend Project** *Retinal Circus* (Ryan Van Poederoyen)



WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Vinnie Colaiuta, **Jeremiah Fraites** (the Lumineers), **McCoy Gibbs** (Love and Theft), **Daniel Platzman** (Imagine Dragons), **Joey Williams** (New Edition), **Taylor York** (Paramore), **Karma Auger** (Brian Auger's Oblivion Express), **John Coghlan** (Status Quo), **Jason Cooper** (the Cure), and **Joe Crabbtree** (Wishbone Ash) have joined Vic Firth.



Chester Elander (Pacific, Pasadena, San Diego, and Santa Barbara Symphonies), **Sean Connors** (Third Coast Percussion), **Adam Groh** (Round Rock, Victoria, and Northwest Florida Symphonies), and **Ian Antonio** (Zs, Talujon) are new to Pearl's artist roster.



Must-Have Gear Equipment the Pros Won't Leave Home Without



This Month: John Fogerty's **KENNY ARONOFF**

Whether I'm playing live or in the studio, I always have my 5x14 signature Tama Trackmaster snare, with a die-cast hoop on it. I also use my trusty Tama Power Glide or Rolling Glide double bass drum pedal, with big wooden beaters. I never leave home without my signature Kenny Aronoff Vic Firth drumsticks, lots of drum keys, and my Tama Rhythm Watch. But, most important, my hands, my feet, my soul, and my personality are always the biggest part of what I bring with me on every gig!



BACK *Through the* STACK

In January 1985, we asked Yes drummer **ALAN WHITE** about the methods he uses when creating rhythms from demo tapes, and how his approach works with different bassists.

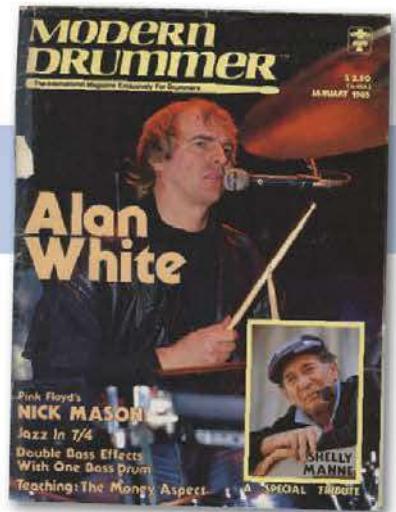
The way [Yes bassist] Chris Squire and I work together, we both strive for the same things in a rhythm. We just have a special working relationship that encourages the two of us to come up with some pretty solid rhythms. The interesting thing is that it took us a long time to learn how to play together. But once we locked into each other's style and ideas, we became a very good team. A lot of the things we come up with are actually very spontaneous.

It's really great when a drummer can work with the same bass player for a couple of years. You can work things out a lot easier, and then you begin to bounce ideas off each other with very positive results. Sometimes it's difficult playing with a bassist [other than Chris Squire]; other times it's quite easy. Sometimes you get lucky and hit it off right away. I like to play games in situations like that. I'll pretend I'm going to hit a certain beat, and then don't hit it. It forces me and whoever's playing bass to focus in on each other very quickly. But I usually know the bass players I play with other than Chris. If it's someone brand-new, well, there's a musical language we can use to communicate with.

I think the drummer's main role in any band is always to be the backbone. I'm not a great fan of drummers who leap into the spotlight and, in effect, say, "Hey, this is my thing!" I like to be a part

of the band. That's the only way I can do my job. A drummer has to make the band swing, even if they do get into complex rhythms.

I like playing different time signatures, especially when the rest of the band stays in one signature. On occasion I'll deliberately go into a time signature that's entirely different from what's expected. But at the same time, I'm listening to the basic beat of the song and making sure the song swings in its normal rhythm. It's like trying to detach my mind from the music; often it's quite difficult to do properly. This is something I've been working on a lot, however. It's fun and extremely challenging.



To read the entire Alan White interview—and all the other great material from the January 1985 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.



The first time I played Meinl,
the touch and feel were nice.....
They have a certain characteristic
of sound where you end up with
something personal.



Ralph Peterson
Professor - Berklee College of Music
Ralph Peterson Fo'tet / Sextet

Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

Emotional Problems, or Just Quirky?

My band has a new bass player. He's a solid musician, but he's starting to creep me out. He has a strange habit of bursting out with random statements when we're having a conversation. Once it was, "Do you think it was God's will for us to break up?" (He and his girlfriend recently split.) And then, at a recent practice, he went berserk when our singer picked up the bass and started playing. He yanked the bass out of the singer's hands and then took about ten minutes to carefully inspect it. He spent the rest of rehearsal glaring at the singer. Is this guy crazy? Should I be worried for my safety?

JWM

I want to both compliment and caution you. You've given me detailed behaviors, which provides a nice "video" description (sight and sound) for me to work with. Good job! But using a generalized term like *crazy* only muddies the waters.

Musicians are artists, and artists sometimes engage in eccentric behaviors. The Who's Keith Moon often smashed his drums at the end of performances. Jimi Hendrix lit his guitar on fire. B.B King named his guitar Lucille. Van Gogh cut off part of his ear. Were they eccentric, delusional, creatively idiosyncratic, mentally ill, or drug addicted? Was it possibly all of the above? It's a big question mark.

Suppose I went to Times Square in New York City, stripped off all my clothes, and dumped a bucket of cocktail sauce on my head while shouting, "Save the shrimp! Save the shrimp!" Would I be a performance artist, a protester for PETA, or mentally ill? Now, if I had a bag filled with cocktail forks and started stabbing pedestrians, then I'd be crossing the line from harmless display to harmful actions. Either way, I'd probably be carted off to a psychiatric unit. If I told the psychiatrist I

really was a shrimp and had to fight back against the humans who were eating my family, I'd be delusional, and I would be given a diagnosis and—hopefully—some good therapy.

But if I said it was performance art or that I was with PETA—and I didn't poke anyone with a fork—I'd probably simply be busted for indecent exposure or for creating a disturbance. My point is that the mental-health expert wouldn't know what was truly going on until he or she interviewed me.

Let me caution you against interviewing your bassist. You're the drummer, not the band's mental-health worker. But do keep observing his behaviors. This is essential. Your bandmate sometimes comes forth with "random" statements. To snag a line from an old Janis Ian song, perhaps this guy is simply "lacking in the social graces." I find it annoying, for instance, when an individual abruptly cuts into a conversation I'm having with someone else. But that's where my level of emotional upset stays—it's simply annoying.

You mentioned that this bass player recently broke up with his girlfriend. His "random" question about whether the split was God's will speaks volumes about what's foremost in his thoughts. Perhaps he was just thinking out loud. The breakup is a loss, and he may be quite depressed.

At gigs, I used to allow other drummers to sit in. But after so many shattered sticks and a couple of ripped bass drum heads, I now have a policy that only I play my kit. When someone broke a piece of my gear, it was awkward, to say the least. Do you ask for reimbursement? Do you take the money if it's offered without your asking? Maybe I should have made the statement "You break it, you buy it." It doesn't matter. Nobody touches my stuff anymore except me. Maybe that's how your bassist feels. He's new to your band. Perhaps in the past someone picked up his favorite bass,

dropped it, and broke the neck.

Also, the fact that he spent the rest of the rehearsal glaring at your singer doesn't warrant your bringing a Glock to your next practice. It continues to be a prevailing myth that anyone with a diagnosable mental illness is inherently violent. It's just not true.

Okay, we've explored the eccentric-artist-versus-mental-illness issue. Now, do I think the bassist presents a threat to you physically? I don't know. Unfortunately, I don't have the advantage of interviewing him. Sometimes there are warning signs that suggest an individual is planning a violent act, but other times it seems that someone simply snaps, without visible indicators of impending rage.

Observe your bassist's behaviors without putting him under a microscope, meaning don't fall into the habit of obsessively watching his every move. If, over time, his anger appears to be escalating—he's screaming, throwing objects, or threatening violence—you'll need to have a band meeting without him. Then, as a group, go and speak with his family about your concerns, listing specific behaviors you've witnessed. Always come from a stance of care and concern if you meet with his family. Never use accusatory language or colloquial phrases such as *screwed up* or *acting nuts*. This will only put family members on the defensive. If your bandmate were to physically harm you, contact the authorities. Above all, be sure to protect yourself.



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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MAPEX SATURN IV MH EXOTIC DRUMSET AND NOMAD SNARE

by Stephen Bidwell

Mapex has rebooted its Saturn series for 2013 with new finishes, new hardware, and other appointments. The series' thin maple and walnut shells are now available in two editions. The Saturn IV MH features chrome hardware, 6-ply toms, 8-ply bass drums, and more traditional finishes, while Saturn IV MH Exotic drums feature an additional outer ply of exotic wood veneer (7-ply toms and 9-ply bass drums)

New suspension mounts, floor tom legs, and bass drum spurs are just a few of the thoughtful and functional upgrades made to Mapex's flagship Saturn series.

and black-chrome hardware. (MH stands for "maple hybrid.") Both series are priced competitively and offer a wealth of high-end features.

THE SAMPLE PACKAGE

Mapex shipped us a five-piece MH Exotic setup in "deep water ash burl." The dark blue finish is aptly named, as the center portion of the shells almost looked as if the figured ash wood grain was underwater and faded to black toward the rims. The dark hardware, combined with the dark blue-and-black finish, made for a menacing overall appearance. The kit we checked out included 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and an 18x22 bass drum. Upgrades for 2013 include new badges, restyled lugs, SONIClear suspension mounts and floor tom legs, and Memory Mark bass drum spurs.

The toms shipped with Remo Clear Emperor tom heads, and the bass drum had a Clear Powerstroke 3 batter. Saturn bass drums can be ordered with a sliding tom mount, but our review kick had no mounting hardware. Separate tom clamps and arms

were included. We didn't get a matching snare, but they are available in 5.5x13, 5.5x14, and 6.5x14 sizes, in both editions of the Saturn IV.

FULLY FUNCTIONING HARDWARE

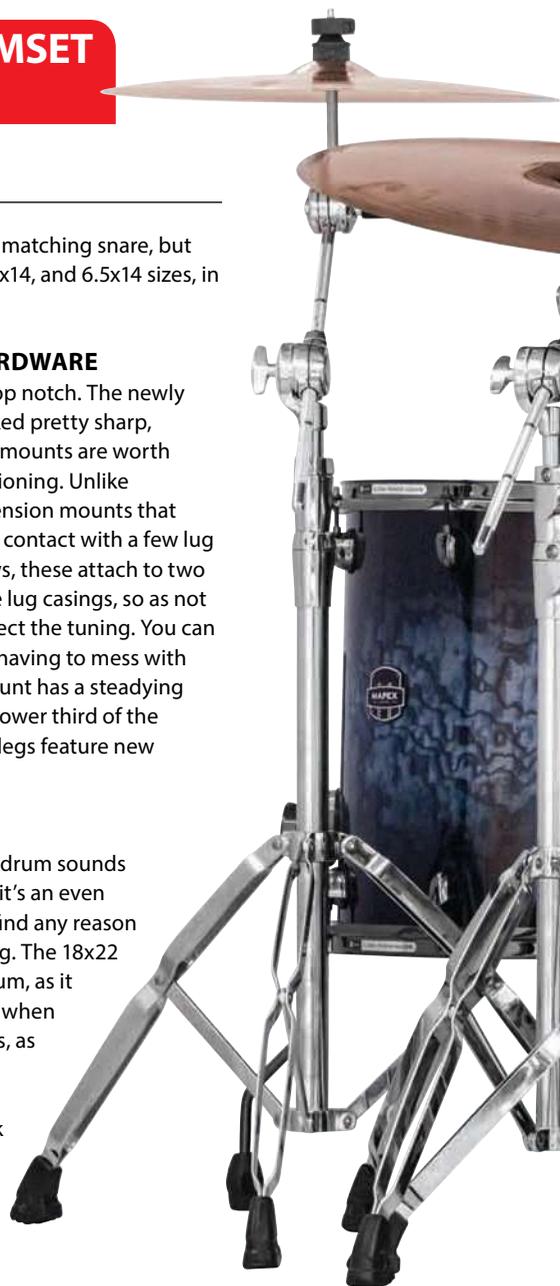
The hardware on this kit was top notch. The newly designed lower-mass lugs looked pretty sharp, and the SONIClear suspension mounts are worth

mentioning. Unlike suspension mounts that make contact with a few lug screws, these attach to two of the lug casings, so as not to affect the tuning. You can

also change the head without having to mess with the bracket. The SONIClear mount has a steadying arm that cushions against the lower third of the shell. The SONIClear floor tom legs feature new shock-absorbing feet.

BASS DRUM

It's a rare pleasure when a kick drum sounds great right out of the box, and it's an even better luxury when you don't find any reason to retune it after days of playing. The 18x22 kick in this kit was one such drum, as it had plenty of punch and body when played with the supplied heads, as they were tuned at the factory. It gained some focus when I swapped out the smooth black front head for a ported head, and adding a beater contact pad gave the drum a bit more attack. The Memory Mark spurs came preset



NOMAD SNARE DRUM



Mapex partnered with Living Colour's Will Calhoun on a unique addition to the Black Panther snare collection, called the Nomad. According to a posted video on the company's website, Calhoun had been thinking about the design for this snare for fifteen years. His research even involved burying a shell for more than three years to achieve an organic sound. The goal is to represent Calhoun's life as a drummer.

The 6x13 Nomad (\$729) offers a smooth but cutting sound and features a 1.2 mm brass shell with 45-degree bearing edges. It comes with an earthy, rust-colored, brushed finish, called Sirocco burst, and is punctuated by round hieroglyphics of suns and stars, a Black Panther badge, chrome tube lugs, and brushed-black Sonic Saver

hoops. The Cylinder-Drive strainer held premium stainless steel snare wires in place and is adjusted on the butt-plate side. The strainer held adjustments well and operated very smoothly. The Sonic Saver hoops are rounded over, like a die-cast or S-hoop, to save stick life.

Being a 13" brass drum, the Nomad sounded great cranked up, but the 6" depth allowed for more substance and weight at all tunings. Tuning the drum down and placing a pair of Moongels just inside the rim at the ten and two o'clock positions made for a nice, low crack, while tuning it up to mimic Calhoun's snare sound on "Time's Up" made for a textbook punk-rock backbeat. The Nomad offers plenty of practical uses as a main or an auxiliary snare.



so that no adjustment was required to allow the drum to sit flat on the floor, but whatever tweaks you might want to make are simple and smooth to execute, thanks to the spurs' slick functionality.

TOMS

The word I kept coming back to when considering the Saturn IV toms was *punchy*. Clear Emperor heads aren't my regular choice on my own kits, but they were exactly what this kit called for, bringing out depth from the floor toms

and adding some bottom end to the rack toms. Other configurations of the Saturn IV MH offer shallower toms, but I particularly liked the fullness of the 9x12 rack tom and both floor toms when tuned wide open. I rarely play a 10" tom anymore, but the 8x10 on this kit blended well with the rest of the set. My favorite tuning on these drums was wide open, with the heads barely above wrinkling. They sounded a bit choked at higher tunings but would probably work great in that range with single-ply heads. If 100 percent maple

shells are too bright sounding for your tastes, the walnut plies of the Saturn series do much to warm up the sound without sacrificing punch.

These are ideal-sounding drums for those who play pop, funk, metal, country, R&B, or gospel music. And while they feature enough high-end features to be a working pro's main kit, the \$3,049 suggested retail price puts the Mapex Saturn IV MH series within reach for many hobbyists.

mapexdrums.com



PAISTE

SIGNATURE PRECISION CYMBALS

by David Ciauro



In April 2013, Paiste launched the Signature Precision series, which is designed to capture all of the distinguished character and sophistication of the renowned Signature series in a more wallet-friendly package. The Precision line uses the same proprietary Signature alloy as its elite predecessor, so the cost-saving

The 14" Sound Edge hi-hats (\$606) also had a fierce bite, but the scalloped bottom cymbal created a faster attack with a slicker swoosh and a wisper chick sound.

CRASHES

The 16" (\$325) and 18" (\$438) Precision Thin crashes were slightly lower pitched

and allowed the impressive evenness of the ride's wash to become the focal point. The 22" Heavy ride (\$592) lived up to its name with a stout ping, a large bell, and a lot of attitude. The bell was piercingly loud but could easily be tamed when struck with a lighter touch.

EFFECTS CYMBALS

Rounding out the Signature Precision series is a 10" splash (\$222) and an 18" China (\$438). The splash had a thin, high-pitched, trashy attack and a fast decay. The 18" China was also on the brighter side of the spectrum but had good projection and some pleasant nastiness.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The Precision lineup is definitely in the same ballpark, as far as sound, as the higher-end Signature series but is less robust and full bodied by comparison—although its thinner tonality is not a deficiency. The resultant sound of the Signature Precision series is, in fact, more precise and exact in nature. The glassier attack of the hi-hats and crashes allows the cymbals to cut through, with quicker decay times. Such attributes may make this line's playing applications, as well as its more modest price points, appealing to a wider audience.

paiste.com

Laser-beam focus and more affordable pricing make these cymbals a great choice for budget-conscious drummers who demand professional, precise-sounding instruments.

efforts were not at the expense of the ingredients' quality. Instead, Paiste examined the manufacturing process and came up with a way to retain the necessary sonic descriptors attached to the Signature fleet (bright, full, clear, and musical), while also making the Precision series more economically accessible. We recently had the chance to check out the entire existing Signature Precision lineup.

14" HI-HATS

The regular 14" Precision hi-hats (\$606) had a nice top end and sharp, defined stick articulation that was balanced by a percussive chick sound. The bright tone of the top cymbal didn't have a lot of body but was very crisp. The chick sound was the best feature of this pair, adding some strong chomp to grooves.

and warmer sounding than the regular crashes and thus had a wider attack with a smoother wash and decay. The attack and projection paths of the 16", 17", and 18" regular-weight crashes were more direct and linear. The 16" had the brightest personality, with subtle brashness, whereas the 17" (\$394) and 18" models had a more consistent and "mature" decay.

20" RIDE AND 22" HEAVY RIDE

The 20" Projection ride (\$504) aims to have an all-purpose sound with a crisp and clear bell, clean attack, and tamed wash. With that in mind, the cymbal proved to be quite sensitive and responsive to stick choice. A 7A stick with a nylon tip allowed the articulation to shine without being consumed by overtones, while a 2B stick with a wood tip diminished the articulation



SPAUN

TAMO ASH DRUMSET

by Nick Amoroso

I have a thing about glossy, beautifully veneered, mirror-lacquered drums—they scare me. See, I've spent a lot of time on the road, and I've played in a lot of

Gorgeous looks and high-class sounds for collectors and discerning players alike.

sketchy places. I've seen drums tumble down flights of stairs, get dropped or thrown by overzealous stagehands, fall out of trailers, and even get run over by a van. I've been rained on while playing a show *indoors*. I guess what I'm trying to say is that while no drum is indestructible, I've grown to really appreciate the ruggedness of a wrap finish on a wood drum. So when I opened the cases and noticed that these drums are finished more finely than any furniture I own, I got a little nervous. Then, factoring in that this kit is a limited edition work, being one of only ten that will ever be made...

The gorgeous drums I'm referring to make up a Tamo Ash kit from the Spaun drum company, located in Chino,

California. Sizes include 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms with Spaun's SSS mounts, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms on legs, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 6x14 snare. The toms

came with clear Evans G2 batters and G1 bottoms, the kick came with a clear EMAD batter and a

black EQ3 front head, and the snare had a coated G2 batter and a 300 Hazy bottom.

As I said, the first thing that grabbed my attention when I opened the cases was the visual beauty of these drums; they are just stunning. The kit is finished in a mouth-watering Tamo Ash veneer that sits beautifully under a small ocean of lacquer. The veneer on each drum was complex looking, yet the pieces were visually consistent with one other. The icing on the cake was a strip of blue abalone that spans the center point of each shell. These inlays were done perfectly, and

they felt almost like part of the veneer. I couldn't feel any raises or dips between them and the shell. Each drum is finished with a limited edition badge.

After fighting off a panic attack caused by the thought of actually taking the drums out of my house, I pulled myself together and played them on gigs in two different venues. In each situation, they spoke quite well. The shells are 8-ply maple, and the consistency of thickness from drum to drum is an important feature, according to Spaun. As stated on its website, the composition of the shell



plies ensures “both maximum tuning range and consistent voicing from drum to drum.” If that’s the company’s definition of drumset components that sound as if they all belong together, then Spaun nailed it. The drums sounded fat, live, and punchy. And each component had a pleasant blend of highs, mids, and lows.

The toms were warm, present, and, according to a fellow musician, “*really* live sounding.” They had a lot of attack, cut, and tone, plus an exceptional tuning range. They could go low without sounding flabby, and when I really cranked them there was just a slight amount of choking.

With the pre-muffled batter head and nothing else inside, the bass drum sounded massive. It had a fat, wonderfully controlled boom with just a slight bit of a bouncing-basketball tone that was cleared up with more careful tensioning of the front head. Even when muffled with an hourglass pillow placed inside, it still had

plenty of tone and bigness.

The Tamo Ash snare was my favorite piece of the kit. It had a pleasant dry quality, thanks to the die-cast hoops, and produced a nice crack at all tensions. This drum gives you a lot of sonic options, which I feel every good snare should do. It came equipped with Spaun’s own throw-off, which is straightforward and did the job well. (Dunnett and Trick throw-offs are also available at an additional cost.)

The double-45-degree bearing edges used on these shells makes for precise, even, and easy tuning. And the tension rods stay where you leave them because of Spaun’s proprietary SBR (Solid Brass Resonator) lugs. Each lug is machined from solid brass, and the tolerances are so tight that the tension rods actually squeak when you turn them. This initially bothered me, but I soon changed my mind after playing the kit for forty-five minutes, as I realized that the tension rods never

moved on any of the drums. You might not love these tighter lugs if you’re used to tensioning drums by feel. But if you find yourself buying aftermarket tension rods, lug locks, or other devices designed to keep your tuning from slipping, then you might greatly value this feature.

Now, as I explained in the beginning, lacquered drums make me tremble like a puppy, so I was especially careful when handling this kit. But every now and then I would accidentally hit the bass drum hoop with a stick. Thankfully, not a lick of damage occurred. Obviously, I wouldn’t go smacking these, or any other drum, repeatedly and on purpose, but you won’t have to worry about an occasional tap destroying the beautiful finish.

The four toms and bass drum can be ordered directly from Spaun’s website for just shy of \$6,500. The snare sells separately for \$699, but it’s 50 percent cheaper if purchased with the kit.

spaundrums.com



GIBRALTAR

LIGHTNING ROD TELESCOPING SINGLE-BRACED HI-HAT STAND

by Miguel Monroy



It’s the little things in life that make all the difference, and Gibraltar has made every effort to provide hardware that offers as much flexibility as possible. One of the latest additions to the company’s lineup is the Lightning Rod Telescoping Single-Braced Hi-Hat Stand, or “LRTSBHHS,” as we like to call it.

This stand is lightweight and very durable. The highlights, however, are its ability to be positioned at extremely low playing heights and the option to adjust the height of the hi-hat rod itself. The first thing I noticed when the stand was positioned for my playing height was that there was now all this

There’s no need to pull out the hacksaw to lop o~ the t op few inches of your hi-hat stand, thanks to Gibraltar’s latest invention.

free space directly above the hi-hats. I had adjusted the hi-hat rod so that only about 1” showed above the clutch, whereas the rod on my previous stand extended about 6” past the clutch. This newfound space allowed me to lower my left-side crash to a more comfortable and natural playing position, or I could add a splash in that spot.

Another benefit of the LRTSBHHS is that it’s a much better fit for younger players. A couple of my students, who are under the age of ten, took full advantage of the stand’s low playing position and rod adjustment capabilities. It allowed them to get a much better spatial relationship between the hi-hat and the snare.

I would love to see a couple more options added to this stand, such as a tension adjustment for the pedal, as well as a double-braced version. As it currently stands, though, the LRTSBHHS is a great option for players looking for a high-quality, low-profile hi-hat stand with rod-height adjustment. List price is \$185.

gibraltarhardware.com

SWAN PERCUSSION

BLACK SWAN

by Stephen Bidwell

Let's say you play a lot of gigs on cajon. What if you want to incorporate a bass drum or a frame drum into your setup but you don't want to carry extra gear? Swan Percussion, of Wimberley, Texas, offers

Taking the kit-in-a-box approach a step beyond your basic cajon, the Black Swan offers a wide range of tones in a portable package.

a unique solution with the Black Swan, a hybrid instrument comprising a wood cajon and a tunable 16" drum that offers a wide range of possibilities for creative sounds in a very portable package.

Swan Percussion is a partnership between designer/craftsman Eric Holland and drummer/percussionist Mike Meadows. The Black Swan instrument was the duo's first design, but they have since added cajons and shakers to their product line, as well as a bongo-size cajon instrument, called the Swango.

The Black Swan has a wood frame that's sturdy enough to sit on, and the instrument features an open back, along with open side areas that can be covered with spring-loaded "slap panels." The front features a tunable 16" head that mounts to the frame with four clamps. The slap panels are currently available in wood (metal panels are a special order) and can be tensioned to achieve looser or tighter slap sounds. The spring on the inside pushes the panel away from the frame when you slap it. Included with the drum are two sizes of Allen wrenches, used for adjusting an optional pedal bracket that attaches to the underside of the frame. The slap panels are adjusted with a medium-size Phillips-head screwdriver.

To tune the drum, a hand crank that's accessed through the open side of the frame tensions a counterhoop on the inside of the head. Any 16" head can be used, and the 18x18x18 Black Swan fits into any standard floor tom case. For extra portability, the open cavity of the Black Swan can be used to store shakers,



bells, or whatever else you need on the gig. The bamboo Black Swan model we tested weighed around thirty-five pounds. Maple and cherry frames are also available and weigh about five pounds less. Up close, the Black Swan looks like a fine piece of cabinetry.

The Swan guys supplied the drum with a Remo Bahia head, which is a Mylar and Naugahyde model meant for Brazilian surdo drums, and they included an Ebony logo head to try as well. I started by tuning the Bahia as low as possible without making it wrinkle. Despite its open construction, the Black Swan's frame created a surprisingly active echo

chamber, with a meaty frame-drum sound at such a low tuning. I attached a bass drum pedal to the optional pedal bracket and set the beater just off center, which produced a round, earthy kick drum tone. A few turns of the crank allowed for a higher, jazzier sound, while playing with my hands gave off more traditional frame-drum tones, like what you'd get from a tar or bodhran.

When I switched over to the Ebony head, the Black Swan produced glassier textures, and the head allowed for easier slaps and more defined finger strokes. The method for changing the heads took some getting used to, but the design is simple

enough that you can get a good sound from any 16" model very quickly.

My first inclination was to play funk beats on the Black Swan, using the drumhead as the kick and the slap panel as the snare, while filling in ghost notes on the frame, toward the edge of the head, and on the slap panel itself. Since the slap panel has two screws, I found that one side could be tensioned tighter than the other to provide contrasting sounds.

Swan's Mike Meadows pointed out that he has sound engineers place a bass drum mic inside the frame, pointed at the drumhead. This placement worked well for the basic recordings I made with the Black Swan, and I could easily clip a Sennheiser e604 tom mic to the frame so that it pointed at the slap panel. The frame also leaves room to clamp a few moderate-size shakers and bells.

With a retail price of \$1,237, the bamboo

Black Swan is the costliest of the wood versions. (Maple and cherry models retail for \$1,179.) This could seem pricey for what might initially appear to be a novelty instrument. But with applications limited only by your own imagination, and by being a conveniently portable replacement for an entire drumkit, the Black Swan is a worthy investment for some serious percussion experimentation.

swanpercussion.com

CANOPUS

8x14 ZELKOVA SNARE DRUM

by Michael Dawson

DIGITALLY
ENHANCED
modern drummer.com

Plywood drum shells are standard these days for a few different reasons. For one, the thin veneers used in plywood are easier to shape and mold into a cylinder than solid planks are. Also, once cured, plywood shells are very stable and durable. Before the use of plywood, which came about during the first half of the twentieth century, all wood-shell drums were formed by steam-bending single

Whittling a drum from a log is an ancient practice, but there's nothing antique or crude about this modern masterpiece.

pieces, gluing together vertical staves, or hollowing out a tree trunk. These types of "solid" drums are generally revered for having a very rich, strong, and resonant tone. The problem with the hollowed-trunk variety is that because the grain of the wood runs vertically, and because there's no glue used in the shell's construction, the shell can be prone to cracking, especially if exposed to extreme weather.

Japanese drum maker Canopus's flagship snare, the Zelkova, features a thick 14 mm solid shell made from 200-year-old zelkova redwood. To eliminate the potential for cracking, Canopus dries the wood for three years, until it reaches a moisture content of 9 percent, then bores the shell with a slight barrel-style outward bend (similar to what you find on traditional Chinese toms and Japanese taiko drums), and uses a special height-adjustable lug that can be tweaked to accommodate contraction or expansion of the shell. (The shell can widen in high humidity,



therefore causing excessive strain on the wood if the lugs aren't adjusted.) Canopus also undersizes the shell, so the drumhead sits on the bearing edge a bit further in from the collar than it does on other drums, similar to what you see on timpani. Lastly, no air-hole grommet is used on Zelkova drums, to eliminate the potential for hardware rattle if the shell were to change over time.

We were sent a mammoth 8-lug, 8x14 Zelkova (\$1,569) to review, which came with die-cast hoops, the aforementioned adjustable brass tube lugs, a standard Canopus throw-off, Bolt Tight leather/metal washers, Vintage snare wires, and Remo Ambassador drumheads (coated batter and clear snare-side). After experimenting with various bearing-edge profiles, Canopus settled on one for the Zelkova that has a very sharp angle, which is said to bring out the most resonance

from the shell.

In action, the 8x14 Zelkova proved to be a powerhouse with a limitless tuning range, supreme sensitivity, and an incredibly resonant tone. Just tapping the drum lightly with a finger close to the edge produced a sound with a five-second sustain. This added resonance was great for minimizing choking at high tunings, and the Zelkova had tons of life when tuned medium, which would be perfect for the extra cut required on unmiked gigs. An added strength of this drum is its ability to maintain presence and clarity at lower tunings. The further down you go, the punchier it gets, while the clean, clear overtones add some nice metal-shell-type "ping." If you prefer a highly muffled, deep snare tone, the Zelkova also handles that very well, without sounding flat.

canopusdrums.com/en





GORILLA EARS

GX-3B MONITORS

by Michael Dawson

Gorilla Ears is a newcomer to the world of in-ear monitors for musicians, but its parent company, Janus Development Group, has been making therapeutic

beige, yellow, red, green, pink, purple, orange, smoke, emerald green, turquoise, and magenta). Our review set of GX-3bs has smoke shells and clear faceplates.

When you're ready to invest in a set of custom-made in-ears, you'll find that the GX-3bs provide all the power, precision, and isolation a drummer demands.

devices for people with speech impairments since 2001, and some of the technicians working at Gorilla have been building hearing aids for decades.

The company offers two lines of in-ear monitors: the AT series, which is more for general music listening, and the GX series, which is designed for musicians. Within each series are four levels, from the simple and affordable single-driver AT-1 and GX-1 up to premium-grade options that feature two drivers for bass, two drivers for midrange, and a single driver for high frequencies. There are also variations within each series with enhanced bass response (AT-2b, AT-3b, GX-2b, and GX-3b).

For drummers, Gorilla Ears recommends the GX-3b, which has separate drivers for bass, midrange, and treble, plus beefed-up bass response. This model is available with four faceplate options (smoke, clear, beige, and black) and an array of shell colors (clear,

The cord on the GX-3b is detachable, and the wires are twisted to help minimize tangling. The cord is 50", which should provide plenty of slack if you wear a bodypack receiver on your belt, but you might need an extension cable if you plan to run the monitors to a source that's farther away from you. (A 60" cable is also available.)

Because Gorilla Ears monitors are custom molded to your exact ear canal, you'll need to visit your audiologist to have impressions taken to send to the company for manufacturing. The monitors provide up to 28 dB of noise isolation, which means you won't have to crank your level nearly as high when playing as you would with basic earbuds or most over-the-ear headphones.

The frequency response of the GX-3bs extends from 20 Hz to 18 kHz, which is just about as wide as what the ear can

hear naturally, so Gorilla Ears have a very precise sound, with the added low-end response helping to enhance their "feel." I was pretty shocked to discover how much of the punch from the bass drum translated into the GX-3bs during a recent drum-tracking session. When compared with the sound-isolation headphones that I typically use when recording, the GX-3bs sounded much clearer, more natural, and more powerful. I could also keep the monitor level much lower, which will no doubt add years to my hearing health.

While the GX-3bs aren't cheap (\$849), they are definitely a worthwhile investment, especially for studio and touring musicians who have to deal with monitoring drums and music on a daily basis. But even if you use them only when playing along with MP3s, sequencers, or metronomes, or when practicing on an electronic kit, these monitors offer a level of clarity and precision that you can't find in off-the-shelf buds or most earphones. Plus the guys at Gorilla Ears are great with customer service should you need to replace the cord or have the monitors adjusted for a more comfortable fit. All Gorilla Ears monitors are handmade from liquid acrylic in the United States and come with a foam-lined plastic case and cleaning tools.

gorillaears.com



GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview by John Martinez • Photos by Paul La Raia

Pink's MARK SCHULMAN

Drums: Gretsch Brooklyn series

- A. 6.5x14 Hammered Polished Brass snare
- B. 12x14 tom
- C. 6x12 Mark Schulman signature maple snare
- D. 7x10 tom
- E. 8x12 tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- G. 16x18 floor tom
- H. 14x26 bass drum

"Growing up, I always played 22" bass drums," Schulman says. "I did my first few world tours using that size, until I got the Foreigner gig in 1992. We started rehearsing for a tour, and I showed up with a 22" bass drum. [Guitarist] Mick Jones says, 'Hey man, can you get a 24" out here?' I was endorsing DW at the time, so they sent me an 18x24, and it sounded great. Now a 16x24 has been my main recording drum for years."

"When I got the Velvet Revolver gig, I wanted a big kit, so I asked Gretsch, which I was endorsing at the time, if they had a 26". They sent a Catalina Club kit with one that sounded unbelievable. I fell in love with 26" bass drums. Ever since then I almost always use a 26" live."

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 16" AAX X-Plosion hi-hats
- 2. 24" AA Bash ride
- 3. 10" AA splash
- 4. 12" HH Max Stax China Kang on top of 12" HH Metal-X splash
- 5. 20" AAX V-Crash
- 6. 21" AA Universal ride

- 7. 20" AAX X-Plosion crash
 - 8. 18" fixed hi-hats (HHX O-Zone crash top and Aero crash bottom)
 - 9. 19" AAX X-Plosion crash
 - 10. 18" HHX O-Zone crash with three rivets
- "When I joined Foreigner, the biggest cymbal I had was an 18". [Singer] Lou Gramm, who's also a drummer, wanted me

to play bigger cymbals because they projected more. So I started using 19" and 20" crashes when I play live. I tend to like bigger crashes that are thinner, because they're still musically expressive and reasonably fast. The Vaults and X-Plosions are bright, shimmering cymbals.

"Playing with Pink in these larger arenas, I really like the way these 16" hi-hats cut through, and they feel good."

Accessories: Vic Firth X55B sticks, T1 mallets, MSBAG2 stick bags (hanging off floor toms), and Stick Caddy holders (attached to short mic stands placed on the riser and attached to the hi-hat stand); Regal Tip Ultra Flex nylon brushes; Zildjian gloves

Hardware: Gibraltar rack, Intruder 9611DC-DB double pedal, and 9607NL-DP legless hi-hat stand; Roc-n-Soc throne

Percussion: Toca 8" acrylic mini timbale and 8" PVC shaker with a Toca Spaceman Globe shaker glued to each end

Electronics: Roland TD-20 sound module, PD-105 pads, FS-5U foot switch, and DP-2 damper pedal



Heads: Remo Coated Emperor X snare batters and Hazy Ambassador bottoms, Clear Vintage Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter with Ebony custom-logo front head (muffled with rolled towels on each head)

"With the Emperor X, I get plenty of resonance. I love to keep heads on as long as I can. It's my belief that a head's sound gets better and better, and then it dies. I never want my tech to change heads unless we absolutely have to."

"We'll use Moongel to cut some of the resonance out of the toms and snare, because that could actually cause feedback on stage. These drums like being tuned low because of the thin shells. The top heads are a little tighter for feel, but the bottom definitely dictates the pitch of the tom-toms. We use the Tune-bot drum tuner nightly."

"I get three different sounds from my main snare. There's a medium and open sound, and then I'll add an O-ring when I use brushes. I also cut out a 13" Ambassador head and lay it on top of the snare. This will drop the pitch by a minor third. I'm not using rimshots for that sound; I'm just playing right in the center."





WOODSHED

DYLAN WISSING

Triple Colossal Studios • Hoboken, New Jersey

Interview by Joe Gorelick
Photos by Kristie Andrijenko

As a burgeoning studio drummer in his hometown of Bloomington, Indiana, Dylan Wissing studied with two giants of the session world: Kenny Aronoff and Shawn Pelton. His first recording experience was in the eighth grade, in Aronoff's home studio. "It was an incredibly cool opportunity that definitely sent me down the path I'm on to this day," says Wissing, who now runs his own studio, Triple Colossal. Since opening the space, located in the historic Neumann Leather Building in Hoboken, New Jersey, Dylan has tracked drums for a wide variety of independent and major-label artists, including the modern R&B stars Alicia Keys, Kanye West, and Drake.

Wissing began his career as a well-traveled road dog, logging in more than thirteen years with the ska/rock/funk/reggae band Johnny Socko. He made the move to the East Coast to pursue a career as a full-time studio musician at the suggestion of a friend, Grammy-winning producer Ken Lewis. "My first session upon arriving was in Ken's studio with a great

alternative singer-songwriter named Noah Levi," Wissing recalls.

Triple Colossal features a sleekly designed drum room, but it didn't start out that way. "My space is the former executive suite of a leather factory complex," Wissing explains. "It hadn't been painted or maintained in decades, so we had a substantial amount of cleanup to do up front." Layers of Sheetrock and Green Glue were added for sonic isolation,

and heavy curtains and bass traps were installed around the perimeter to further treat the space.

Wissing's approach for working with clients, through his company, Indie Studio Drummer, is now down to a science. "The first step is to pull up the client's track to get an idea of what the song sounds like, while making sure all the necessary files are there," Dylan says. "Next I take a listen to any reference tracks the client may have





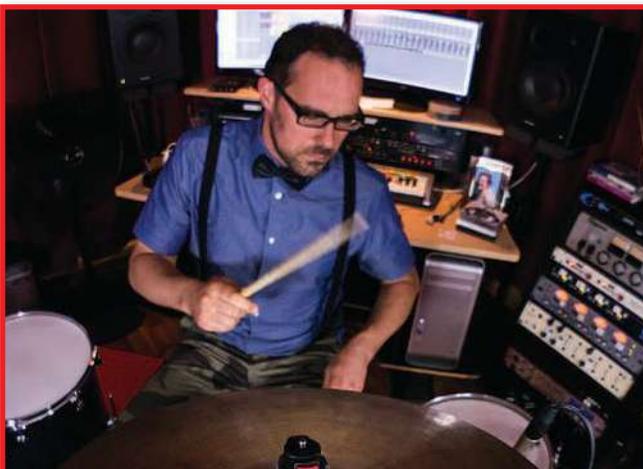
sent, to get an idea of the overall vibe they're going for. Then I loop the song while I begin assembling the right kit."

A longtime endorser of GMS, Aquarian, Pro-Mark, and Protektor, Wissing has racks of his first-choice drums on one side of the room, with four closets full of additional drums, cymbals, and percussion. Included in the collection are different bass drum and tom configurations that are preset for specific sounds, whether it's tight and modern, dark and moody, classic '70s studio, or trashy, lo-fi tones. "Choosing the snare comes next," Wissing explains, showing an impressive array of more than a dozen modern and vintage drums from Leedy, Ludwig, WFL, Slingerland, Gretsch, Premier, DW, Sonor, Tama, and GMS. "They all sound different from one another, and getting the right snare is extremely important in the track."

Regarding microphone and preamp selection, Wissing says, "I have a few starting setups that vary depending on the vibe that the producer or mix engineer is searching for. We'll generally change overhead, room, snare, and bass drum mics for each song, but the other microphones usually remain unchanged."

Before starting to record, Wissing runs through the song a few times to get a proper feel for it. Once a main take is tracked, he takes an alternate pass to give the artist or producer more variety to work with in the editing stage. Many times the complete drum part also contains layers of percussion. "If I know that will be happening," Wissing says, "I will be very conscious when tracking the initial drumset part to leave plenty of room, playing-wise and sonically, for tambourines, shakers, hand drums, cowbells, or whatever else the song requires."

Once the final tracks are complete, Wissing assembles a rough mix to email to the client. "We usually record dry," he explains, "without any EQ or compression, so that the engineer has control over the mix when the various parts of the song are finished. After making any final revisions, we'll upload the files to the client on our server. The whole process usually takes two to four hours." From there, Dylan and his assistant engineer/drum tech, Matt Teitelman, clean up the studio and return everything back to its original spot so that they're ready to start the process all over again when the next track comes in.



GEAR BOX

PRIMARY KITS

- GMS SE maple in midnight blue sparkle (8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, 16x22 bass drum, 6.5x13 Revolution brass snare)
- GMS Super Vintage in black/gold duco (8x12 rack, 14x15 floor, 14x22 and 12x26 bass drums, 5.5x14 snare)
- GMS SE maple in red sparkle pearl with calfskin heads (8x12 rack, 14x14 floor, 12x20 bass drum, 5x13 snare)
- Early-'70s Slingerland in white marine pearl (8x12, 9x13, 10x14 racks; 16x16 and 16x18 floors; 10", 12", 13", 14", and 15" concert toms; 14x22 and 14x24 bass drums)

HEADS

- Aquarian, including Texture Coated, coated Super-2, and Vintage series snare and tom batters

SELECT SNARES

- 5x14 '20s Leedy Black Elite engraved brass
- 5x14 '20s Leedy Black Elite 1-ply mahogany
- 6.5x14 '40s Leedy Broadway Standard brass
- 5.5x14 and 8x14 '40s Slingerland Radio King one-ply maple
- 7x14 '40s WFL Swing model mahogany
- 5.5x14 '60s Gretsch Name Band maple
- 5x14 '60s Ludwig Supra-Phonic and Acrolite aluminum
- 2.5x14 '60s Sonor Pancake maple
- 6.5x14 and 6.5x15 '60s Ludwig Auditorium mahogany
- 5x14 Tama Trackmaster and 4x15 Super Piccolo engraved brass
- 3.25x14, 5.5x14, and 6.5x14 Tama Power Metal bronze
- 5x14 Tama Power Metal hammered bronze
- 5.5x14 GMS Grand Master maple
- 5.5x13 GMS SE aluminum
- 6.5x14 GMS SE brass
- 6.5x14 GMS SE with Vintage Mahogany shell



The Power Station

There are drummers who make hits, and drummers who make grooves. **Tony Thompson** was both. Ten years after his premature passing, *MD* revisits what might be his greatest recording.

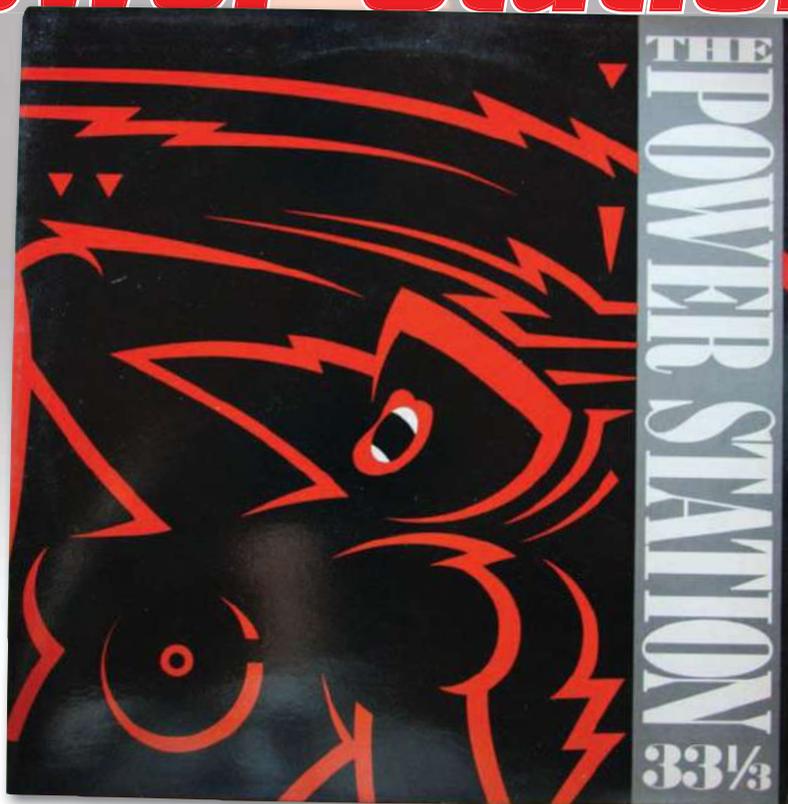
Grounded in funk, jazz, and perhaps Caribbean music (the drummer's mother was a native of Trinidad), Tony Thompson's titanic grooves were slick and tremendously powerful but also sly, possessing an undeniable intelligence that went far beyond the four-on-the-floor bass drum monotony of the disco era, of which the Thompson-propelled Chic was a star player. Even before Thompson joined forces with rock's elite, his beat on Chic's "Good Times" was sampled for some of the most seminal tracks in hip-hop, including the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" and Grandmaster Flash's "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel." Chic's grooves were undeniable, as was Thompson's monster rhythm machine, which also fattened Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out" and Madonna's game-changing "Like a Virgin," as well as albums

Hot Stuff

HAND/FOOT HEAVEN. *The Power Station* is littered with Thompson's mammoth hand/foot combos. Opening cut "Some Like It Hot" features a variety. Check out the intro at 0:07 and 0:30, and the ends of the vocal lines in the choruses.

LETTING THE BOTTOM FALL OUT. The most intense track on *The Power Station* is the cover of T. Rex's classic "Get It On (Bang a Gong)." A recurring rhythmic motif in this song is upbeat accents on the "&" before 1, which Thompson goes to town on, either with hi-hat barks (0:33, 0:49, etc.) or snare/crashes (1:10). The momentary gulf a listener feels is like an itch that gets scratched at beat 2.

TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN. Tony would sometimes construct fills that would go from the toms to the snare, rather than the more common snare-to-tom direction. You can hear this on "Get It On" at 2:20. Or, as on "Communication" (1:42), his "fill" could be a simple bass drum flurry within the groove. He would also sometimes follow a fill that involves the snare and toms with an "answer" fill that uses only the bass drum.



by Robert Palmer, David Bowie, Debbie Harry, and Sister Sledge. But it all seemed to be in preparation for the all-star Duran Duran side project *The Power Station*.

Helmed by the Duran members Andy and John Taylor and the powerful R&B singer Robert Palmer, the Power Station slammed home a top-ten album with its self-titled 1985 debut and the hit singles "Some Like It Hot" and a cover of T. Rex's "Get It On (Bang a Gong)." But the album is so much more than its singles, and in retrospect it's a prime example of Thompson's thunderous beat and inventive ideas, as well as a patented mid-'80s production sound that glistened like polished steel.

Thompson's intro to "Some Like It Hot" comes on like an attack wave made of bits of glass and metal, seemingly produced to replicate the sound of his drumheads more than his drums, all head-butting contact and stick and beater definition. Meanwhile, his unusual hi-hat phrases propel the motion. Thompson's drumming is absolutely the star of the song, and his thumping pocket drives it home.

Elsewhere, Tony's elemental 2-and-4 groove and hiccupping end-of-bar breaks on "Communication" are pure magic. His snare on "Get It On" is designed to crack skulls, accented throughout with a swooping hi-hat and a nail-hard, seething pulse. Then it's all about his bass drum in "Go to Zero," the thud landing with enough force to break your nose.

The Power Station re-formed in 1996, but the ensuing album, *Living in Fear*, bombed. Sadly, Tony Thompson passed away on November 12, 2003, leaving his wife, Patrice, and two children, Jensen and Jazzy. Thankfully, his music lives on.

Ken Micallef

The Power Station (1985)

Some Like It Hot • Murderess • Lonely Tonight
• Communication • Get It On (Bang a Gong) •
Go to Zero • Harvest for the World • Still in
Your Heart

Robert Palmer: vocals

Andy Taylor: guitar

John Taylor: bass

Tony Thompson: drums

Produced by Bernard Edwards





Sean Reinert **CYNIC**
Limited Edition Snow White Pearl finish with Black Nickel hardware



George "Spanky" McCurdy **LADY GAGA**
Limited Edition Flat Black finish with Black Nickel hardware

HYPER-DRIVE ATTACKS

DOMINATE YOUR SET-UP. DOMINATE YOUR SOUND. Tama's shorter Hyper-Drive shell-style is catching the attention of players in every genre. Working from a lower, flatter, tom height puts you in the position of dominating your setup like never before. PLUS... that punchier attack-heavy sonic character of Hyper-Drive delivers an extra helping of "cut" in thick mix situations. See the three new Limited Edition Starclassic Performer B/B finishes at tama.com/bb.

Starclassic Performer B/B



Alvin Ford Jr. **DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND**



Matt Garstka **ANIMALS AS LEADERS**



Yesod Williams **PEPPER**



Mike Moore **KID CUDDI**

TAMA
f e s p i

Get Good: Backing

by Robin Tolleson

It's one of the most demanding concepts a drummer can attempt to master. But as with any other skill, with dedicated practice and guidance, your potential to achieve high levels of artistry is limitless. The practicing part is up to you. But we can provide some helpful advice, from *MD* Pro Panelists **Kenny Washington** and **Dafnis Prieto**, plus some choice quotes from other jazz drumming greats.

Solid time, endurance, empathy, big ears, quick hands and wits—if you want to hang with the big cats of improvisation, these are the skills you *must* develop, and to a high level. In his 1982 instructional cassette, *The Art of Accompaniment*, jazz legend Jack DeJohnette described our responsibility as “staying out of the soloist’s way by keeping the swing time emotionally charged with simplicity and intensity, proportionately balanced enough to keep the ensemble motivated and the soloist’s ideas fresh and flowing.” DeJohnette’s words get to the profoundness of the challenge: providing a powerful yet elegantly simple foundation, while inspiring adventure in our band-

mates. Making the gig even tougher is the fact that the ways to actually *do* this are innumerable, and often not immediately clear.

In 2011, Adam Cruz related in *Modern Drummer* how pianist Danilo Pérez often requested that the drummer solo right along with him. “It’s a real art to find that balance of giving support and leaving space for a solo,” Cruz told *MD*, “but then also choosing as the comp, as the drummer, when it could be a good moment for you to lead, for you to push and prod and get involved at the same time.”

Kenny Washington also uses the word *comp* to describe backing soloists. “You have to listen to the compers,” the noted drummer and educator says. “*Comping* is short for *accompaniment*. It’s a term that’s used for the way a pianist backs up a soloist rhythmically and harmonically, and the same thing goes for drums.

“Max Roach, Philly Joe Jones, Lex Humphries, Art Blakey, Jimmy Cobb, Al Foster, Louis Hayes— [studying] any of those guys will give you ideas,” Washington says. “It takes listening to them, listening to what they play behind a soloist, how they play. I call it action and reaction. They

play from what they hear the soloist play. They all play differently, and they all have something to offer.”

Washington breaks down the act of comping this way: “The drummer is using his left hand and his bass drum, and he’s playing rhythmic figures behind the soloist. Listen to these rhythms, listen to what the drummer is doing, and write it down. The thing is to know why that person is playing that rhythm at that particular time. You can’t just write things down and play them anywhere. You have to listen to the rest of the rhythm section and know the form of the tune, or you just sound like you’re playing exercises from a book.”

In Washington’s case, his voracious listening habits made his job as a performer that much more natural. “I had listened to so many records,” Kenny says, “that when I started getting out to play I knew exactly what to expect. When you listen to enough soloists, you know it’s not about just banging on the drums, man. You have to listen and know the melodies. The more soloists that you listen to and solos that you’re able to sing by memory, the more you become part of the music, and the easier it is to comp for soloists. That’s when it’s really fun, because it’s not just playing from a book. You’re playing actual phrases—it’s from-scratch comping. You’re out there with a soloist, and he’s listening to you and you’re listening to him. It’s a two-way street.”

Dafnis Prieto uses the term “elastic possibility” to describe the art of backing soloists. “It really depends on the soloist and the style of music that you’re playing at that moment,” he explains, “and specifically the musicianship. I’m kind of an active listener while I’m playing, so I react to the soloist. I try to create a relationship with my playing and what he’s doing. And I have to balance that interplay



Dafnis Prieto

Christopher Otazo

Soloists

with the role of keeping the whole structure together—being interactive with the soloist, but at the same time playing the fundamental parts of the tune.”

There are two basic strategies to comping, according to Prieto. “One is keeping the structure of it and being interactive,” Dafnis says. “The other is trying to be a little bit less interactive and keeping more of the form, so the soloist can also feel more space and freedom to hear what he’s doing.

“You react to what the soloist is playing,” Prieto continues, “but at the same time you give him suggestions. It’s kind of a conversation. Not everybody has the same style of playing, so that has to be accommodated in the live situation. One kind of player has a very rhythmic orientation; therefore, as a drummer, I have more possibility of interacting rhythmically with him. Other soloists play more rubato or freely on top of the beat. In that case I will just play more oriented to the form instead of interacting that much, and I’ll wait for specific places where I can give sonic or rhythmic suggestions—textures or any kind of thing.”

Prieto uses the piano/drums relationship to illustrate his point. “If the piano is soloing,” he says, “I don’t necessarily have to be interactive in a rhythmic way, but maybe in a sonic way—more textures and creating different sounds. Some piano players play with more complexity than others, so it really depends. You know, when we play music it’s about sharing the space and time. Some people have the tendency to play with more space, so the drummer has more room to play. Or he might choose to be elastic or as spacey as the other players—or balance that by playing more. It really depends on who the musicians are, the idea behind the tune, the musicianship between the bass player and piano player, and who else is playing.”

Ultimately, Prieto says the learning is in the doing. “As much as we can practice isolated from a real environment that we’re going to end up playing in, a real circumstance and environment of playing is the ultimate place to be. The only way to learn how to interact is interaction.”



Textbook Examples

Kenny Washington Cuts to the Chase

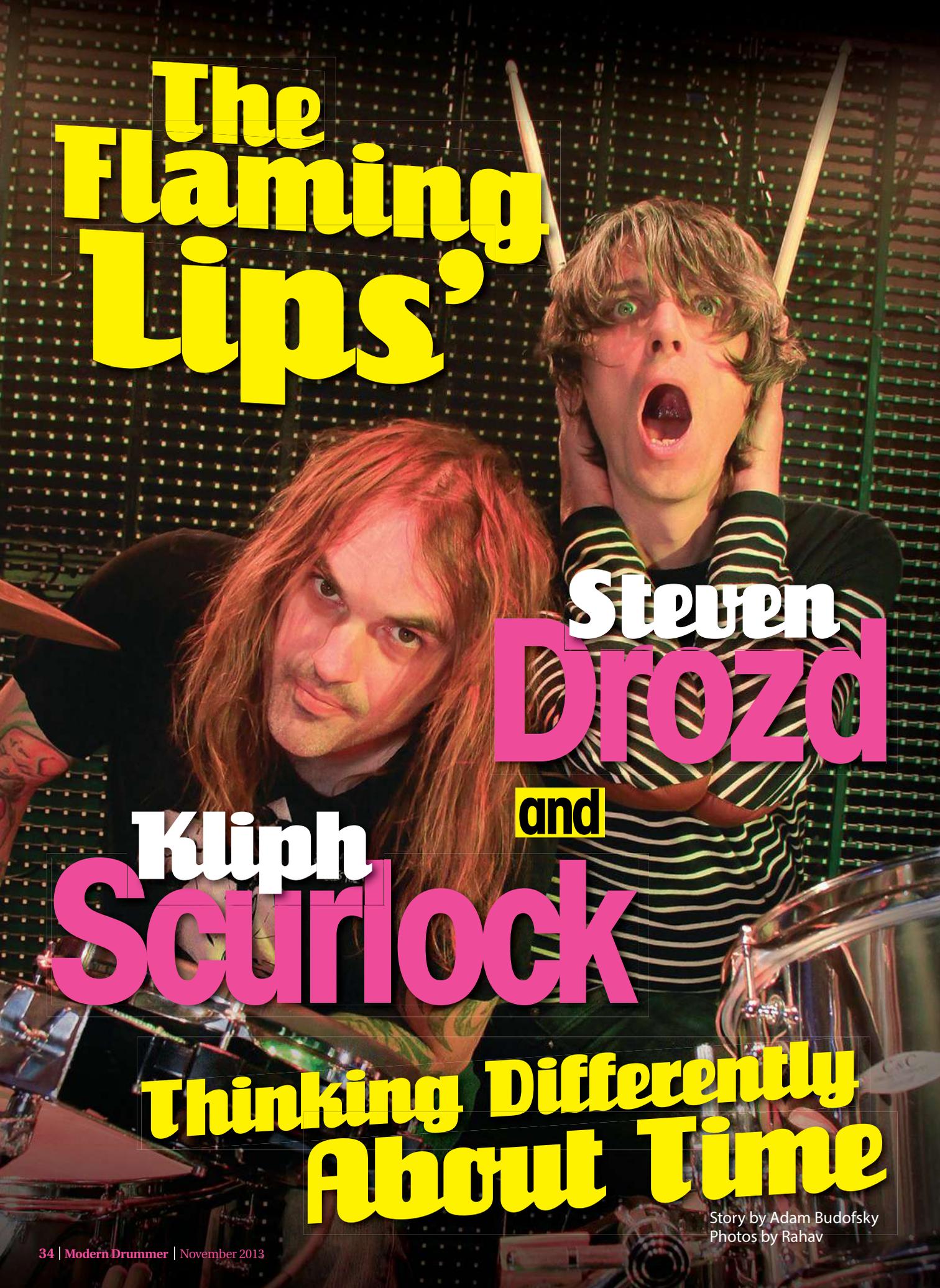
“**Max Roach** records, the piano-less ones like *Deeds, Not Words* and *Award-Winning Drummer*, are fantastic to listen to for examples of great comping,” Kenny Washington says. “Max was so musical. He understood the piano, and the way he plays without a pianist is just like having a piano there, the way he uses his left hand and the accents between his left hand and the bass drum.

“One of my favorite albums, another great comping record, is *The Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall*. If you listen to the track ‘Little Rootie Tootie’ and you hear the way **Arthur Taylor** is playing behind trumpeter Donald Byrd, baritone sax player Pepper Adams, and Monk, those are textbook examples of how to comp behind a soloist—what to play and what not to play. Growing up, I listened to these records over and over.

“It’s a conversation, man. That’s one of the things you hear on records. There’s a record by pianist Duke Pearson called *Dedication!*, featuring Pepper Adams, Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, and **Lex Humphries** on drums. In the tune that trumpeter Donald Byrd wrote for Humphries, ‘Lex,’ there’s one part during Freddie Hubbard’s solo where Freddie played something, and man, Lex Humphries fired it right back at him. You could hear what was happening. There are records like that with Hubbard and **Louis Hayes**, specifically a Kenny Drew album called *Undercurrent*. If you listen to the title tune, there’s one part where Hubbard and Hayes are going back and forth at it—it’s like they were sparring partners. I mean, it’s *really* something to hear. You can hear that Hayes was really listening and zeroing in on what Hubbard was doing, and vice versa.”

For Washington, the best drummer “by far” to listen to for comping behind a bass solo is **Philly Joe Jones**. “Get the Miles Davis album *Milestones* and listen to ‘Straight No Chaser,’” Kenny suggests. “Listen to how Philly Joe plays behind bassist Paul Chambers—that’s another textbook example. Then there’s a record by Milt Jackson and Wes Montgomery called *Bags Meets Wes!*, which features the song ‘Sam Sack.’ The way that Philly Joe plays behind Sam Jones’ bass solo is classic. Also, *Kelly at Midnight* by Wynton Kelly—listen to any of those Paul Chambers bass solos. Philly Joe’s playing all kinds of slick stuff behind him, but he never gets in his way.

“You’re building a vocabulary by listening to these records,” Washington concludes. “It’s a language, and the more of it you learn—and the more you utilize it—the more you’ll hopefully know what to use when and where.”



The Flaming Lips'

Steven
Drozd

and

Kliph
Scurlock

Thinking Differently
About Time

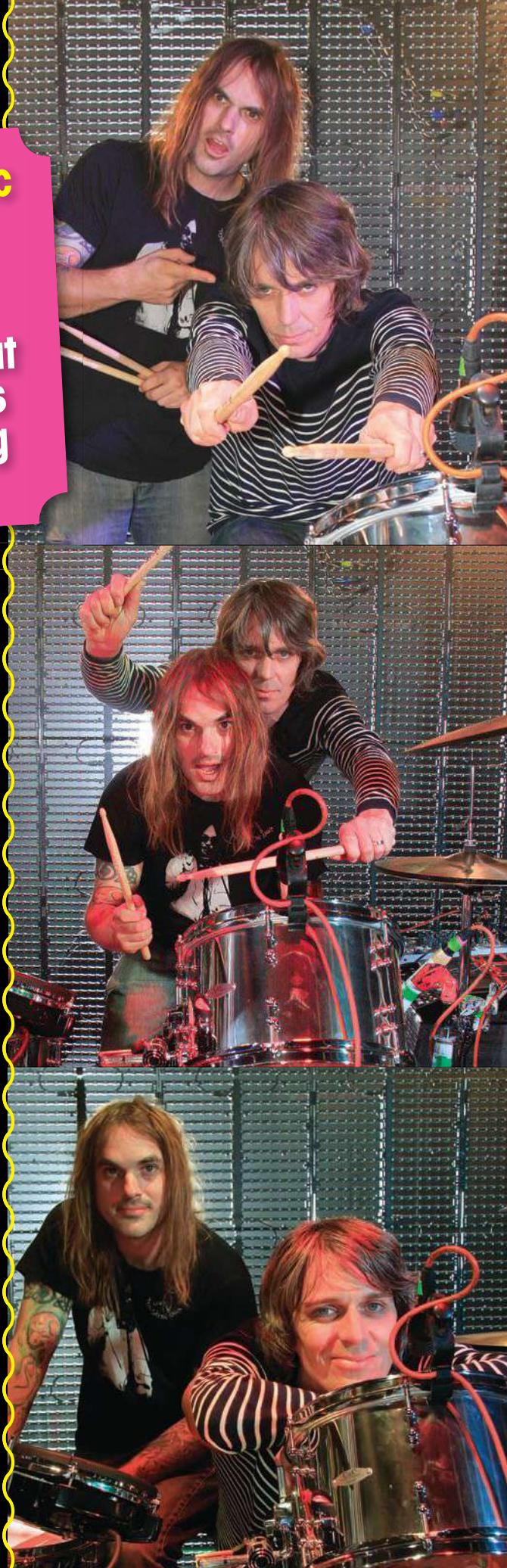
Story by Adam Budofsky
Photos by Rahav

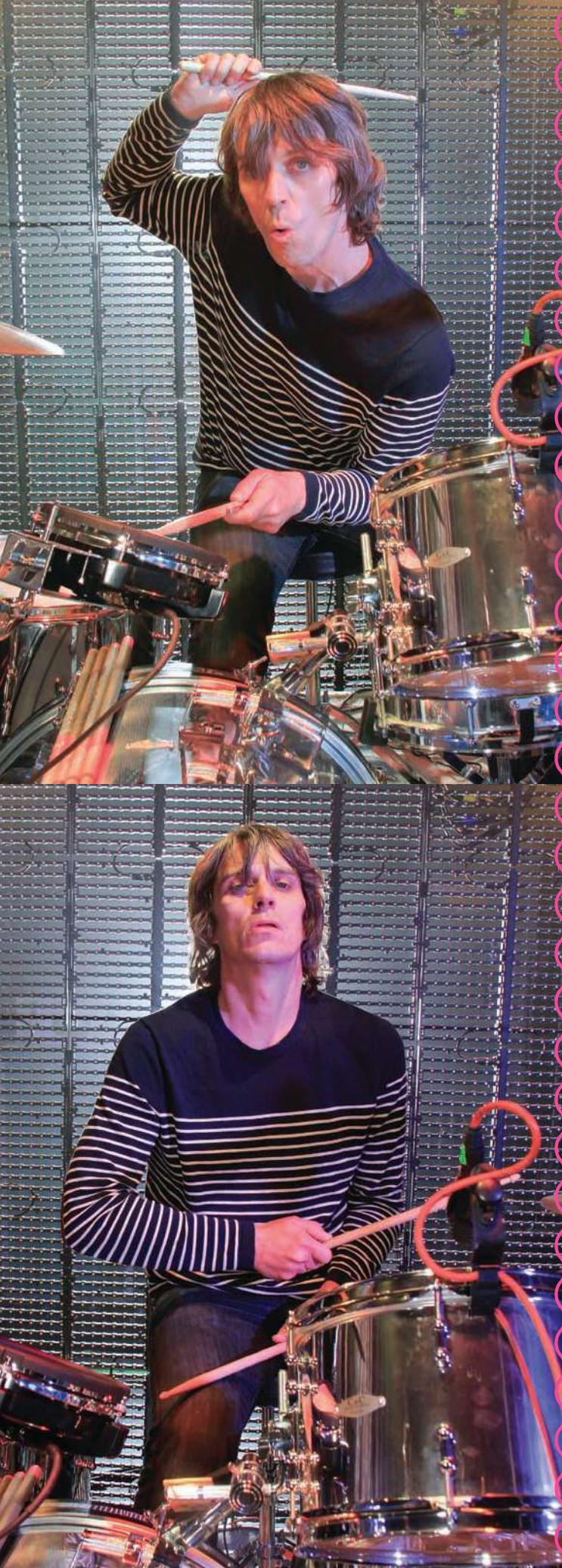
Oklahoma's favorite psychedelic sons take yet another road less traveled. We talk to the group's main sonic architect and his drummer-in-arms about what went into their ambitious new album, and how it's being presented on stage.

When we last checked in with Steven Drozd and Kliph Scurlock in April 2010, for their first *Modern Drummer* cover story. At the time the pair were exploring the massive power and subtle nuances of the double-drummer relationship via the Flaming Lips' rule-dispensing double-length twelfth studio album, *Embryonic*. In the years since, the band's notoriously bright searchlights have illuminated a dozen more unexplored alleys of the dark sonic arts, including the surprising (even by their standards) collaborative album *The Flaming Lips and Heady Fwends*, a stamina-testing attempt to perform more concerts in a day than anyone had ever done before (eight, nudging past Jay-Z's previous record), and a series of format-exploding releases available in actual human skulls, via limited online streams, and partitioned among multiple YouTube videos. Oh, and the Lips saw fit to issue eight- and *twenty-four-hour-long* songs. What to do for an encore? What...to...do?

Well, get real, apparently. On the surface, the group's latest album, *The Terror*, might seem like yet another chapter in the Lips' ongoing narrative of inner-space themes put to outer-space sounds. But from its title on down, *The Terror* is a remarkably human, earthbound album, featuring songs born from broken alliances, lapses into addiction, and loneliness. Supporting these themes are musical ideas that few modern pop bands have previously shown the guts to explore—namely the willingness to turn away from tried-and-true songwriting methods and allow pure sound to dictate direction. This is brave stuff, but, remarkably, the results are hugely musical.

As usual, when given the chance to pick the brain of Steven Drozd, who continues to compose and record the lion's share of the Lips' material, we're all ears. And later we chat with band member Kliph Scurlock, who handles the live drumming duties, and who had no small part in capturing Drozd's bold studio experiments.





“There’s this thing that you get from repetition that you can’t get any other way.”
—Steven Drozd

MD: The seeds of *The Terror* can be heard on your last proper studio album, *Embryonic*, including the concept of allowing musical ideas to develop longer. Was that part of the plan?

Steven: *The Terror* is my favorite Lips record in quite a long time. We recorded so much stuff after *Embryonic*, so many extra projects and collaborations with other people, and it seemed like the period where we explored every idealistic thing we could think of had come to an end. So this time it was really just messing around in the studio with no real agenda, putting together some sounds that I thought were kind of cool.

[Singer] Wayne [Coyne] really responded to this one thing I was working on, which became the song “You Are Alone.” We were really excited, because it seemed like something different for us, and we decided that we wanted to make an entire record that existed in this one mood. If you’ve been making records for as long as we have, any time you find excitement about a new concept, it’s pure gold. I guess the word *dark* has been overused to describe it, but it is sort of bleak—more of a mood than a collection of pop songs. It felt like a good time to make a record that expresses whatever these moods and emotions are. I was definitely going through some struggles when I was first starting on this, and now, when I hear a couple of these songs, I’m still able to connect to whatever that feeling was. And for me that’s pretty powerful.

The first song we did was “You Are Alone,” and that shaped the record. Once we decided to do that, we just were like, let’s not worry about writing pop songs or hooky choruses. There was really none of that. It was more like, let’s turn on that drum machine, run it through this reverb, see what it sounds like, and turn that into a song. So on “You Lust,” for example, we’d be like, yeah, this song could be nine minutes, and four of those minutes can be a choir sample running through a delay over and over again. [laughs] But that seemed right; the song seemed to lend itself to that kind of thing. We did struggle with that: Should we edit that down to two minutes? And after a couple days we were like, no, we have to let it play, because there’s this thing that you get from repetition that you can’t get any other way.

MD: This idea of exploring time in new ways is pretty deep.

Steven: Well, I know I think differently about time now, both in terms of our music and in my personal life. As far as the songs go, I don’t think we care if anything is a minute and a half or fifteen minutes. Now the agenda seems to be: Does it do something for us collectively as a group? Does it sound cool? Is it *doing* something?

A couple of the songs on *The Terror* have these little soundscapes that happen after the song. One was this five-minute piece of music that I had, and when we threw it

at the end of “Be Free, a Way” it got whittled down to a minute or so. Ten years ago, we would have said, “This is a whole piece of music; we can’t use it as found sounds.” But now, because of the brevity of it, it has more mystery than if it had been the full length.

MD: One of the cool things about the album is that, though it’s meticulously put together, there are times where you’re clearly not precious about exactitude.

Steven: Oh, definitely—we do that as a sound technique. On “You Are Alone” there’s a bad Pro Tools edit where the loop got cut off, and we thought it sounded cool, so we just left it. There’s no other way we could have gotten that sound.

MD: There are only a few songs with acoustic drums on them.

Steven: Right, only three songs have acoustic drums—the first song, “Look...the Sun Is Rising”; “Butterfly, How Long It Takes to Die”; and the last song, “Always There...in Our Hearts.” A couple songs we tried to add drums to, but it just didn’t seem to fit. It took away from the emotional heaviness somehow.

MD: And the beats that you do play wouldn’t be called standard rock beats.

Steven: On “Look...the Sun Is Rising,” the hi-hat plays quarter notes and the left hand is on the snare playing 8th notes with random accents. It’s almost like a weird bossa nova. That’s really fun to play.

MD: So how are you approaching playing these songs live?

Steven: We have some more keyboards on stage, and Kliph is in this new area where he’s playing a sampler. He still plays drums, but he’s triggering some of the samples that we don’t have keyboards for. And I’m triggering samples and playing a couple more keyboards as well.

MD: The analog synths you used have so much character.

Steven: Oh, yeah, and on this record we used more analog synths than ever before. *The Soft Bulletin* has some synths and MIDI strings, but not really a lot of mono synths. We decided to make the whole record from a palette

of sound that included four keyboards and the iPad apps Sylo Synth, Korg iMS-20, Animoog, and Argon.

A lot of the noisier things are a Wasp mono synth that was given to us by Sean Lennon and a beautiful old ARP 2600 that [longtime Lips producer] Dave Fridmann had sitting in the corner gathering dust. And he’s got a Yamaha CS-50, which is also a beautiful instrument. And then I bought this old Yamaha Electone home organ that’s modified with filters and oscillators. It turned out to be the same model I learned to play on when I was about twelve, so I was like, “I remember this old drum machine patch!” The drumbeat on the song “The Terror” is from that.

MD: Playing along to an analog synth arpeggio is a skill in itself.

Steven: I love playing to that stuff. If you have an arpeggio from an old synth, it’s in time—but not, like, digitally in time. And we used a lot of out-of-tune things, not in A440. I think it helps give the songs an extra level of eeriness or unsettledness.

On “Butterfly, How Long It Takes to Die,” the song starts off with just drumkit with some delays on it. Then you hear this weird arpeggio, which is the ARP, and we tried for several hours to line up the rhythm and tempo of that with the drumkit on the song. We never got it, so we said let’s go the other way, and we sped up the ARP just a little. So it’s now on its own rhythm that goes against the rhythm of the drums. At another time we would have gotten the digital plug-in and tried to tempo-sync it or something. But we were like, let’s not do that—let’s let it go on its own sinister new-wave rhythm.

Another example is in the beginning of the song “You Lust.” We were in the room playing, and Wayne recorded that with his iPhone. We tried to re-create it miked up but ended up giving the cell phone recording to Dave, who compressed and EQ’d it. It wouldn’t have sounded like that if we’d re-recorded it.

So yeah, we’ve definitely crossed some lines that we wouldn’t have in the past.

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“One of the things that separates us from a lot of bands is that we get bored easily. But at the core of it, we’re just music nerds.”

—Kliph Scurlock

MD: The last time we spoke, you were working on your own project.

Kliph: That band you’re talking about, Pink Purple, sort of fell apart. But I did finish making a record with my friend Brodie Rush. The project is named Air Station, and the album is called *Dix*. We haven’t found a home for it yet. I’ve been so busy with the Lips, plus Brodie and I are in the middle of recording another album under the name Rohypnol Rangers—which sounds kind of like a band with the name Rohypnol Rangers should sound like. [laughs] We’ve had that band for fifteen years or so, and we’ve talked forever about recording those songs, but we could never get our schedules to match up, until late last fall. But then we started coming up with new stuff that didn’t really fit the Rohypnol Rangers framework, so we gave it the name Air Station and switched the focus to that. But now we’re working on the Rohypnol Rangers album whenever I’m at home. I’ve also been mixing the new album by the band Skating Polly.

Earlier this year I got to play some shows with Gruff Rhys from the band Super Furry Animals. That was amazing for me, because he’s one of my favorite songwriters of all time, and I love him as a human being. He’s working on a movie about this explorer named John Evans who’s sort of this weird footnote in American history, a Welsh guy who’s a distant relative of Gruff’s. Gruff wrote songs for the soundtrack, and we recorded a bunch of those.

MD: Of course you’ve spent most of the year touring behind *The Terror*. How have you been approaching the material live?

Kliph: The songs have to change a little. When we record we never think about what we’re going to do live; we’re just creating interesting stuff to listen to, and then it’s, okay, how are we going to play it live? There’s a different dynamic live, so some of the stuff is pepped up a little bit. And I’m definitely playing more stuff on my sampler than on drums, which is cool with me, because it’s different. So these crazy rhythm beds and some of the programmed beats, I have them programmed into my sampler.

MD: Can you be specific about how you’re approaching some of the songs?

Kliph: I trigger the synth loop on “Look...the Sun Is Rising,” the thing that goes “jun-jun-jun-jun” throughout the whole song. Also, the synth loop on “Always There...in Our Hearts,” the one that goes “dun-nun-nun-nun-nun-nu.” But since that loop goes in and out of time, I trigger it each time, whereas on “Look...the Sun Is Rising” it goes throughout the whole song and dictates the time.

Most of the other sounds I trigger are random string swells or other sounds that occur a few times within a song that we don’t want to do without. The sampler sits to the left of me, so I have a couple of Roland PD-85 pads that are mounted within my drum setup so that they’re easier to hit during parts where I need to trigger something in the middle of a beat.

MD: All the songs on *The Terror* segue into one another, which you had a hand in.

Kliph: I, of course, am a big fan of stuff like *Dark Side of the Moon*, where you put on one side of the album and it runs together. I did this on *Embryonic* too. Sometimes Wayne would be like, “It gets a little confusing there,” but we’d work on the transitions, and eventually we were like, let’s



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Kliph's Kit

In the current Flaming Lips live shows, Scurlock uses a C&C drumset consisting of a 6.5x13 snare, an 8x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 14x22 bass drum. In the studio he plays either an older C&C kit with a 6.5x13 snare, a 13" rack tom, an 18" floor tom, and a 24" bass drum, or a 1957 Slingerland kit. His live Istanbul Agop cymbal setup includes 14" Heavy hi-hats, a 22" Medium ride or crash/ride, and a 24" Heavy ride; in the studio he chooses from a variety of Istanbul Agops, with his favorites being a 20" Dark crash and a 26" Heavy ride.

Kliph's drumheads are Remo, including a Controlled Sound dotted snare batter and Hazy Ambassador snare-side, Coated Ambassador tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and a Coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter. His electronics include Roland PD-85 pads and a Roland SPD-SX sampling pad. His accessories include a Snareweight muffler.

try to tie all of it together and make one long piece of music.

I think one of the things that separates us from a lot of bands is that we get bored easily. But at the core of it, we're just music nerds. We always come back to the classics—Led Zeppelin, the Stones, the Beatles—but we're always trying to find new bands that we haven't heard before that excite us. And that carries over to when we're making music. On *Embryonic* we threw away a bunch of songs because they sounded like they could have been on *At War With the Mystics* or *Yoshimi*.

MD: *The Terror* has roots in your 2009 album, *Embryonic*. But you guys actually recorded a ton of material in between.

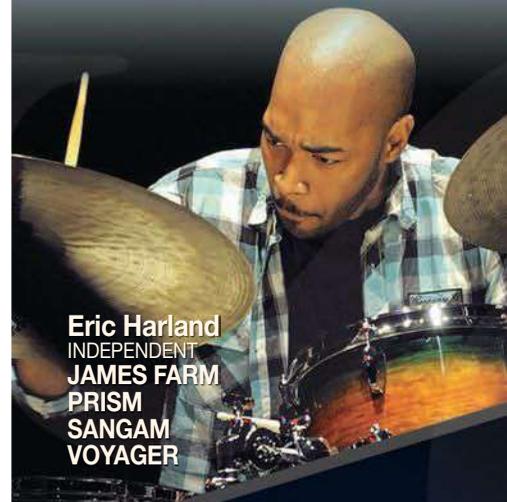
Kliph: We weren't even trying to make an entire record when we started this one. We'd done all this other stuff in 2011—the gummy skull, the this and the that—but a lot of people didn't know that stuff existed. I have friends who'd ask me, "So, when are you guys doing another album?" And I'd be like, "Dude, we put out like thirty hours of music last year." *"Really?"* [laughs]

We knew it was time to do a record, so we booked a couple sessions at Tarbox

[producer Dave Fridmann's upstate New York studio] just to kind of get started, thinking it would be like last time, where the sessions span six months to a year. But Steven just started spitting out jams, like, where's *this* coming from? I played some bits on it, but most of my role was engineering. Dave's got this second room that he turned into a live room, and he put in an old desk and a Pro Tools system. Wayne and Dave would be in the main room mixing a song, and then Steven would be in the other room just working on stuff. So most of what I did was set up mics and hit record fast enough to capture all this stuff that Steven was doing. The whole thing was done in two ten-day sessions. So we kind of just suddenly had an album.

MD: There's something very cohesive about the record.

Kliph: I think so too. A lot of times if Steven's working on something, it's left open-ended, for it to be a jumping-off point for a song to be written around it. And it might get chopped up. But this time it was like, this sounds great the way it is. I've known Steven forever, and there's no end to his musical creativity and capabilities.



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	Pittsburgh, PA	Volkwein's Music
	Tacoma, WA	Ted Brown Music
October 22	Country Hills, IL	Guitar Center
October 24	West Seneca, NY	Guitar Factory
October 25	San Jose, CA	Guitar Center
October 26	Chicago, IL	Chicago Music Exchange
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November 2	Hollywood, CA	Professional Drum Shop

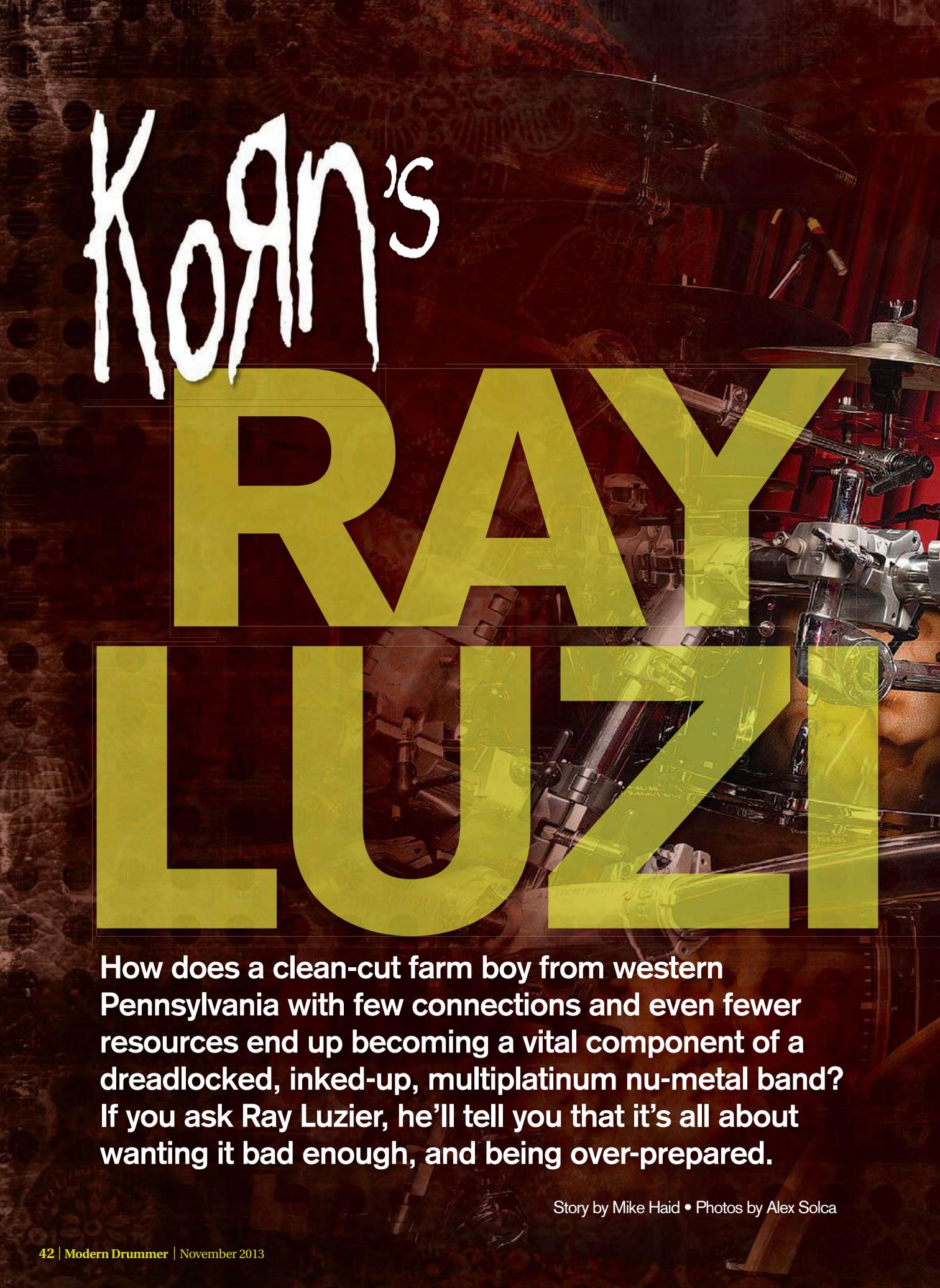


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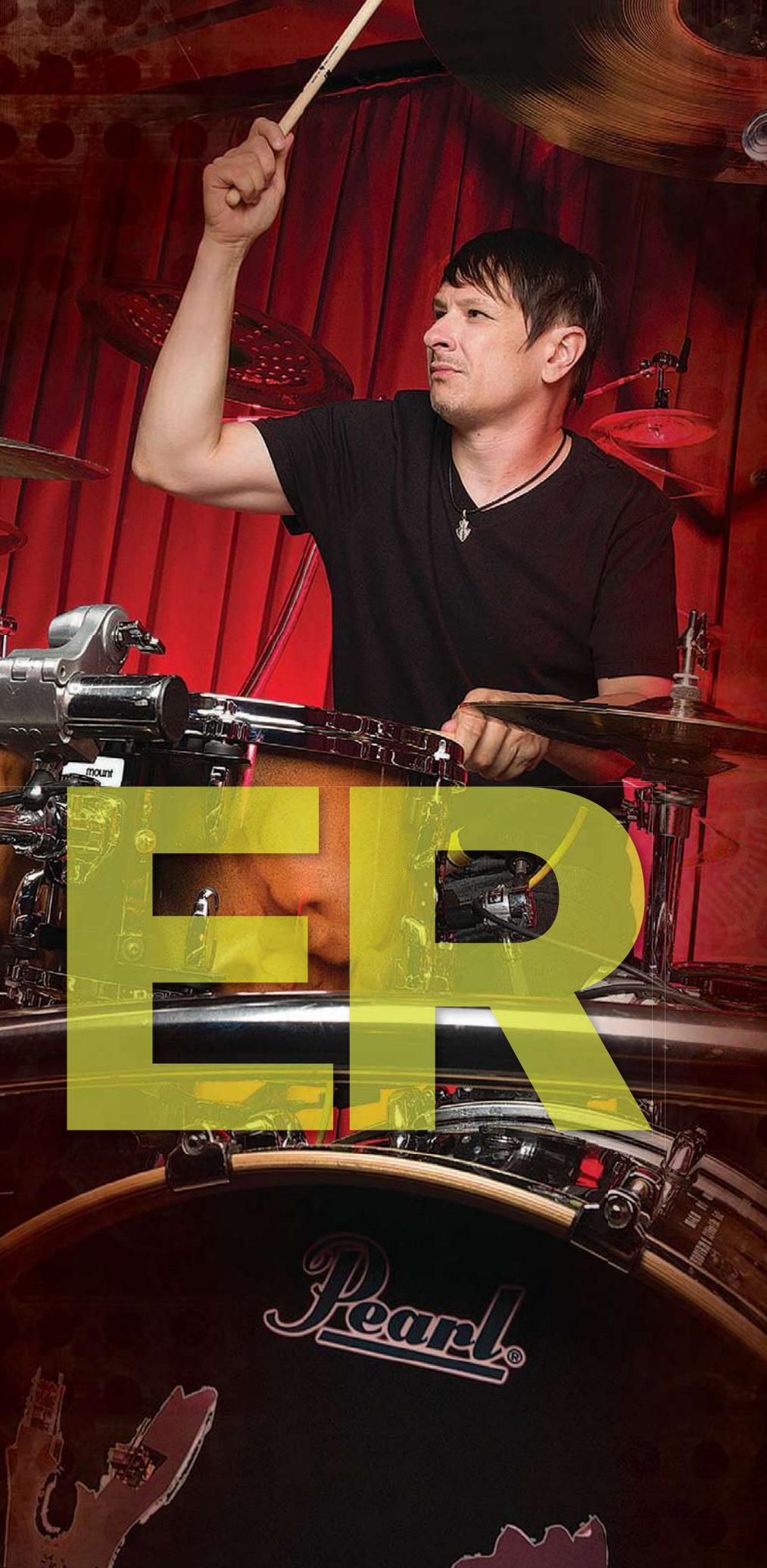
Koan's

RAY

LUZIER

How does a clean-cut farm boy from western Pennsylvania with few connections and even fewer resources end up becoming a vital component of a dreadlocked, inked-up, multiplatinum nu-metal band? If you ask Ray Luzier, he'll tell you that it's all about wanting it bad enough, and being over-prepared.

Story by Mike Haid • Photos by Alex Solca



PER

Of course, Ray Luzier didn't jump from the farm to the front lines of stardom overnight. In fact, he's spent

the past twenty-five years tirelessly working to achieve his goals. A student turned instructor at the world-renowned Musicians Institute in Hollywood, Luzier diligently sharpened his playing and networking skills for ten long years, even when his teaching schedule grew to become full time. Eventually he landed a gig with Ozzy Osbourne guitarist Jake E. Lee, the kickoff to a journeyman career that would feature eight years touring and recording with Van Halen frontman David Lee Roth, a stint with the criminally overlooked pop-rock supergroup Army of Anyone, and five years and counting with the alternative-metal gods Korn.

Today Luzier is justifiably proud of Korn's brand-new studio album, *The Paradigm Shift*, his third and strongest performance to date with the group. It's no coincidence that the release features the return of cofounding guitarist Brian "Head" Welch, as it finds the band revisiting its organic roots while exploring ultra-modern sounds, grooves, and recording techniques. After more than two decades as a pro drummer, Luzier is playing at the very top of his game and receiving the kind of accolades precious few players enjoy.

Ray's popularity among drummers stems not just from his ability to shred with superhuman control, but to do so with an appealingly human feel and a veteran's sense of playing the right thing at the right time. It's telling that although he's one of the most popular heavy drummers on the planet, Luzier doesn't label himself as such, instead preferring to focus his attention—and ours—on the challenges of *owning* it no matter what the musical situation.

To observe the Luzier magic as closely as possible for this exclusive

feature story—his first *MD* cover—we meet with Ray backstage prior to Korn's set at the Rock on the Range festival in Columbus, Ohio. Two decades after the release of its self-titled debut album, Korn is as visually gripping and musically imposing as ever, and can still

“The director pushed us *hard*. He told us that we would be at practice an hour before the rest of the band arrived and would stay an hour after they left. All the drummers hated him, but I was totally into it!”

command a headlining spot at a huge weekend-long music fest. Crew Stadium is filled to capacity, with twenty thousand ravenous fans anxiously awaiting the arrival of the boys from Bakersfield, California. Part of the hysteria is no doubt due to the return of Head after an

eight-year hiatus (Rock on the Range represents only his second appearance since reuniting with the band), but the reality is that Korn fans have always been among the most loyal in rock. It says much about Luzier's abilities that the drummer has been warmly welcomed into the fold by

fans and also treated like an equal by his bandmates.

As Korn prepares to take the stage, Luzier jogs in circles behind the drummer, ramping up for the gig like an athlete preparing for competition. When we mention how awesome his massive drumkit looks, like a proud

father he smiles and enthusiastically replies, “Yeah, those are my babies.” Despite some unexpected land mines, including the lack of guitar in his monitors for the first four songs and a cracked crash cymbal midway through the set, Ray gives an absolutely commanding performance.

His magnetic focus and professionalism completely overshadow the chaos, and his musical drama, precise stick tricks, and big rig draw the legions in to his percussive barrage, which is by now an integral part of Korn's appeal. The band's Rock on the Range performance is positively spellbinding, a powerful force that happens only when passion meets purpose. Ray Luzier knows his role within this unique equation, and he plays it to perfection.



MD: When did drumming become your passion?

Ray: I was self-taught and played along to records until high school. I grew up on a 118-acre farm near Pittsburgh. We didn't have much money, and nobody in my family was really into music.

But when I was in high school, my uncle started giving me records by Kiss, AC/DC, Ted Nugent, Ozzy Osbourne.... I was learning to play by ear, but I couldn't figure out why AC/DC was so much easier to play along to than Rush.

Then my high school band director got me into playing rudiments and learning basic reading skills, and I joined jazz band and concert band and really started getting into marching band. The director was straight out of the military and pushed the drummers *hard*. He told us that we would be at practice an hour before the rest of the band arrived and would stay an hour after they left. All the drummers hated him, but I was totally into it.

I basically lived in the band room during my senior year of high school. We used those giant DC10 Louisville Slugger sticks and learned to play flam taps and Swiss Army triplets at alarming rates. Up to that point, I paid no attention to playing in time or playing grooves and clean, precise fills. I was just a kid playing to records. He really helped get my chops together, taught me discipline, and expanded my overall musical skills, which have stuck with me all these years. And most of my visual antics, like flipping my sticks, stem from my high school marching band days. It also taught me all of the rudiments that I use today.

So then I met a guitar player in jazz band who was into more progressive music like Yes, Rush, and Deep Purple. We put a band together and played our first gig with another guitarist—and no bass player. We did club gigs, and my dad would have to come with us and stand at the door because we were only fifteen or sixteen years old. I knew at that point that I wanted to play music for the rest of my life.

MD: How did you end up in L.A.?

Ray: A lot of great musicians from Pittsburgh were going to L.A. at the

HE GOT THE FUNK

Ray Luzier counts the new Korn album among his very best recordings—thanks, in part, to his decision to tune into the groovy.



MD: Where was *The Paradigm Shift* recorded?

Ray: We tracked the drums at NRG in North Hollywood, and all the rest of the record was done at the Buck Owens studio in Bakersfield, California, where the original members of Korn are from.

MD: Did you go into the recording with any predetermined ideas?

Ray: I listened to a lot of James Brown and Parliament records before we went into the studio this time. I love old funk music; it's so real and *not* locked up to a machine, like most music these days. I encourage drummers, especially hard-rock and metal players, to listen to other styles. It really helps your playing and broadens your musical vocabulary. In the song "Never Never," for instance, I just lay back and groove. It's what this tune called for—a very different style of tune for Korn!

MD: What kind of input did producer Don Gilmore have on your playing on *Paradigm Shift*?

Ray: Don suggested ideas for me to play based on what the other instruments were doing. There are some unique grooves on the record. Fieldy and I really play off each other—and around each other. We're not your typical lock-in-together rhythm section. He's a percussive bassist, so we find parts that complement each other.

MD: Did Gilmore talk to you about your fills too?

Ray: Yes, he had me approach some of them differently. They're still "me," but I did some different things. Fills that I might normally divide between my hands and feet, I would do a build fill on just my snare. Like when we come out of the bridge of "Mass Hysteria," I do a very quick 32nd-note fill. In the song "Love and Meth," I do a single-stroke roll between the snare and toms in the choruses and intro, then at the very end I do a typical "Luzier" fill between my feet and hands. There are some quick fills on that song that I like a lot.

More important to me than the fills on the new album, though, are the grooves. I don't play typical kick/snare/hat patterns. You have to have a funky hard-rock/metal groove to play in this band. It's not just bashing away and robotic. My favorite drum parts on this record are when the toms, hi-hats, and splash cymbals are incorporated into the verse grooves and then I straighten out in the chorus to make it more powerful. Incorporating the toms and the hi-hats into my grooves funks them up a bit and makes them not so typical.

On "What We Do," I incorporate my transitional fills in the actual groove. Those are some of my favorite things to play, because they kind of flow into the next part of the song. The opening groove in "What We Do" involves a cymbal configuration that I made up using a 16" Sabian Radia on top of a 15" HHX hi-hat bottom cymbal, which I also used in the verses of "Paranoid and Aroused." Then it goes to a more straight hi-hat in the verse, then to the O-Zone crash in the pre-choruses, and then it opens up with a 19" HHX-Plosion crash in the chorus. In that chorus and in intros I'm using a double pedal, which makes it sound more powerful and even.

"Victimized" is another one of my favorite tracks from the album. In the opening groove and the verses I used a 10" side snare with my left hand and played the hi-hats and snare with my right hand, creating a kind of loop feel. In the chorus of this tune, I'm using the double pedals again.

MD: How much digital enhancement was done to your drum tracks?

Ray: There are two songs where I play along to drum loops that our vocalist, Jonathan, created. He's actually a really good drummer. There's a song called "Spike in My Veins" that he cowrote with a DJ. The drum loop he created is so cool that no matter what I did to try to reproduce it, it didn't enhance the groove. So I laid out until the chorus, and the drums only play on the chorus and outro.

MD: Did you play to a click?

Ray: I played to a click on everything. And we pushed and pulled certain sections to create a vibe. We tried doing it without a click, but with so many electronics going on, it just made life easier to do it all with it.

MD: Once your tracks are finished, do you keep tabs on what's being done to them during mixing?

Ray: Yes, and Don actually invited me to his house to go over all the drum tracks to make sure I was cool with everything that he was doing before we started mixing. There were times when he would slice measures in half and cut fills off in ways that didn't sound natural to me. So we both compromised on what made sense for the song, and it all worked out really well in the end. There were a few minor things that I had to move, but I still wanted it to breathe and feel real without too much editing. *Korn III* was done totally without a click, and the time moved all over the map, on purpose. Then on the next album, *The Path of Totality*, everything was completely locked on the grid. On this new record it's a bit of both worlds.



RECORDINGS

Korn III: Remember Who You Are, The Path of Totality, Live at the Hollywood Palladium (DVD and CD), Paradigm Shift /// **Army of Anyone** Army of Anyone /// **David Lee Roth** DLR Band, Diamond Dave /// **Billy Sheehan** Cosmic Troubadour, Holy Cow /// **The Hideous Sun Demons** The Hideous Sun Demons

RAY'S KORN TOUR SETUP

Drums: Pearl Reference series

- A. 6.5x14 snare
- B. 5x13 snare
- C. 9x12 tom
- D. 10x13 tom
- E. 16x18 floor tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- G. 16x24 bass drum
- H. 16x20 gong drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 19" Holy China (or Manta Ray)
- 2. 18" AAX X-Plosion crash
- 3. 10" AA splash
- 4. 19" AAX X-Plosion crash
- 5. 14" AA Rock Hats
- 6. 10" Glennie's Garbage
- 7. 21" AA Rock ride
- 8. 20" HHX X-Plosion crash
- 9. 18" AAX O-Zone crash
- 10. 8" Ice Bell
- 11. 18" APX O-Zone crash
- 12. 16" Radia with 15" HH bottom hi-hat underneath
- 13. 15" Radia China with 14" HH bottom hi-hat underneath
- 14. 9" LP Ice Bell
- 15. 18" Holy China (or AAX China)

Not shown: 21" Holy China and two prototype "spiral" cymbals

"I have a lot of cymbals, but I use them all for specific sounds in each song," Luzier says. "On my right I have several stacks for really tight sounds. My crash cymbals are pretty loose, but my stacks are very tight, and I'll break a few cymbals along the way. I especially love the Sabian 18" O-Zone crash. I used it quite a bit on this record. In 'Prey for Me' and 'Mass Hysteria,' it's in the opening riffs, and I used it in the pre-chorus of 'Love and Meth.' It's great for quick attacks; it dies out quickly. I go back and forth between the ride and O-Zone a lot."

Electronics: Yamaha DTX-MULTI 12, ddrum triggers, Hart pads, Aviom A-16II mixer

"My two electronic pads are used to trigger 808 sounds and different electronic snare sounds, and to activate loops. One thing David Lee Roth said to me was, 'Always have a backup for the backup—don't make excuses.' So one is my main pad and the other is an active backup if the main one fails. I have triggers on some of the drums, but they're only activated when we play the dubstep songs. For 90 percent of the show they're off."

Hardware: DW, including 9000 series double pedal

Heads: Remo, including Ambassador X snare batters, Clear Emperor tom batters, and Powerstroke 3s on the bass drums

Sticks: Pro-Mark Ray Luzier 757

Percussion: LP

Accessories: Porter & Davies BC2 throne

Tech: Toi Russel

"Toi is my awesome drum tech. He worked with Snoop Dogg for six or seven years, as well as many other artists. He's great with Pro Tools and can fix anything quickly. So I have no worries when things go wrong, like they did in Columbus!"



time, and my guitar player thought that going to Musicians Institute in Hollywood would be a great way to meet other musicians and make connections in the industry. I didn't care about connections. I thought we were good enough that we could just go out there and somebody would discover us. That's how naïve I was about the business. So we both passed the audition to attend MI, and two months after we graduated from high school we packed up the bus and set sail across the States.

MD: What happened when you arrived at MI?

Ray: I got my butt kicked. I thought I was hot stuff coming off the farm, playing all this prog stuff. What I learned immediately was that my time was awful and I had a lot to learn about

drumming. I didn't know much about jazz, Latin, or world music, and my reading chops were weak.

There were a lot of inspiring players in my class, though, a lot of heavy cats, like Chad Smith and basically the entire Alanis Morissette band. My teachers, especially Ralph Humphrey, Joe Porcaro, Steve Houghton, Richie Garcia, and Efrain Toro, taught me a lot. They're all world-class players. Joe Porcaro was most helpful in making me realize I was gripping my sticks way too tight. He got me to relax and helped me learn the Moeller technique. I'll always be grateful to him for that. I'm forty-three and I've never had any hand problems, thanks to Joe's guidance.

MD: What happened with your guitar player and making connections in the business?



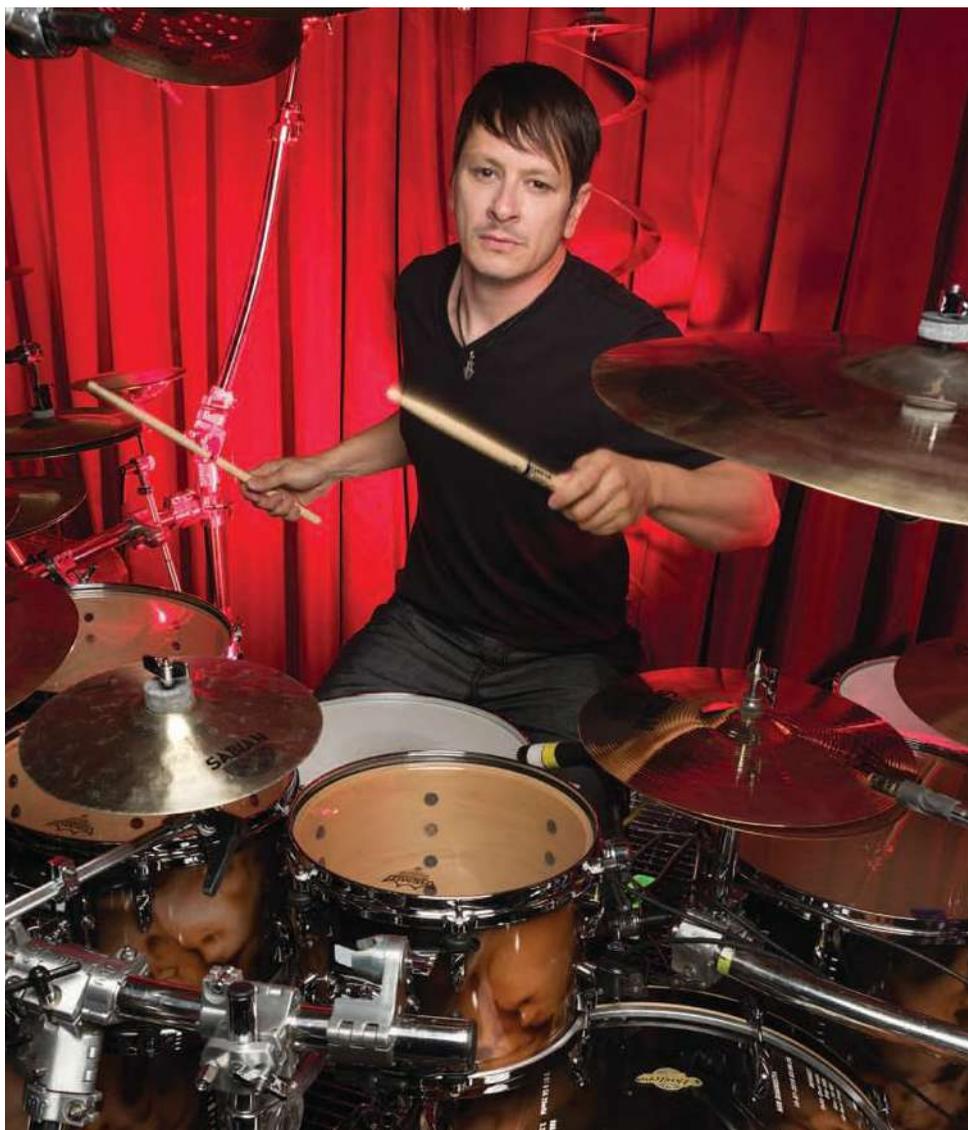
Ray: I graduated from MI with average scores. My main goal became trying to fine-tune my skills so I could go out and meet players and get into a band. Also, most of my favorite players, like Steve Smith, Scott Travis, Deen Castronovo, and Atma Anur, were on these Shrapnel recordings with shredder guitar players, and I wanted to be a part of that scene. It just so happened that one of the guitar instructors at MI, Craig Small, was getting ready to sign with Shrapnel, and he asked me to play on his record. The project was called 9.0 and the album was titled *Too Far Gone*. I was nineteen when that came out, and it was my first professional recording. I ended up doing several more recordings for Shrapnel. At that point, my guitar player friend from Pennsylvania was getting bummed because our band wasn't doing anything, and he moved back home.

MD: How did you end up teaching at MI?

Ray: After graduation I was doing small recording projects, advertising for lessons, and doing everything I could to survive in L.A. I was really struggling for a couple of years. Then Ralph Humphrey called and asked if I'd like to write a hard-rock curriculum for MI and teach a few hours a week. So we put together the Heavy Metal Live Playing Workshop and I started teaching four hours a week. Eventually the four hours a week turned into thirty-three, and I started teaching other classes, like Rhythm Section Workshop. I was still doing sessions and auditioning for lots of bands. I thought that if I practiced six to eight hours a day, I would get so good that everyone would want to hire me. That was definitely *not* the case.

MD: What did you learn from that experience?

Ray: One of my drummer friends at MI would always be in the practice room next to me, playing basic 4/4 grooves to a click track. He ended up getting the Joan Jett gig. That opened my eyes to the fact that I was going about the business all wrong. While I was practicing to build crazy chops, he was out networking and handing out



business cards, sitting in at clubs, and meeting players. He taught me that doing the business of music was just as important as learning to play.

MD: When did your big break happen?

Ray: When I was twenty-one I auditioned and got the gig with Infectious Grooves. It was a full-fledged cattle call of about seventy-five drummers. I was thinking this was going to be my big break. After two weeks I was out of the band. I just wasn't the right guy, and it humbled me quickly.

Fitting in with the other band members is such a big part of getting a gig. Sometimes if you don't share the same hobbies or passions that the other members do, it can cost you the gig. I'm proud to say that I've never done drugs in my entire life. Red wine is my drug of choice! But I've seen so many bands, careers, and marriages ruined by drugs. Many bands today consist of recovering

addicts. So out of respect for them I won't even have a glass of wine around them. I've always been the designated driver. [laughs]

Anyway, after the Infectious Grooves gig fell through, I heard that Badlands/Ozzy Osbourne guitarist Jake E. Lee was auditioning players for his band. I'm a huge Ozzy fan and love Jake E.'s playing. I found out about the audition from a guy at the studio. So I went home and learned every song off both Badlands records and all the Ozzy stuff that Jake E. played on, just in case he wanted to play any of that. I practiced those songs for a solid week. So when I got to the studio, I hung out by the door until the bass player came out, and I asked him about auditioning. He said to hang out and he would see what he could do. So I sat there all day and listened to every type of drummer play the same three songs.

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RAY LUZIER

Finally, I got to go in. I was the last guy of the day, and they were so tired that they literally had their heads in their hands—you could tell that they just wanted to get it over with. I talked them into playing one of my favorite Badlands songs, which was a refreshing break for them. Then I went into another of my favorite Badlands tunes and we jammed on that. Then they asked what I was doing the next day. I spent over four years touring in the band, until the label dropped them. But it was my first big break.

MD: What happened next?

Ray: I went back to doing a lot of sessions, thinking maybe that was going to be my niche. During that time, I did a session at guitarist Steve Vai's house for a twenty-one-year-old guitarist named Mike Hartman. Shortly afterwards, Hartman hooked up with David Lee Roth to write and record some songs, because he was going to put out a new record and tour again. So Hartman called me to come down and record with them. He said that Roth heard his tracks and liked my playing. I didn't really believe this was going to happen, but I went anyway.

Sure enough, when I got there, I was standing face to face with Diamond Dave. During the session he kept asking me a lot of questions about my playing, which I thought was kind of strange for a session. What I didn't realize is that he was actually auditioning me for his band. His manager called me the next day and said I passed the audition. I was freaked out because I love Van Halen, and playing with Dave was on my bucket list. I spent the next eight years touring and recording with him. It was a childhood dream come true.

MD: What was it like working with him?

Ray: I loved touring the world with David. He taught me a lot about the music business, and he taught me to be an entertainer, not just a drummer. He would tell me to think about what someone in the audience would think of me when they were watching me play. Would I look boring to them, or would I be entertaining? That was a

huge lesson for me. I learned to be more aggressive and display my emotion in a more visual way. But I got tired of playing the same songs for eight years, and I found that I wasn't growing as a musician. So I started looking for other opportunities.

MD: What did you discover?

Ray: I was doing a NAMM Show gig in 2006 with bassist Billy Sheehan and David Lee Roth guitarist Toshi Hiketa. The DeLeo brothers from Stone Temple Pilots were also on the bill, playing with drummer Steve Ferrone. They were checking us out at sound-check, and afterwards they asked me what I was doing, because they were putting a new band together with Filter frontman Richard Patrick called Army of Anyone. I told them I was a huge fan of STP and Filter and that I'd love to audition. I got a six-song demo from management and was ready for the audition.

But before we even played a note of their music I knew that they were all big Led Zeppelin fans, so we started the audition by playing the entire first two sides of *Physical Graffiti*. After we started into the first demo song, we took a quick break. When I came back into the room, they all had grins on their faces and welcomed me into the band, without even really playing any of their own music. It also meant a lot to them that I was from the East Coast, because they are all East Coast guys. There's just a certain vibe that connects people from there.

MD: What did Army of Anyone give you that you were looking for musically at the time?

Ray: We all started writing the music together, and they taught me how to simplify my playing and to create hooks with my grooves. They got me thinking more about creating drum patterns that would become integral parts of the song. Unfortunately the band was short-lived. After we did the record, we toured for about four months, and then everybody ended up going back to their previous bands. I joined Korn within the same month.

MD: What was your connection to get the gig with Korn?



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RAY LUZIER

know. Usually when that happens it means you don't have the gig. So I figured I just didn't have the look they wanted and started taking my cymbals down. But before I knew it, there were video cameras in my face and they walked up and said, "Congratulations, you got the gig. Welcome to Korn. We'll see you in Dublin." I was totally stunned. The only thing Fieldy said was, "Hey man, start letting your hair grow!"

MD: What do you feel you bring to Korn from a drumming perspective?

Ray: When I joined Korn, they said, "We hired you because we love your playing and your personality. We want you to bring *your* thing to this band." When we first hit the road in 2008, I was a hired gun, and I was completely fine with that. I was really into re-creating the tracks with respect to the original parts, but adding my personality, groove, and feel.

I became a full member in 2009, after the tour. Now that I've done three Korn recordings, along with some movie soundtracks, I can totally do my own thing. When we started writing for *Korn III*, I knew that a big part of the band's sound was producer Ross Robinson. Ross is very hard on drummers, so I knew he was going to ride me and that I'd have to prove myself. I still get referred to as the new guy, and I've been in Korn for six years now. So I understood that I had to prove myself to the fans before they would accept me into the Korn family.

MD: Watching Korn on stage and the way the audience responds, there's a hypnotic aura that surrounds the band. Do you sense that when you're on stage?

Ray: Absolutely. The band is so much larger than we are as individual members. No matter how tired or jet-lagged we are when we hit the stage, the music takes over and controls us for the entire show. It's almost like an out-of-body experience. The music takes us to an amazing place that I've never experienced in any other band.

There's a serious cult following with Korn. I've met about forty fans who have my picture tattooed on their body. That really freaks me out. But it also tells me that the fans take our music as seriously as we do. And that means a lot

Ray: The guys in Korn aren't really schooled players. The beautiful thing about that is they create their own style based on heart, soul, and emotion. So the fact that Terry Bozzio and Brooks Wackerman played on *Untitled* [the first studio album without founding drummer David Silveria] was pretty bizarre. For whatever reason, it didn't end up working out with Terry, so Joey Jordison from Slipknot did some of that tour until he had to get back to recording with Slipknot. My manager told me they were looking for somebody and that they really liked the Army of Anyone recording that I played on. So he was able to set up the audition. I owned four Korn records, so I started listening to them and visualizing myself in the drum chair.

Then I bought *Untitled*, started practicing to it, and found myself really getting into it. So I called my manager a week later and told him that I wanted to audition for the band. He suggested

that I go to Seattle and audition before their last show of the tour. He said he'd rent a kit and set up the audition at soundcheck. I was doing a clinic tour for Sabian at the time, and we rerouted the tour into Seattle so I could audition.

MD: What was the audition like?

Ray: It was bizarre. I showed up to an empty arena, walked on stage, and sat down behind a really bad-sounding rental kit that was impossible to tune. They'd asked me to learn five tunes, but I learned thirty so I could be ready for whatever they threw at me. My best advice for any musician is to be overly prepared when you audition. Think about what you can do that will separate you from the other hundred guys that will be auditioning.

At first Munky [guitarist James Shaffer] and I started playing some tunes, and then after about three songs, the bassist, Fieldy, showed up and we jammed on three more. Then they said they would talk things over and let me

to us and keeps us wanting to give our best at every show. The eye makeup that I wear is just to help enhance the character that takes over on stage.

MD: Talk about the amazing-looking rack that you use with your live kit.

Ray: I've been a non-rack player for most of my career. A few years ago I met a guy in L.A. named Nissim Aharon, who designed racks for other musicians around L.A., including Jonathan [Davis, singer] from Korn. So I agreed to let him make a rack for me, but I needed him to make sure to place my signature China cymbal front and center and still leave a space in front of the kit. Two weeks later he had it finished, and it looked really cool, so I started using it. Now I've changed it a little and gone back to the straight stand in the center for my China.

MD: You play open-handed a lot. What's the main purpose of that?

Ray: I started playing drums open-handed. I like the feel and power of it. I'm not good at ghosting open-handed, though. So when I want to play more intricate patterns with ghost notes, I'll cross over and play traditional.

MD: Did you ever do specific exercises for improving the coordination of that?

Ray: I like to play one-handed 16th-note patterns using my left hand on the hats, to strengthen my left hand. Just be sure that your snare drum is very strong and powerful no matter what hand is hitting it. No one cares what hand you're hitting the drums with—it's all about how it sounds on record or in performance. The grooves do change slightly when you play open versus crossed. Sometimes I'll open doors, eat, or brush my teeth with my left hand, just to balance out the strength. It affects your playing—try it!

MD: Can you talk about the technique and stamina involved in playing heavy music in a large arena? You play with a lot of power, but you have such relaxed control of your hands and feet.

Ray: We play two-hour shows, and I don't get much of a break during that time. It looks like I'm playing heavier than I really am. I'm actually quite relaxed most of the time. My grip is very loose. Sometimes the butt of the stick is

in the middle of my palm and I'm barely holding on.

I always pace myself. Fatigue can actually set in quicker on smaller gigs, so I try to ease into the gig a bit more when we play smaller places, where it's hotter with less fresh air to breathe. Having proper stick technique is crucial to staying loose and relaxed.

MD: You wrote the hard rock and double bass curriculums when you taught at MI. What do you feel are the most important elements of being a

good metal player?

Ray: If you're going to play a heavier style of music, your timing has to be great, which means you have to practice to a click about 75 percent of the time. Not *all* the time, because you'll start to rely on it too much. You have to be ready for any situation and not depend on the click to save you. You have to develop your internal clock. It takes time—I'm always working on my timing.

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and metal drummers lack is dynamics. It's *very* important to practice at all different volume levels. Consistency between your kick and snare is key as well. You won't get hired if your backbeats aren't consistent. Most important for metal drummers: Play your fills as loud as your groove! I can't stand when I see a drummer playing this slamming groove, and then the fill comes up and the bottom falls out.

I actually don't consider myself a metal drummer. I play many different styles, but I do specialize in heavier drumming with soul. I think a lot of today's music is too stiff. We have to remember that we're human, not machines. Listen to some albums made in the '70s!

MD: Do you play both traditional and matched grip?

Ray: I can, but there's really not much need for me to play traditional these days, since most of my gigs are with Korn and it calls for a more powerful technique. Sometimes, when I practice, I'll mess around with some jazz and

switch to traditional grip. But not very often anymore.

MD: Do you play any gigs outside of Korn?

Ray: Since 1996 I've been hired by a company called Perfect World Entertainment to play weddings, corporate gigs, and private parties, everything from disco to classic rock. I've always done these gigs in between touring and session work. It's a humbling experience coming off a major world tour and then loading your drums up in your car and having to haul them up a flight of stairs and play disco to a click track all night. These gigs have paid my bills many times when I've been taken off retainer from a salary gig.

MD: What other recording projects are you currently involved with?

Ray: Outside of Korn, I've been recording with bass virtuoso Billy Sheehan. We just finished a bass-and-drums-only project that includes lengthy, epic conversations that explore crazy musical directions. Also,

King's X is one of my all-time favorite bands, and I've wanted to work with bassist/vocalist Doug Pinnick for years. I finally got my wish on the new KXM project, which also includes former Dokken and Lynch Mob guitarist George Lynch. It's made up of spontaneous compositions that we wrote in my home studio. We recorded a song a day for twelve days. I also recorded the drum tracks for Korn vocalist Jonathan's solo release. From an educational perspective, in 2005 I released an instructional DVD on Hal Leonard that focuses on drumset technique for double bass, hand-and-foot coordination, practice techniques, and groove and fill exercises.

MD: With all your activities, what keeps you grounded?

Ray: I have an amazing family in L.A. and a place near my folks' house in Pennsylvania, in case I end up penniless and go insane in Los Angeles. [laughs] But life is really good, and I'm thankful for everyone and everything in it.



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Ilan Rubín

Choice Cuts From *Paramore* and *Exhibit A*

by Ken Micallef



Rob Sheridan

This year, drummer Ilan Rubín further secured his position as one of modern rock's hottest prospects after putting out a third release with his solo project, the New Regime; touring with Nine Inch Nails; and making a guest spot on emo-pop superstars Paramore's recent self-titled release.

As with his previous solo records, Rubín played all of the instruments on the New Regime's *Exhibit A*. "This is a natural progression from my first two albums," he says. "A couple songs have a riffier, bluesier feel, so organic sounds and natural recording suited those the best. Then I went rawer on a few songs. 'Know How It Feels' is very stripped down. By contrast, I extended the electronic aspect in a song like 'Daydream,' where the heart of the song is a loop that I programmed."

Whether Rubín is recording with the New Regime or Paramore, his drumming sounds massive, which has as much to do with his aggressive playing style as it does miking and production choices. "I like having as much of the ambient sound as possible, though you need close miking to cut through a mix," Ilan explains. "I pride myself on being a hard hitter but having the finesse and detail required for any gig."

Rubín's work with Paramore brings out the more metal/punk side of his playing, from the heavy ska and killer tom fills on "Now" to the Stewart Copeland-meets-Keith Moon juxtapositions on "Daydreaming." Rubín handily maneuvers through multiple section changes and rhythms on "Part II," creates a provocative tom-based groove on "Proof," and follows unusual vocal phrasing with snare drum accents on "Be Alone." Throughout, his drum parts are as memorable as the band's great songs.

Given the chance to dictate his drumming in the New Regime, you'd think Rubín would put the kit at center stage, but his rhythms are more streamlined on *Exhibit A*. "Don't Chase It" is one such example, featuring a basic groove that's adorned with subtle drum-corps-style snare rolls. "Daydream" contains both programmed and acoustic drums and sounds like Depeche Mode collaborating with blues guitar legend Albert King. Then on "No Traces," Rubín supports soaring vocal harmonies and riff-heavy guitars with a funky bell-based groove.

Starting on page 56 are transcriptions of select beats from *Paramore* and *Exhibit A*, along with comments from Rubín regarding the conception behind his parts.

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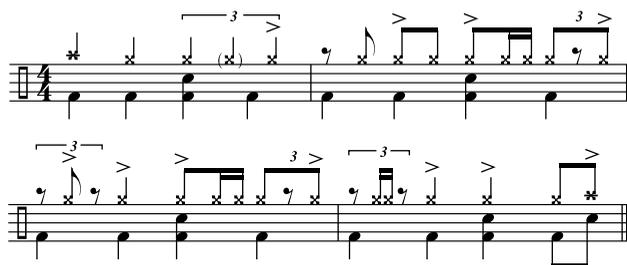
PARAMORE

“Now”

The band programmed a beat for the demo of this song. The verse part I played was similar to what they'd programmed. (0:00)



After the first chorus, there's a re-intro that leads into verse two, and that's where I play triplet stuff on the hi-hat. They said, “We want something with busier hi-hats,” so I summoned my inner Stewart Copeland. I improvised, and they liked it. (1:24)

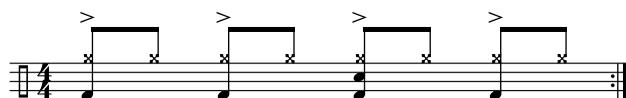


“Daydreaming”

Whether I accent on beat 3 or use more of a 2-and-4 feel is up to the band. They're the songwriters. My job is to create

something they're happy with. With all of the fills, I just play and improvise. I don't like to do anything too busy.

(0:26, 1:30)



“Part II”

There are a lot of different drum parts in this song, which evolved after the drum tracks were recorded. But they enjoyed the busy, chaotic parts and fills I played. They said, “Keep building and get busier, and then go overboard.” I tried to play as powerfully as possible. (3:31)



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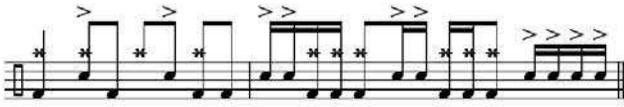
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“Proof”

This song has a pretty simple tom-based groove with 2 and 4 on the snare. (0:22)



“Be Alone”

The snare drum accent in unison with the vocal was the band’s idea. That’s one of those things you can imagine sounding very rigid, but it flowed pretty well. (0:42)



THE NEW REGIME

“Don’t Chase It”

I’m keeping straight 8ths on the hi-hat and then adding swoops, which is one of those things that you don’t notice but keeps things moving. (0:16)



“Daydream”

From the point where the live drums come in, I’m filling in the electronic pattern with the acoustic kit. (2:52)



“No Traces”

The feel and style of the beat in this song is like a Bonham-ized version of Ginger Baker’s groove in Cream’s “Born Under a Bad Sign.” I’m playing straight 8th notes on the bell. The performance is swinging, but it’s still beefy and hard hitting. (0:03)



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Part 5: Paradiddle-Based Grooves

by Mike Adamo

MUSIC KEY

R.C.	×	
S.D.	○	(○)
B.D.	×	
H.H.	×	
w/foot	×	
		Ghost note

In this series we've focused on exercises that help develop a tight and steady groove. This month we'll start by breaking up the four paradiddle variations between the bass drum and snare. However, instead of playing each pattern for the entire measure, we'll play it only during the second half of the measure. We'll begin with more basic patterns and then develop them as the lesson progresses.

Here's the first set of paradiddle exercises. Don't forget to pay attention to the accents and ghost notes within the snare pattern; they add a lot of depth to the grooves.

Now play those in conjunction with the right-hand ride patterns from part four of this series. You don't have to play the left-foot hi-hat patterns, but it's a good idea to add them as you get more comfortable, to help keep you locked in and to improve your coordination.

Here's the first set of right-hand patterns.

After you've mastered each of the paradiddle variations (Examples 1-4) with the first set of right-hand patterns, move on to the next set, which is based on playing three 16th notes in a row.

After you've mastered the second set, move on to the third. These patterns are based on instances of two 16th notes in a row starting on different subdivisions of the beat.

The fourth set of right-hand patterns contains instances of single notes starting on the "e" and "a" of the beat.

It's important to be able to play steady 16th notes on the hi-hat or ride. This creates a grooving, driving feel for slow to mid-tempo songs (75-95 bpm). Practice Examples 1-4 in conjunction with this right-hand pattern.

Now let's move on to the next set of paradiddle exercises. These are a bit more complicated than the first set. Practice them in conjunction with each of the right-hand patterns, as you did with Examples 1-4.



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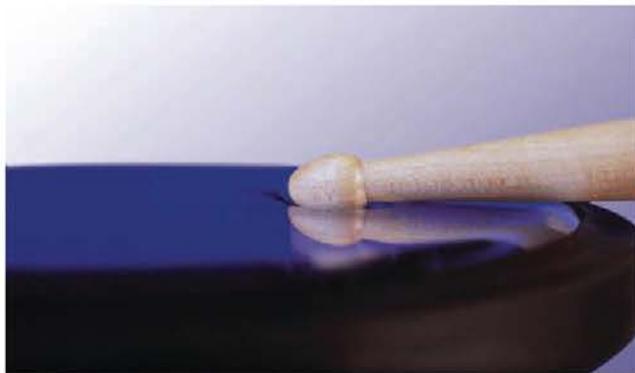
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Here's a third set of paradiddle exercises to practice with the different right-hand patterns.



After you've mastered these examples, spend some time making up your own grooves based on the concepts from the lesson. Until next time!



Mike Adamo is the author of the critically acclaimed instructional book *The Breakbeat Bible* (Hudson Music). For more info, including how to sign up for lessons via Skype, visit mikeadamo.com and thebreakbeatbible.com.



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DOUBLE BASS WORKOUT

Part 4: Advanced Grooves

by Todd Vinciguerra

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	x
S.D.	●
B.D.	●

This month we're exploring advanced double bass groove ideas that mix 16th notes, 16th-note triplets, and 32nd notes alongside

16th-note-based hand patterns. Remember to always play to a metronome or a click track. Also, start off slowly and master each exercise before increasing the speed. To take the exercises a step further, instead of just playing the patterns one at a time, turn them into two-, three-, or four-bar phrases. And instead of using only straight 8th notes on the hi-hat, try using quarter notes or 16ths, or mix all three.

Experiment with the bass drum patterns as well, by switching the lead foot or by using double strokes.

1

2

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19

20



Todd "Vinny" Vinciguerra is the author of several drum instructional books. His latest, *Double Basics: Complete Double Bass Drum Book*, is available through Mel Bay. For more info, visit anotherstateofmind.com.



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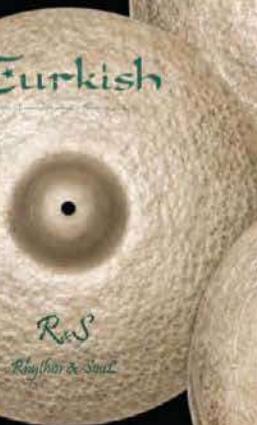
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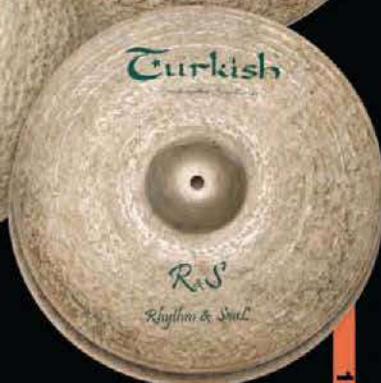
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APPROACHING STANDARDS

A Framework for Musical Practice, Part 2: Melody and Form

by Steve Fidyk

Welcome to the second installment in our series on approaching jazz standards. This article reveals ways of using the melodic rhythm as the source for creating accompaniment (or “comping”) patterns.

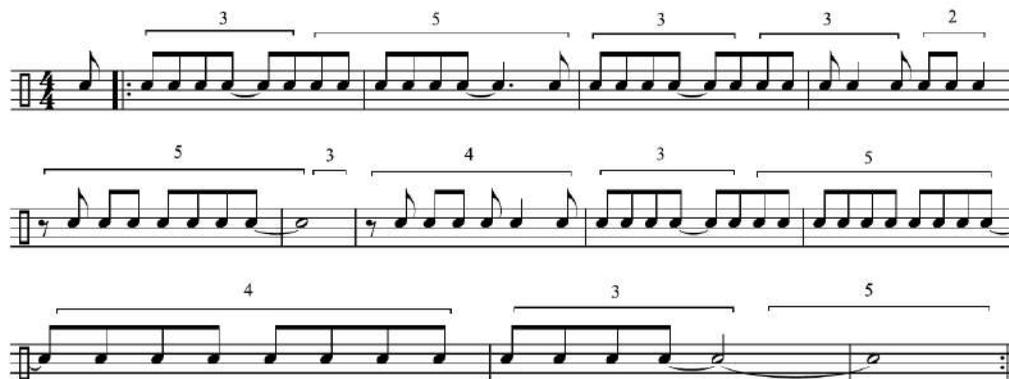
THE MELODY ITSELF

In order for you to feel comfortable and confident supporting any melody, it helps to have a solid understanding of the tune’s form. As you determine a song’s structure, listen closely for ideas that repeat.

One of the oldest and most common musical forms is the twelve-bar blues. This form is divided into three four-measure phrases, and each twelve-measure interval is called a chorus. It’s common in a live jazz setting to have dozens of improvised choruses played by multiple musicians within the band. Each performer uses the melody and its chord structure as a springboard to create variations on the original song.

INSIDE THE PHRASES

The focus of part one of this series was the standard “Straight No Chaser” by Thelonious Monk, which is built on the blues form. What makes the tune so much fun to play is the fact that the phrases do not resolve neatly every four measures. (This trait is found in many of Monk’s compositions.) Below is a phrase-by-phrase analysis that identifies the nonsymmetrical start of each phrase. We will apply this information a little later as our first accompaniment approach.



MELODY SHAPING

To gain a better understanding of the melodic contour of “Straight No Chaser,” try using a few of the sticking variations from part one, and voice them around the drumset.

Here’s an example that voices the melody around the kit using combinations of single and double strokes.



MUSIC KEY

H.H.	×	R.C.
T.T.	×	
S.D.	●	
F.T.	●	
B.D.	●	
H.H.	×	
w/ foot		

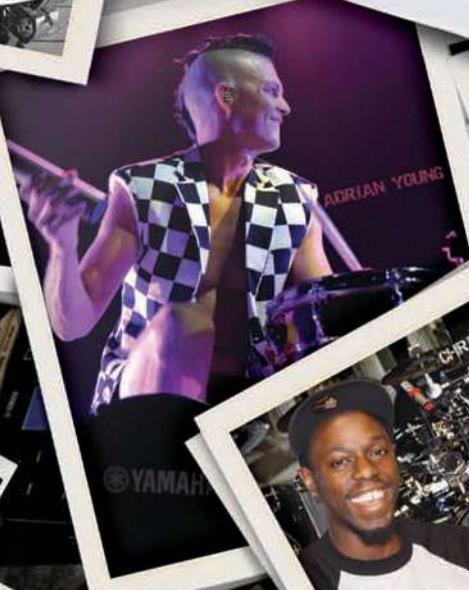
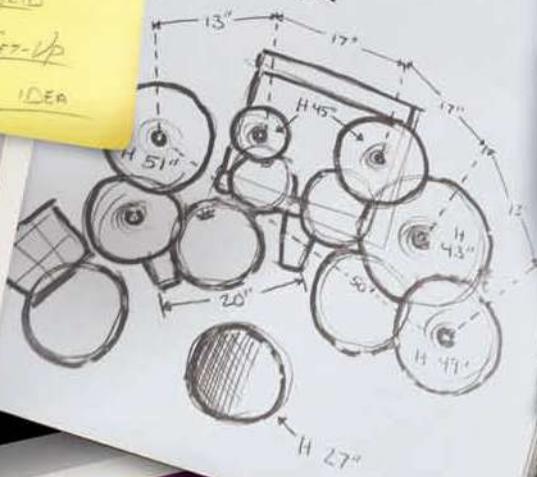
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MARKERS ALONG THE MELODIC TRAIL

As you listen to the melody of “Straight No Chaser,” take note of the different points that are accented within the musical line. These markers provide a second tier of rhythm that jazz drummers often emphasize as they accompany soloists. As you practice these extracted rhythms, come up with your own ideas that swing with the same intensity as the melody itself.

ACCOMPANIMENT APPROACHES

This first comping example applies the nonsymmetrical phrasing of the melody to the ride cymbal, with the rest of the rhythm broken up between the snare and bass drum.

3 5
 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 5 &
 3 3 2
 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2
 5 3
 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 1 2 & 3
 4 3
 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 &
 5 4
 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
 3 5
 1 & 2 & 3 1 & 2 3 & 4 5 &

RECORDING SESSIONS

EPISODE I

— FEATURING —

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The next example uses the 8th-note pickup rhythm found at the start of the tune as an accompanying ostinato played on the hi-hat. The melody is voiced around the kit.

In the next example, the melody is played in unison on the ride cymbal, snare, and bass drum. Using segments of the melodic rhythm as your ride cymbal beat can help you connect with a tune's phrasing. Check out Roy Haynes, Mel Lewis, Jack DeJohnette, and Adam Nussbaum to hear this approach in action.

The more often you record your practice sessions, the easier it will be to refine and edit your style of accompaniment. At first you'll have to focus on the weaknesses that need attention. In time you will begin to hear ideas that are uniquely yours. Remain patient and continue to develop these ideas, because they are what will make your individual playing style.

In part three of this series we'll explore ways of using the melody as the vehicle for developing memorable improvisational statements.



Steve Fidyk has performed with Terrell Stafford, Tim Warfield, Dick Oatts, Doc Severinsen, Wayne Bergeron, Phil Wilson, and Maureen McGovern, and he's a member of the jazz studies faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia. For more info, including how to sign up for lessons via Skype, visit stevefidyk.com.



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SEEING SOUNDS

Part 5: Specialty Mics

by Donny Gruendler

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In the first four installments of this series we discussed very broad ideas for achieving stylistically appropriate drum sounds, from pop-rock to traditional jazz. Each setup employed different drums, head selections, and tunings, and we used miking techniques that ranged from spot mics on each drumkit voice to just two overheads and a bass drum mic. In this final article we'll add sonic depth and personality to those previously discussed tones, with some strategically placed room mics.

MONO MIC

In order to capture the drums as they sound in real life, many engineers use a mono room mic. This simple and effective texture is achieved by employing a single large-diaphragm condenser microphone in order to capture the entire frequency range of the drumkit. Place it, with the capsule facing forward, approximately 6' in front of the kit. For a direct, punchy tone that focuses mostly on the drums, position the mic no higher than 4.5' to 5'.

By raising the mic, you can achieve an airier room tone with more cymbal wash and less kick and snare drum attack.

In your digital audio workstation (DAW), mix in a small amount of the room mic to taste. Not only will this blend a natural, live-in-the-room sound with the kick, snare, tom, and overhead mics, but it will also help you play more dynamically when you record.

In order to get that larger-than-life bombastic room sound in your final mix, apply a plug-in compressor to



the room-mic channel. As compression lessens the dynamic range between the loudest and quietest parts of an audio signal, the effect will squash the audio captured by the room mic and make the kit sound as though it was recorded in a large, loud space. Many plug-in developers have presets that allow you to dial up various levels of distorted, squashed, and pumping compression. These usually have names like Room, Pump, or Squashed.

BLUMLEIN PAIR

If you're lacking space or depth with the mono room sound, or if you'd like to apply some extreme panning to your final mix, try placing two bidirectional large-diaphragm condensers in

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front of the kit to form a stereo Blumlein pair. One of the mics should be placed upside down, directly over the other mic, with its capsule facing 45 degrees to the right. The bottom mic should be turned so that the capsule faces 45 degrees to the left. The top mic will pick up the front-left and back-right sounds of the room, while the bottom mic will capture the front-right and back-left.



Since we're treating these two mics as one capturing device, using a matched pair is ideal; at the very least, use two of the same make and model.

X/Y STEREO

If you don't own two identical mics, you can enlist a single X/Y stereo mic. A stereo mic has two separate capsules placed within one housing. It allows for easy transport and placement but may have a smaller stereo image.

SOFTEN THE TONE

If you'd like to add a softer midrange "gush" to your room tone, place a large packing blanket between the drumkit and the room mics. This can be accomplished by extending the boom arms of two cymbal or mic stands to form a half rectangle. The stands should be 12" to 18" above the mic capsule, with the blanket being placed like this:



This technique will retain the body and fundamental tone of the drumkit while taming the high-frequency cymbal wash.

SPACED PAIR

In order to capture a wide slap effect, try placing a spaced pair of small-diaphragm condensers in the opposing corners of your room, with the mics facing *away* from the kit. The mics should be positioned 5' to 8' high, with the capsules placed 6" from a hard surface, preferably a gypsum, concrete, or brick wall.

To obtain more wash and less of the slap effect, raise the condensers into the far corners of the room. The capsules should be placed 2' to 3' from where the back wall meets the side wall and ceiling. Point the mics directly at the junction of the three surfaces.



Should there be an ugly low or midrange rumble in the sound captured by the spaced pair, you can remove it by adding a plug-in EQ within your DAW. A simple four-band EQ works best. Select the lowest band and drag it downward to -12dB. Gradually move the band to the right and listen for the moment when the drum sound becomes more articulate to your ears. If some low or midrange rumble is still present, repeat the previous steps with the additional low-mid, mid, and high-mid bands.



LOOP MIC

In order to create lo-fi loop textures, many producers like to place a harmonica mic directly above the kit, with the capsule pointing at the bass drum beater. To avoid phasing issues, you shouldn't use this microphone in conjunction

with normal overheads. Rather, treat its signal as an audio effect to be used in a particular section of a song. To really dirty up the sound this mic captures, apply a harmonic distortion plug-in, such as Avid's Lo-Fi or SansAmp PSA-1.

CONTINUE TO EXPERIMENT

We've discussed some very specific room-miking techniques in this article. Think of them as a starting point for your own sessions. Each approach will continue to be a work in progress and will take time to fully master. And before you can use any of these methods in an actual session, you'll have to spend some time getting to know the sound and idiosyncrasies of your room. I suggest that you concentrate on one of the room-mic placements at a time.

Thanks for reading this series. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me via iq@moderndrummer.com.



Donny Gruendler is vice president of curricular development at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.



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DEEP LISTENING MAKES FOR DEEP DRUMMING

by Chris Brewer

What does the old-school album format have to do with increasing your skills at the kit? One drummer argues that expanding your listening experiences will result in a broadened percussive palette.

I've never listened to music in a singles format, preferring instead to enjoy full-length albums. Of course, given the fact that my formative years were in the '70s and '80s, this makes sense—go with what you know, right? But it's more than that. Full-length albums were one of the most crucial aspects of my development as a musician, indeed as a human being. And it's with some crusty-old-man trepidation that I sense that the act of celebrating music designed to be listened to in one longer sitting is becoming less of a ritual these days.

Given the rapid advance of media in our 99-cent-download-Frappuccino-hard-drive-rush-hour world, it's really not surprising. People want quick jolts of information given to them in rapid-fire succession, which results in attention spans becoming increasingly shorter. If you scan the music library in an average young person's MP3 player, you'll find mostly singles. There's "Rock and Roll" where there's no *Led Zeppelin IV*. "Purple Haze" where there's no *Are You Experienced*. And "Money" where there's no *Dark Side of the Moon*.

Many people roll their eyes when Deep Purple's iconic heavy rocker "Smoke on the Water" is mentioned. But if you listen to the band's *Machine Head* album as a whole and the tune comes up in context, between the songs "Never Before" and "Lazy," you'll hear it entirely differently, and it will never seem tired or stale. It's no longer just a song with a worn-out riff, but rather one moment in a series of moments that come together to form one of the best rock 'n' roll albums of all time.

Listening to an album isn't an old-fuddy-duddy thing to do either. We're

talking about works of art here. Think of Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*, Radiohead's *OK Computer*, or Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti*. These albums were made for listeners to have an *experience*. In their entirety, they convey a complete emotive quality that can't necessarily be gotten by focusing on only one track. Imagine trying to grasp the thematic and emotional complexities that saturate *The Wall* just by listening to "Comfortably Numb." It's impossible.

Listening to albums was an integral part of my life while growing up, and it still is today. Just like being absorbed by a novel or a film and finding new levels of depth

Experiencing an artist's full intent is a great mental and emotional endeavor. True communication on the drums means you have to be about more than just mastery of specific technical applications.

with each repeated experience—you might not willingly read only one chapter or watch only one scene over and over—listening to albums can leave a life-long impression on a person. This extends to one's development as a drummer, because true communication on the drums means you have to be about more than just mastery of specific technical applications. Those technical tools are not to be scoffed at, of course. But they are just that: tools, one of many components that help you get where you want to go in music. The destination, of course, is expressing yourself. And just as there are physical exercises to teach you coordination and muscle memory, there are mental and emotional exercises that teach you about reaching deeper places inside yourself. Hopefully you can then draw from this well in order to

communicate something that is profound and that connects with your listeners on a level that stays with them forever.

I feel deeply that experiencing an artist's full intent in an album-length format is a great mental and emotional endeavor that leaves listeners much more enriched than before they sat down to listen. The more enriched people become, the more they have to offer through their own form of expression.

One album that I come back to time and again is the Allman Brothers Band's *At Fillmore East*. The double record, which was ranked number forty-nine by *Rolling Stone* in its list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, is considered by many as the group's peak achievement. Released in 1971, *At Fillmore East* captures the original lineup of the Allman Brothers at the height of its powers. Taken from two shows at the hallowed New York City rock 'n' roll shrine that the album is named for, the record

showcases a band that was breaking new ground in its exploration of how far music could be taken within the parameters that the members had set for themselves.

Led by Gregg Allman on lead vocals and Hammond B3 organ and his older brother, the already established guitar hero Duane, on slide, the group was rounded out by yet another great guitarist, the country-pickin', jazz-minded Dickey Betts, plus the cosmic traveling bass player Berry Oakley and the incredible drumming duo of Jai Johanny Johanson—better known as Jaimoe—and Butch Trucks. At the time of *At Fillmore East's* release, jazz-fusion as a genre was in full swing, and to my mind the Allman Brothers were very much a part of this new movement. In the band's biography *Midnight Riders*, author Scott Freeman smartly suggests that while Miles Davis was taking jazz and putting it to rock

beats on his seminal album *Bitches Brew*, the Allmans were taking rock and putting it to jazz beats. Though most people focus on the Allmans' role as progenitors of the Southern rock movement that was about to explode, the group was just as "fusion" as Miles Davis was. The instrumental cut "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," full of counterpoint, Latin-inspired rhythms, and bluegrass licks, was in fact inspired by the music of Miles and John Coltrane. Another key cut, "Whipping Post," alternates between 11/8 and 6/8 and blends straight-up blues and dizzying guitar solos that touch on jazz motifs.

At Fillmore East hit me at just the right time in my life. I was nineteen years old and my older brother and his wife had left town for a beach vacation. They asked me to stop by each day and check on their cat, Baloo, and one day while I was there I started combing through my brother's record collection and found the recently released Allmans box set, *Dreams*. Though I'd cut my teeth on hard rock and metal, around then I was dedicating a lot of time to getting better at the drums, and I was searching for new inspiration. Artists such as Jeff Beck and Billy Cobham were some of my first forays into this realm. But when I put on *Dreams*, I knew I had discovered something magical.

A few weeks later I was at my friend AJ's house and found his copy of *At Fillmore East*. I was blown away by what I heard. I borrowed the CD (I still have it—sorry, AJ!) and loved sitting in front of my stereo and listening to it from beginning to end. I remember panning the volume hard right and hard left—on one side you could hear Trucks' hard-driving beat and on the other you could hear Jaimoe providing cool bop counterpoint. Same with Duane and Dickey's guitars.

It's not often that on an album with such sheer note density, one is able to recall distinct passages from ten-minute guitar or organ solos. But with this record, it was absolutely possible. And besides the soloing, the Allman Brothers delivered great original songs as well as stellar covers by legendary American roots musicians, such as T-Bone Walker's "Stormy Monday" and Blind Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues." This combination provided a backdrop as wide as the Mississippi Delta, against which the band jammed its way through a couple of stunning hours of music.

And it all made sense to me, because of where I came from. The bridge the Allman Brothers built between more traditional

Southern music (which, being from Appalachia, I inherently understood) and the more refined improvisation of jazz (which was initially not so clear to me) was easy for me to cross.

Every once in a while an album like *At Fillmore East* comes along and gives you a wonderful push into the next phase of your development as a musician. By absorbing the complete work of *At Fillmore East* and slowly digesting all that it had to offer through repeated listening, I grew to incorporate many of its tangibles—and, maybe even more important, its *intangibles*—into my own musicianship, and subsequently my life.



Chris Brewer is the artist relations manager for Meinl USA and lives in Old Hickory, Tennessee.



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David Langlois



Inventing an instrument often means inventing situations in which to explore it. This globe hopper has made a lot of things happen with a modest yet versatile and fun-sounding concoction that puts heirloom family items to brilliant percussive use.

Story and photos by Michael Parillo



When you walk into a bar to find a nattily dressed cool character with thimbles on his fingers and a tricked-out washboard in his lap, it's an image you won't soon forget. And then you hear the guy play—a brisk, quick-turning groove with all sorts of sharp tones and what sounds like the sweep of a brushed snare drum, all delivered with rhythmic fire, good humor, and a tad of attention-deficit restlessness. You haven't even noticed yet that in addition to a traditional woodblock, the board is adorned with non-drummerly things like a fondue pot, a dishpan, a trowel, and the sieve from a food mill. Let's just say that after you've witnessed David Langlois in action for the first time, you'll be telling people about it the next day.

Langlois moved from his native France to New York City in 2005, and he began amassing a variety of gigs while starting to learn English (he's now fluent, as you'll see). One of his first hookups was with guitarist Stephane Wrembel, a proponent of Django Reinhardt-type "Gypsy jazz" who also incorporates styles as diverse as flamenco and blues. Langlois traveled the world with Wrembel's band until late last year, when he left in order to focus on his many

projects in New York. With his uniquely homespun washboard rig, and sometimes his djembe, in his lap, David—who plays old-time jazz and R&B with the Blue Vipers of Brooklyn, does session and jingle dates, has worked with mandolinist David Grisman and with Chapman Stick player Steve Adelson (among many other artists), and also plays guitar and sings in the reggae group Jahwid—can be seen live just about every night, in one of the city's hundreds of venues.

MD: How did you create this instrument, and what was your path to focusing on it exclusively?

David: I was playing the drumset, and a clarinet player that I met on a gig saw that I knew "New Orleans jazz," as they call it in France—Dixieland stuff. My teacher had told me to learn jazz if I wanted to make money and not be unemployed. The clarinet player said, "Let's make a band." He was going on tour in the south of France. He said, "We already have a double bass in the car—you obviously can't bring the drumset. You know how in New Orleans they have that washboard?"

I had Terry Bozzio and Billy Cobham posters on my wall. I was...not insulted,

but I was a drummer, not a washboard player, whatever that was. But I was so intrigued. I was in the mountains in France, the Alps, staying with my grandparents. At the entrance of my village there was a thrift shop. Very nasty, very dusty. And the dude, I asked him, "Do you have a washboard?" He's like, "Yeah, sure," and then he disappeared for like twenty minutes. He came back with that one, trying to dust it off. "Five bucks." He was happy to get rid of it.

So I showed up at my grandparents' house and put on that band's CD. I asked my grandma if she had thimbles, because I heard you need thimbles. Luckily, she had two. I asked for more. She said, "You need only one for a lifetime, so be happy that I have two." So I was in my room with just the board and those two thimbles, trying to play along to that CD. Oh, man—that's so boring, it's so flat. I got very frustrated.

So I went down to make myself a coffee. And that [points to fondue pot] was there in the kitchen, maybe drying with the dishes. While I was waiting for my water to boil, I started hitting it with those two thimbles, and it sounded nice, like a cowbell. My grandma saw that I was really into it, so she said, "You know, we've had

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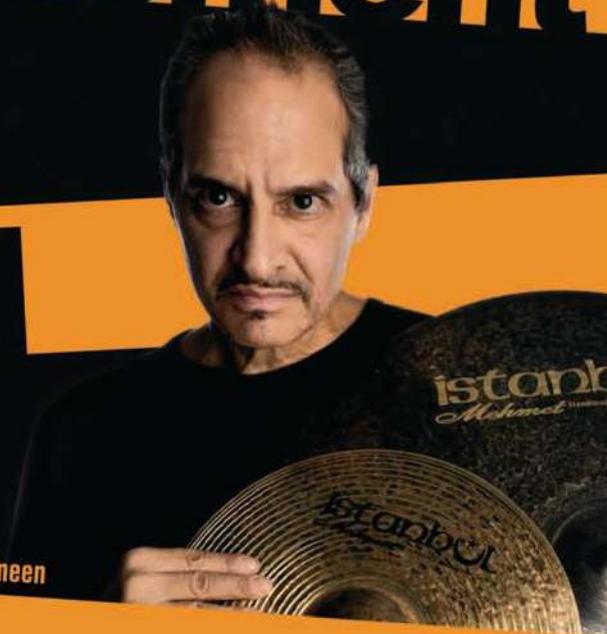


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that for fifteen years”—that was the family fondue pot, and up there we ate a lot of those—and it’s paid off. You can have it, if it makes you feel a little better.” And then my grandpa was there, also waiting for his coffee and smoking a cigarette, so I asked him, “Hey, can I jiggle that thing there?” I had a cymbal idea; I was trying to re-create a drumset. I tried the cheese-grater thing [aka the sieve], and it sounded a little bit like a cymbal. So then the grandpa played the game, and he went into his workshop and came back with a bunch of trowels and probably some other stuff. So I kept that trowel, thinking of a hi-hat.

Then I got a dishpan to have a snare, which became my main element, and I got more thimbles. And the grandfather fixed the whole thing to the washboard, because I don’t know how to put four screws together. It started to be my kit. And that was it—we went on tour in the south of France. I was bleeding, I would lose thimbles...

We were playing in the street a lot and getting gigs. We’d play a market, because there are markets every day. We’d meet the chefs and restaurant owners shopping, and they’d say, “You’re gonna come play in my restaurant tonight.” We’d do a whole tour like that.

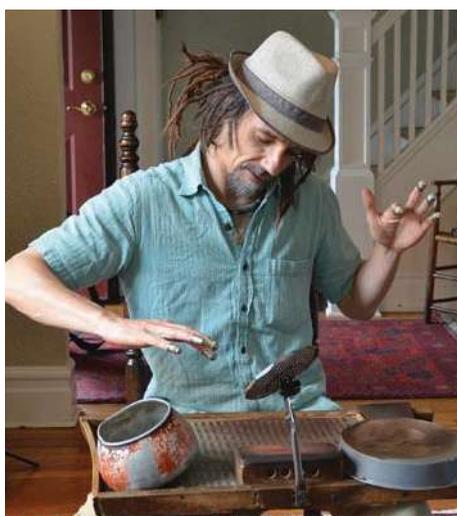
And then, when I came back, I would bring the snare and hi-hat and the washboard. But nobody would notice me playing snare. As soon as I switched to that, I had all the attention. Little by little I gave up on the snare and the hi-hat and I just brought that thing.

MD: You can see people get excited once they realize what you’re playing on.

David: It’s weird. I wouldn’t even play it—I would set it up before the gig, and already people would be taking pictures or wondering what it is, just gathering around it. They never did that with a snare drum!

MD: Was there any feeling of needing to get together a concept for the instrument?

David: No. I played a lot and found myself in situations, especially in New York. Before coming to New York, the only thing I knew how to do on this was swing. I didn’t know any straight stuff. Then I came to New York, and all of a sudden in the middle of the gig: “Okay, a mambo...” And I’m like, “Shit, how am I supposed to play a mambo with a trowel and a fondue pot?” You don’t even



have a second to think about it—you just try to memorize the different sounds you have at your disposal and try to use the right one at the right time.

You evolve because you have to create something else. You find yourself playing some flamenco. I never played flamenco before, so I would go to the board, because the sound was more like the clapping, the compás. But for something more snare-y, like some funky stuff, I would go more between the trowel, which is the cymbal, and the dishpan, which is the snare. For New Orleans second-line beats I can add some cowbell. I was adapting to whatever was going on right then. It’s like I have a bar to figure it out. By the second bar it should be all right, and hopefully by the third one

it’ll be fine.

MD: If the trowel is the cymbal and the dishpan is the snare, what about a bass drum?

David: Well, that’s what was kind of missing. But most of the time I would play with an upright bass player, and they’d take care of that range. It was weird at the beginning, because I would still have my feet going—like

a duck that’s still walking after you cut off the head. Little by little that went away, and I would focus more on my hands. So I couldn’t play without a bass player—he was the counterbalance.

After a while I started to add a suitcase to the kit and use it as a bass drum. I still do that once in a while, but I play with very good bass players, so I don’t have to think too much about this.

MD: You must have been at a much lower technical level when you started than you are now.

David: Oh, yeah—and I had only two fingers. So the brushing was not there yet. It took me a little bit to realize that I had eight “sticks” and how much I could do with that compared to two. So I started to really get into the brushing, and also the brushing [with two fingers while the index finger is free to tap out other rhythms]. Also you can mute [the pan] with the thumb. And there’s a roll with two fingers while I’m brushing and tapping at the same time. I couldn’t do that with two sticks or two brushes.

Then I started to really create a whole technique. I don’t think I’d heard another

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DAVID LANGLOIS

washboard player...yet. It's only when I went to New Orleans after being here for two or three years. I was already playing that thing for fifteen years when I went to New Orleans. *Zydeco? Oh!* I didn't know anything, and that's probably why I don't use the board too much.

MD: What did you take away from your first experience in New Orleans?

David: I think it's going to be my next town. It was that powerful. It was the first time I was going into a town that was dedicated to one of the musics I love, which is old-time jazz. I was with really good friends who took me around and had me play gigs, and I was really living the dream. So that's what I'm gonna do next, I think. After New York, that would be a nice next step.

MD: Were you influenced by seeing the washboard players there?

David: No. It just made me realize that I wasn't a "washboard" player—I'm a fondue pot and pots-and-pans player.

MD: You've done a lot of Django Reinhardt tributes, with Stephane Wrembel and others.

David: The videos of the New York Django Reinhardt festival really helped me be known by the people who listen to the music. I didn't know it was watched so much. Every time I see Europeans it's, "Oh, yeah, we saw you in that video with Angelo Debarre and blah-blah-blah at Birdland." So it seems to be a big part of where I am now.

MD: When I heard you play through a big PA at one of the festivals, it seemed that you knew exactly how your sound was translating through the mics, and you calibrated everything perfectly. You later said you actually prefer situations where you don't have to be miked.

David: Yeah, because it's closer to reality to me. But it depends—if the dude is amazing

on the board and has some effects that sound awesome, okay, I prefer his stuff. But that's not most of the time. It's not like a guitar, where every string has the same volume and you put a mic here. The dude might know what he's doing but he's never had to mike a trowel. So by experience I usually prefer it without the mic, but if the room is loud I lose a lot of subtle things.

MD: What do you like to use for mics?

David: One condenser on each side. It's the situation that seems to be the most realistic.

MD: Looking back, it's hard to believe you came to New York to work without speaking English.

David: That was tough. I didn't know musicians either. I wouldn't answer my phone, so I could be able to listen to messages five times or ask someone, "Which address is that? Which day?" It was really confusing. But that's part of what I came here for, to understand English, and now I'm so glad I did that, because I get that whole perspective on storytelling.

I loved them before, but I love even more Bob Marley or Bob Dylan or people who are telling stories with messages. Because now I can understand; it's not just a word here and there. Johnny Cash—I didn't know anything about him. To me he's mostly a storyteller, so before understanding the story I didn't really have anything. I discovered that country music, when it's good, is mostly about the story. And the blues, and pretty much everything here. It's like you guys have four dimensions when we have only three. So all of a sudden I'm discovering the fourth dimension, which is understanding what the guys are talking about. And it's huge.

Go to moderndrummer.com to see a clip of Langlois at work on his washboard rig.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



Langlois uses thimbles to play an old zinc washboard from a thrift shop in the French Alps, outfitted with, clockwise from lower left: his grandfather's trowel, a dishpan, an LP wood-block, the sieve from his grandmother's food mill, and his grandmother's fondue pot.

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ZBT cymbals now feature lathing on both sides and an updated logo. The line has been augmented to include larger 17" and 19" Medium-Thin crashes and a 22" Medium ride. The ZHT line features an updated logo as well.

zildjian.com



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Toaca has also added a silk and cotton Kente cloth design to its line of Freestyle djembes. Each djembe features a lightweight but durable seamless synthetic shell that creates a slightly higher-pitched tone than that of traditional wood djembes. These mechanically tuned djembes are available with 9", 10", 12", and 14" heads. List prices range from \$141 to \$314. The rope-tuned version is available with 7", 9", 10", 12", and 14" heads and lists from \$58 to \$272.

Antique, hand-painted Spun Copper djembes are said to be lightweight, durable, and weather resistant. Rope-tuned models have additional rope runners for more precise tuning, while mechanically tuned versions come with a tuning wrench. Sizes include 9", 10", 12", and 14". All 14" djembes are also supplied with a carrying bag. List prices for the rope-tuned drums are \$99 to \$295; the mechanically tuned models are \$159 to \$359.

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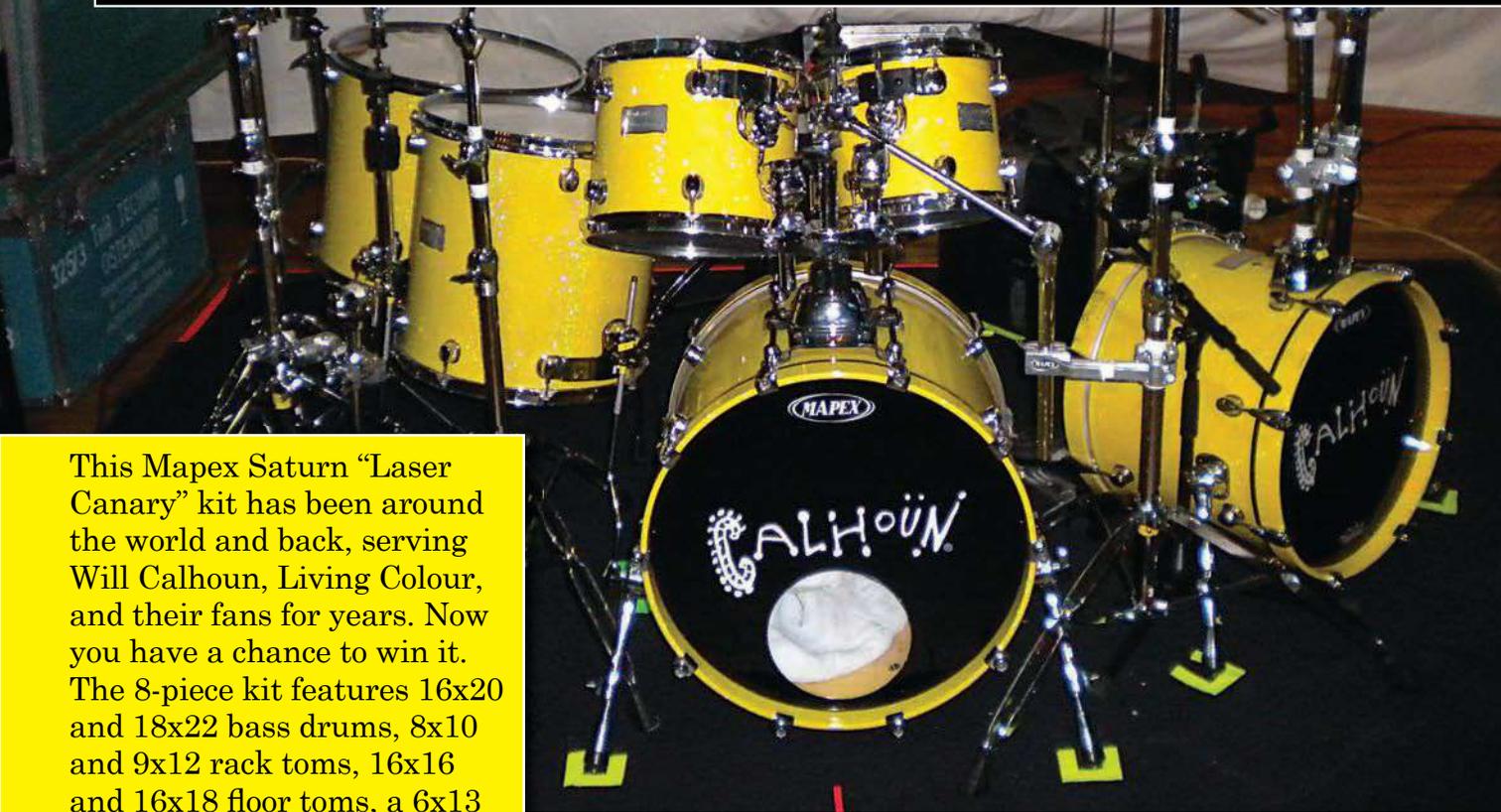
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Will Calhoun Is Getting a New Kit, and a Lucky Winner Is Getting His Old One!

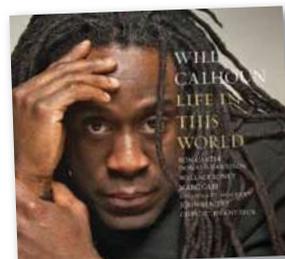


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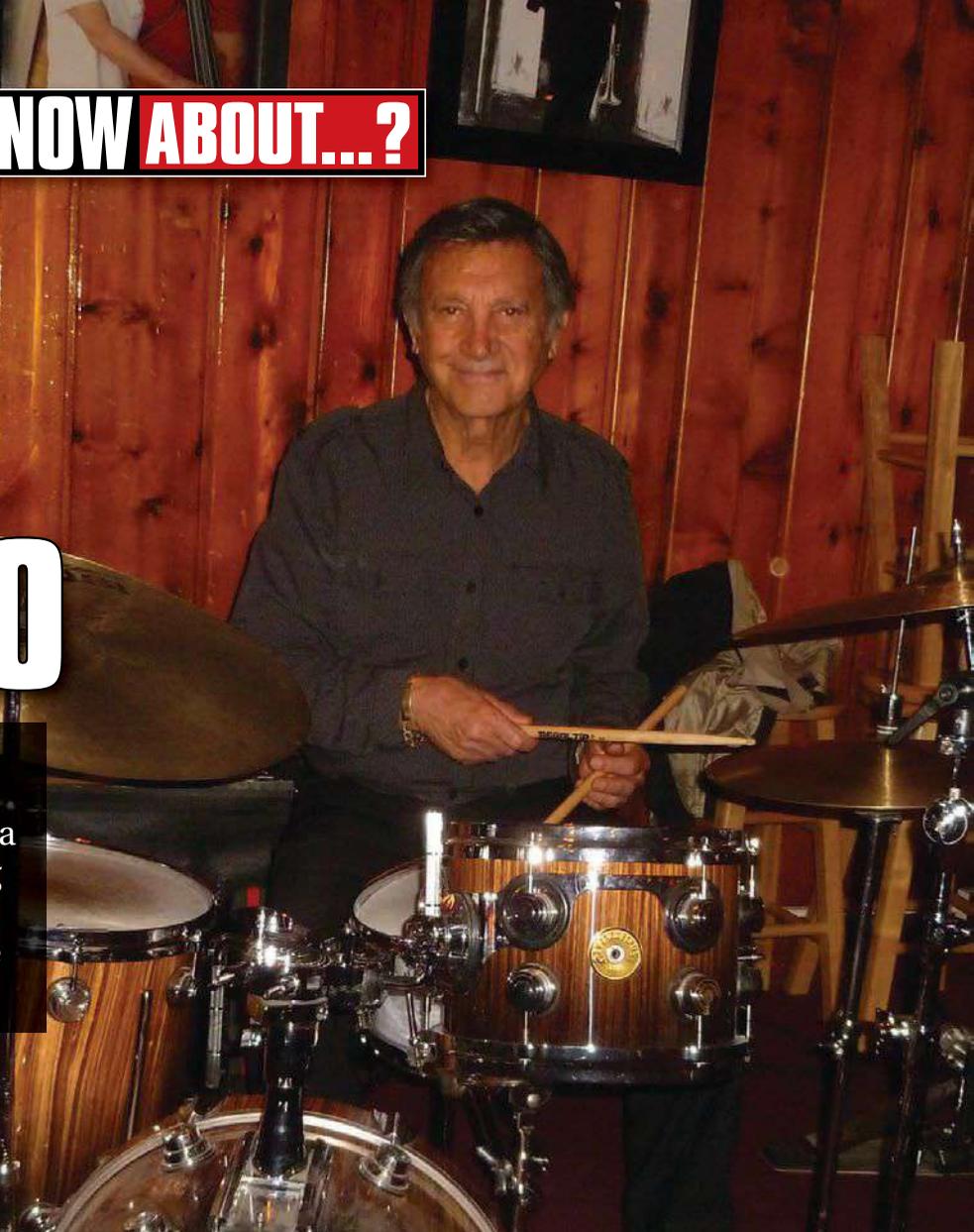
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Frank De Vito

His story—which includes work with some of the most iconic artists of all time—is a timeless lesson in providing exactly what’s needed, and being open to whatever fate sends your way. by Jeff Potter



Perhaps in the '60s you were waxing down your surfboard and seeking summer love while the transistor radio blared the Beach Boys' "Surfin' USA." Or maybe you were a tad older, reminiscing about strolling "that golden sand" with a lost summer love, to the swinging strains of Frank Sinatra's "The Summer Wind." In either scenario, the vibrant pulse of drummer Frank De Vito was imprinted on the soundtrack of your life.

Recalling those hits and other top-shelf gigs, De Vito humbly claims today that he was often "just filling in" for the regular first-calls. Still, his filling in made for one impressive résumé. In a long, diverse, and successful career, the drummer excelled with artists from Sinatra to Charlie Parker to Elvis Presley.

At fourteen, De Vito began gigging in his native Utica, New York, with tenor saxophonist J.R. Monterose. Upon moving to New York City in his late teens, he studied at the Brooklyn School of Music

with the great Jim Chapin. De Vito holds the honor of being the first student to master Chapin's *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer*. He still owns the worn copy in which his mentor inscribed, "To my first star pupil."

The fledgling pro frequented the jazz clubs in Manhattan, eventually landing a gig replacing Shelly Manne in Bob Astor's popular dance band. Months later, he joined saxophonist Benny Ventura's group. "One of our first gigs, in 1948, was backing Billie Holiday in Baltimore," De Vito recalls. "I was about nineteen years old, and believe me, it was *intimidating*. I did learn one thing through her, regarding playing with brushes on ballads: not to 'chop.' I learned to play legato. I've worked with all the great singers through the years—Mel Tormé, Billy Eckstine, Rosemary Clooney, Ella Fitzgerald, Jack Jones, Andy Williams—and I always remembered that: *Suggest* the time. Even Buddy Rich told me, 'You've got a good

bass player—let him lead the time on ballads; you just make that beautiful legato sound with the brush."

In 1949 De Vito joined a new sextet led by his friend Buddy DeFranco, with whom he played the top New York jazz clubs. But while touring the Midwest with the rising clarinetist, everything collapsed. "We were scuffling," De Vito recalls. "I had a broken-down old set of Slingerlands. Buddy got on the phone to Louie Bellson and said, 'I've got a young drummer here, and he needs some drums!' We got to the next gig in Memphis, and there were big cardboard boxes on the bandstand from Gretsch. That was because of Louie."

DeFranco later formed a big band with De Vito at the helm. This time, the tour succeeded. De Vito's name was now getting around, and during downtime Frank worked with jazz greats such as Stan Getz, J.J. Johnson, and Lennie Tristano. The drummer hit the road with the Hal McIntyre Orchestra in 1951, and

the band backed the Mills Brothers on their classic number-one hit "Glow-Worm." "That was my first big recording," De Vito remembers.

In 1953 De Vito took the chair with the Terry Gibbs Quartet, and for the next two years he toured the country with the vibraphonist. Their frequent residence at New York City's Birdland led to a rare experience. Gibbs' band shared the bill with the Birdland All-Stars, which included

"Buddy Rich told me, 'You've got a good bass player—let him lead the time on ballads. You just make that beautiful legato sound with the brush.'"

the formidable Roy Haynes. The famed drummer couldn't make a first set due to a record date. Impressed with De Vito's talents, Haynes offered a dream opportunity. "You want to cover for me?" he asked. De Vito leaped at the chance and found himself bopping with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Subsequently, he was invited to cover rehearsals with Parker for the legendary *Bird With Strings* sessions.

A chance street encounter with bass great Oscar Pettiford found De Vito as part of another dream team, for a seven-week

stint. "Oscar told me, 'Be at Snookie's tomorrow night,'" Frank remembers. "I arrived, and it was an all-star band including Kenny Dorham, Lee Konitz, Kai Winding, and Horace Silver. I lucked out!"

When an auto accident during Gibbs' tour waylaid the band in L.A., De Vito put down stakes. A six-month gig with Georgie Auld ensued, followed by dates with the Pete Jolly Trio, the Dave Pell Octet, and movie star/vocalist Betty Hutton.

Another "right timing" encounter unfolded when De Vito ran into ace studio guitarist Tommy Tedesco at a favorite Italian restaurant. Tedesco knew De Vito's drumming and handed him a dime. "Put that in the phone and call this contractor's number," Tedesco said. "Sinatra's looking for a drummer." "Yeah, right!" De Vito replied. But with Tedesco's endorsement, De Vito was hired right over the phone.

De Vito toured with Sinatra over a three-year period. In addition, he recorded several singles in 1957 and four tracks on

the 1966 LP *Strangers in the Night*, and he's featured on *Sinatra '57: In Concert*, a recording released for the first time on CD in 1999.

Sinatra famously kept his few favorite drummers close at hand. "If he liked you," De Vito says, "you were there. If he didn't like you, you weren't there. There was no in between." Sinatra's regular drummers Alvin Stoller and Irv Cottler didn't tour due to busy recording schedules. As the newcomer, De Vito had to quickly master the key to keeping the vocalist happy.

"He had such impeccable time," De Vito says of Sinatra. "I just zeroed in on *him*. He had a little shoulder movement he would do when he wanted to fool with the time a bit. I would watch and go right with him. When recording, Frank was about six feet from us. He liked to have it set



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FRANK DE VITO

up almost like a big band gig; he didn't like all that isolation.

"On 'Witchcraft,' we were standing in front of speakers listening to the playback. Frank was standing next to me. There's a phrase at the top followed by a space. During that space, Frank looked over at me and moved his hands up and down, like, 'Fill in there! Play something!' I didn't want to overdo it, because I noticed when Alvin and Irv played on his dates, they didn't play a lot, didn't get in the way. So I did the same. But later on, as I worked with him, I loosened up a little and I noticed he didn't give me any looks, so I figured, That's cool! The fills you hear on the record were from his suggestion; he knew his stuff."

During these years De Vito also worked with Stan Kenton and with Benny Goodman, and he did a summer tour with Ella Fitzgerald. He eventually amassed an impressive jazz discography with artists such as DeFranco, Gibbs, Kenton, Howard Roberts, and, later, Joe Pass.

But L.A. offered De Vito a new horizon of possibility when the studio kingpins Earl Palmer and Hal Blaine began recommending him for dates and employing him as a top sub on their own pop sessions. "The late '50s into the '60s was a golden era," De Vito says. "There was so much work. We would work eight, ten, fifteen times a week. I wasn't 'number one,' but I worked *a lot*."

Although he was jazz-based, De Vito was keen to ride the rising wave of studio work for rock and pop records. His goal was born of both business savvy and open-mindedness. "This was in the early age of rock 'n' roll," he says. "A lot of real good drummers did not care for the new music. They looked down on it, didn't think it was going to 'make it.' They didn't want to get it. And a lot of the guys a little older than I was didn't have a concept for the straight-8th-note grooves. I didn't slough it off; I wanted to do it. If Hal or Earl were in a studio in the next room, I'd go in there and listen to them, keep my ears open and learn.

"Also, the new producers were young. Weird-looking guys! Some of the older guys resented being told what to do by the new producers. But Earl and Hal were great with these producers—very patient and open to everything. I recognized that besides having great talent, they approached it like a business."

De Vito became a successful hired gun, laying down tracks for the Ventures, the Beach Boys, Sam Cooke, Dick Dale, and

the Monkees. And a late-night, last-minute session that the drummer "didn't predict as a hit," yielded the track "I Got You Babe" by a shaggy-dog duo named Sonny and Cher.

The title track on the now-multiplatinum album *Whipped Cream & Other Delights* by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass was sparked by De Vito's infectious beat. A spin-off group of studio musicians from Alpert's sessions became the Baja Marimba Band. Over a busy five-year period, De Vito toured with the group and recorded six LPs. The band injected wacky comedy routines into its act—including De Vito's haywire drum solo—which paid off on television. "We started to clown around," Frank recalls, "and people loved it. We were very visual, and we did about ten *Tonight Show* appearances alone."

Again, "just filling in" for Blaine, De Vito was called to play rehearsals and help develop arrangements for a television special with none other than Elvis. "He was always nice to us, always smoking these little cigars and passing them out," Frank recalls. "I didn't really smoke, but... what the hell! *Elvis* was offering me a cigar, so I lit up!"

De Vito ended up being asked to play percussion, along with Blaine on drums, for the live broadcast. It turned out to be a rock-history television landmark, Elvis's "1968 Comeback Special," which was also released as an RCA album.

De Vito even saw his spare-time hobby become a productive business. During a long Phil Spector session, his mounted castanets broke repeatedly. Always the garage-workshop tinkerer, Frank hurried home and created an improved model. Fellow percussionists encouraged him to market it, and that was the genesis of Danmar Percussion Products. De Vito remains involved with the company's popular line of accessories today.

In more recent years, De Vito has gigged with artists such as Ken Peplowski, Tom Rainier, John Altman, and his old pal Buddy DeFranco, and he maintains a steady gig with the Tracy Wells Big Swing Band. He also teaches advanced students. His choice of drum book? The cherished Jim Chapin volume.

De Vito's youthful energy and continued enthusiasm for music, past and present, remains inspiring. Asked for the secret to his long success with some of history's highest-profile artists, Frank answers, "It was simple: I wanted to make them happy."





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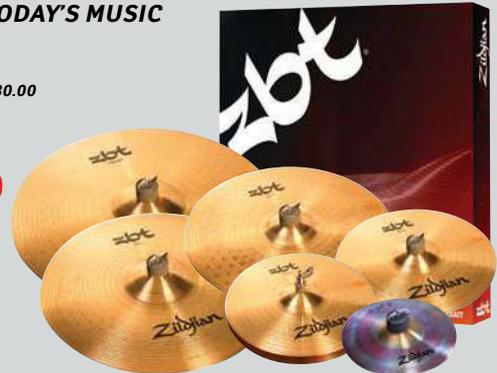
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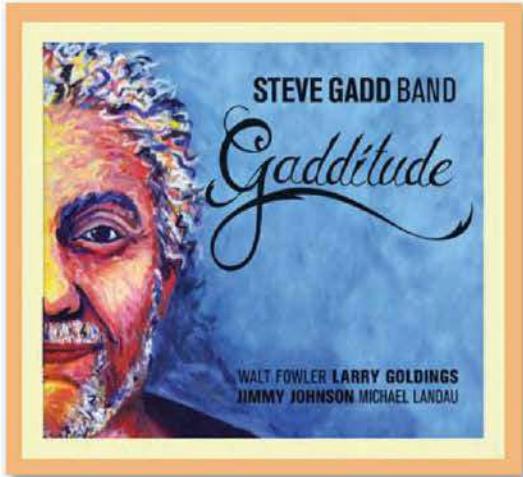
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Decades deep into his legendary career, Steve Gadd can certainly be forgiven for steering clear of complex charts and creating the kind of down-home, feel-good groove music that comes naturally to him. So assembling a killer band featuring fellow James Taylor sidemen, including keyboardist Larry Goldings, bassist Jimmy Johnson, guitarist Michael Landau, and trumpeter Walt Fowler, should produce expertly played if not mind-blowingly intense results. No "look at me" stuff from this crew, as Gadd sits comfortably in a brush ballad like "Country," and his insistent 8th-note hi-hats on "Cavaliero" add just the right amount of chug atop the ruffs-and-ghosting beat that he's made famous. Also dig his languid time feel and ending workout on a cover of Radiohead's "Scatterbrain." As Gadd gets longer in the tooth, his playing seems to have a wise, profound sense of conviction, as if each tom accent and ride hit has even greater weight than in years past. Bring on more. (bfmjazz.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



CAMILLE GAINER-JONES *A GIRL FROM QUEENS*

One joyous jazz-funk groove after another, powered by an excellent blend of chops, production know-how, and gamesmanship.

The solo debut by Camille Gainer-Jones, a Steve Coleman, Lonnie Liston Smith, and Roberta Flack vet, sounds like a house party,

with instruments and vocals delivering a sometimes raucous blend. There's an old-school Marvin Gaye buzz, and some tunes sound like 1980s Creed Taylor productions with flute and synth leads and popping snare, kick, and hats. Gainer-Jones toys with the groove on "Changes," impersonates a programmed beat and rips lightning-fast snare licks on "Boom Bap," plays feathery snare fills on the 9/8 funk track "I'm From Queens," and hip-hops the spry 7/4 groove of "Mars Blackman." Throughout, human voices rise through the mix, either in the form of Gainer-Jones' composed beats for MCs or her layering of drum improvisations onto spoken-word samples. Thoughtful, fun, and well played. (Inner Circle Music) **Robin Tolleson**



JAIMEO BROWN *TRANSCENDENCE*

A mix of faith stories in songs, free jazz, and blues makes for a hugely compelling set.

On this unique album, thirty-four-year-old drummer Jaimeo Brown

(Bobby Hutcherson, Q-Tip) superimposes his group on the recorded African-American spirituals of the Gees Bend quilters of Alabama, adding the East Indian devotional music of singer Falu to the fusion. Brown follows the quilters' rhythm on "I Know I've Been Changed," enhancing and enveloping and turning it into a sacred jazz chant. As the drummer launches precise, dynamic rolls around the kit, Chris Sholar's distorted blues-jazz guitar shadows the vocals, joined by the probing tenor sax of J.D. Allen. On "This World Ain't My Home," Brown blasts over the piano ostinato, subdividing time between toms before the melody is revived to a hip-hop beat. A remarkable, at times stunning debut from Brown and crew. (Motéma)

Robin Tolleson



WILL CALHOUN *LIFE IN THIS WORLD*

The Living Colour drummer's myriad interests and skills coalesce naturally and powerfully on his latest effort as a leader.

The opening track, a pointed power run, acts as a motivic "head," and as a declaration: Will Calhoun is not only here to groove and explore, but to *speak*. Whether he's slamming hard funk-rock backbeats with Living Colour or swinging a straight four, the wide-ranging Calhoun plumbs the sweet spot every time and shows deep intuition for sculpting sound. Although the scope is sprawling, from bluesy swing to post-*Bitches Brew* space funk, it's a thoroughly unified outing. The core pleasure is the trio of Calhoun, keyboardist Marc Carey, and a bass seat shared by Charnett Moffett, Ron Carter, John Benitez, and Alioune Wade. Guest stars include trumpeter Wallace Roney and saxophonist Donald Harrison. The earthy grooves are an organic weave of jazz and funk, with a healthy dose of West African rhythms. Whether Calhoun is wielding sticks or brushes or is fingering an earthen water drum, his unit delivers passion, surprises, and mystery. (Motéma) **Jeff Potter**



JIM BLACK ALASNOAXIS *ANTIHEROES*

Downtown's rhythmic prince keeps his vision alive with more melodic esoterica.

After five albums of envelope-pushing avant jazz-rock, AlasNoAxis doesn't fix what ain't broken, returning here with a new set of adventurous compositions written by drummer/leader Jim Black. Though occasionally very delicate, *Antiheroes* is a demanding listen, featuring plenty of distorted electric guitar and steering clear of head/solo/head structures. On the up-tempo "Super K's," Black accents the offbeats within the 7/8, and on "Tockle" he improvises a stutter-step pattern filled with choked cymbals and bursts of random metric embellishments. As usual, his kit is captured beautifully, and sound aficionados will hear detail even when the drummer is at his busiest or the music is at its most obtuse. In an ever-homogenized jazz landscape, it's refreshing that records like this are still being made. (Winter and Winter) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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No fluff here. This double-DVD set is a Spartan, get-down-to-business affair. Instructor Bruce Becker asks drummers, "Are you really maximizing efficiency and stamina, or are you muscling your way through?" In a teaching career exceeding three decades—with many notable students—Becker has developed a system of drum ergonomics aimed at improving fluidity and power as well as ensuring safety and longevity. The key words throughout are *balance* and *motion*. Becker cites his long-term studies with the legendary guru Freddie Gruber as his method's foundation, and also relates its principles to yoga. The mechanics of traditional, French, and German grips and strokes are given exhaustive analysis and demonstrated on a pad and then later applied to the drumset. The grail-like Moeller technique is also explained, and ankle/foot movement is given similar attention. An especially interesting tip is the "constant release" technique that involves popping the bass beater off the head rather than pushing it in. Beginners may be served by Becker's attention to establishing good physical habits. But, even more, advanced players will benefit just as top athletes benefit from coaches who drive them to constantly reanalyze and reevaluate their most fundamental moves. (brucebecker.com) **Jeff Potter**

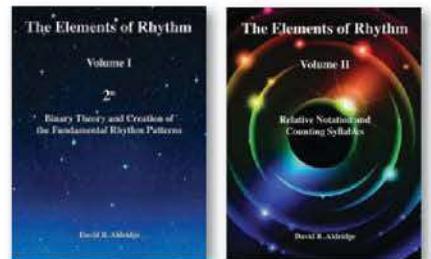


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BOOKS LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$30 (VOL. I), \$20 (VOL. II)

Dust off your calculus textbooks, because David R. Aldridge's new *Elements of Rhythm* tomes will require some application of math. Citing an abundance of harmony or counterpoint material and a lack of rhythm-based theory texts, Aldridge presents his binary-theory model of rhythm pattern development, with 0 and 1 used to express "event points"—silence and sound. "There exists a finite number of building block rhythm patterns from which all larger and more complex patterns are comprised," he writes, and the pages of *Vol. I* are filled with tables of notation breaking down these patterns to the nitty-gritty. When you're done scratching your head, you can move on to sections covering "A Rhythm Pattern's Vertical and Lateral Absolute Sound Shape." *Vol. II* tackles counting syllables and "translating" rhythm patterns in different metric contexts. Using a multi-stave layout, the book will help those seeking to delve deeper into polyrhythms and improve reading skills. Drummers seeking practical, easy-reference ideas to apply to their swing-band gig are advised to look elsewhere. But if you're tired of the same-old, check out *Elements of Rhythm* for the dry but helpful resources they are. (theelementsofrythm.com)

Ilya Stemkovsky



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Aquiles Priester's Top 100 Drum Fills

The Brazilian prog-metal powerhouse, who recently toured with the guitar gods Tony MacAlpine and Vinnie Moore, has produced enough eye-opening licks in his career to make his new DVD a must-see.

MD: This is your third DVD. What were the challenges of creating something interesting?

Aquiles: When I embark on a new project, I want to outdo myself. I think about something I can be proud of that is related to what I'm going through as a musician, not if sales will be good. I can't release anything that doesn't have at least the same quality as my other products. *Aquiles Priester's Top 100 Drum Fills* is a continuation of my book *Inside My PsychoBook: 100 Drum Patterns*, because both methods bring one hundred examples each, at least in the original conception.

MD: What is the best way for students to work with the material? Are transcriptions included, or should viewers just mimic your movements?

Aquiles: I don't want anyone to copy my ideas; I want them to see through them and organize their own. Any groove or drum fill presented can easily be transformed into five new ideas. My friend Pedro Elias Jr. listened to all the albums I recorded with Hangar, Freakeys, and Angra and selected the best and most varied drum fills for the DVD. Some fills were so good that they inspired me to create new ones while I was recording.

I love letting my more insane ideas take me down unexplored paths. I'll soon release a book containing transcriptions of these same drum fills, along with an audio CD. With the DVD, students will have access to the images, and with the book they'll be able to follow the scores. Besides the main drum fills, there are twenty-five more bonus fills that will become an iTunes app. In all, I recorded 150 different fills to fulfill the technical level for all those interested.

For the DVD, we put the fills in order of difficulty so students can study the material at their own pace, and it'll also work as a reference point in their evolution. When a student is unable to go ahead at a certain point, he knows something has to be reviewed on the prior drum fills. It is a sequential approach. I'm very methodical, and this helps me give sense to the things I do.

MD: What if viewers' kits aren't set up the same way as yours?

Aquiles: That was one of my main concerns. I focused the fills on a basic kit for heavy metal drummers: three rack toms, two floor toms, and two bass drums, adding the Chinas, splashes, and rides. A fill executed on three rack toms and two floor toms can be adapted in various manners.

I never owned a drumkit like the ones the drummers who influenced me had, but I always used my creativity to introduce new ideas into my reality. This is a healthy attitude. My fans don't want to grow and become great drummers if all they are is a copy of me—they want to have their own identity.

MD: The drums sound beautiful on the video. Any secrets?

Aquiles: A good drumset, good heads, good sticks, good microphones, good tuning, and a good room. I had an excellent team for the DVD—video director Daniel Piquê; Pedro Elias Jr., who transcribed everything; and engineers and coproducers Marcello Pompeu and Heros Trench, of Mr. Som Studio in São Paulo.

MD: How do you come up with your fills? Do you write them out or improvise?

Aquiles: Usually the first ideas that come up when I'm developing a new composition are



the ones I like the most, since I'm still learning the structure and I'm worried about a whole lot of other things. When the drum fill comes up, I have to take that spontaneity into consideration. I always record everything during preproduction. Even if the idea isn't well executed, it can be improved on and adjusted to fit perfectly into the new song. I worry about what kind of fill I'll insert, because it can seem a little too premeditated. You play something that may sound wonderful to you but has nothing to do with the song. For me, a song always comes first. A simple drum fill like Lars Ulrich plays at the beginning of "Sad but True" can take on monstrous proportions.

MD: What makes a good drum fill?

Aquiles: It's that fill that all drummers—and even non-drummers—air drum along to at the gig, that fill you can't leave out when you're playing that song. There are also those that only the creator can reproduce, because drum fills have a lot to do with tuning, style, vocabulary, and accents. There are spaces inside heavy metal music that have to be filled to go from one passage to another. That's when we have to be creative and make the most of those silent beats and transform the drum fill into something special for the song. After all, it doesn't matter how incredible your idea is—it has to be compatible with the song. No one will buy a whole album of drum fills, unless it's a DVD like mine, which provides students with more options.

Ilya Stenkovsky



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Muscle Shoals

A small town along the Tennessee River in Alabama is famous for a rich musical tradition that's blind to racial and stylistic distinctions. A new film tells the story of the hit-making cast behind the region's legendary sound.

The recently released documentary *Muscle Shoals*, directed by Greg Camalier, features all the requisite rock-doc stuff. You get A-list talking heads, including Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Bono, theorizing about what made the backwater town of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, a musical mecca. Drama abounds, from the personal tragedies endured by one of the key figures in the Muscle Shoals sound, FAME Studios owner and producer Rick Hall, to Hall's crack crew of session musicians, the Swampers, walking out to open their own studio across town. And there's fantastic archival footage, capturing Aretha Franklin's first visit to FAME and the Rolling Stones' Southern-fried sessions for *Sticky Fingers* at the Swampers' Muscle Shoals Sound Studios.

All that stuff is necessary in telling the story of a town responsible for just as much '60s and '70s soul power as Detroit and Memphis. But the sweet spot in the documentary comes during a sequence that is alternately hilarious and touching, detailing Wilson Pickett's first visit to town for a session that featured Muscle Shoals mainstay Roger Hawkins on drums.

Hawkins, whose versatile grooves and tasty fills have graced some of the finest moments in the careers of Pickett, Franklin, Paul Simon, Jimmy Cliff, Bob Seger, and countless others, recalls the session for "Land of 1,000 Dances," one of the earliest hits to come out of Muscle Shoals and FAME. Hawkins had already played on Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman," but now, tasked with laying down a beat funky enough to please the brash Pickett and his seasoned producer from Atlantic Records, Jerry Wexler, he was fraught with nerves. At least he was until Wexler called out to him during a break in the session to tell the young Hawkins he was "a great drummer." "All of a sudden I just relaxed and

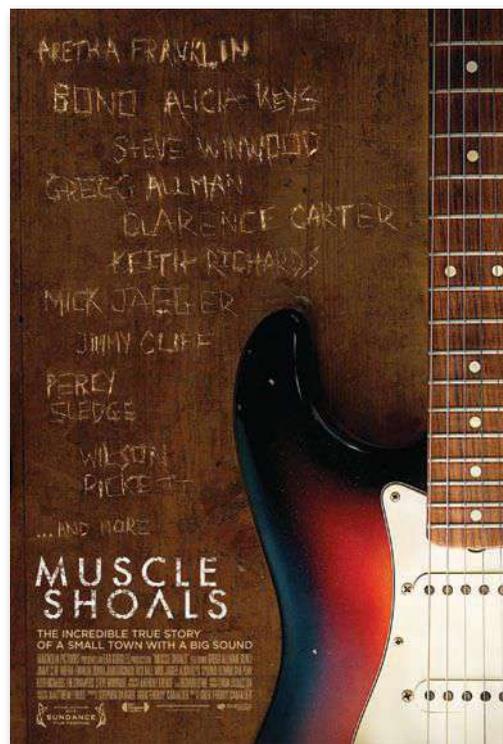
became a great drummer just like he said I was," Hawkins says plainly in the film.

Recalling that exchange over the telephone from his home in Muscle Shoals, Hawkins laughs and says, "I was a little bit scared there, I sure was. Matter of fact, to tell you the truth I was really not ever not scared. I was always a little scared right before we were gonna do it. It was like 'Okay, here we go—I'm scared.'"

If Hawkins was scared, you certainly can't hear it on the sides he cut with the core Swampers unit, which also included keyboardist Barry Beckett, guitarist Jimmy Johnson, and bassist David Hood—one of the greatest studio crews to ever strap on the cans. In *Muscle Shoals*, Aretha Franklin describes their playing as "gree-zee." She's not wrong, as is made perfectly clear by tracks like "Respect" and the version of "Hey Jude" that the Swampers tracked with Pickett and a young Duane Allman on guitar—of which Hawkins says, "We were trying to play like the rhythm-and-blues Beatles."

But that grease was just one element of the Swampers' sound. The film touches on the incredible amount of ground the quartet covered in its heyday, laying down memorable backing tracks in the rock, soul, pop, and country genres, even augmenting the lineup of Traffic for the *Shoot Out at the Fantasy Factory* album and tour. As you learn in *Muscle Shoals*, the Swampers even lent such a convincing reggae bounce to a 1972 Staple Singers smash that it prompted Paul Simon to call Stax head Al Bell, seeking "those same black players that played on 'I'll Take You There.'"

"Absolutely true," Hawkins says of the story that smacks of a rock 'n' roll tall tale. "From that we did [Simon's] 'Kodachrome' and probably seven or eight other tunes with him. The exposure to reggae actually



started when we were on tour in England with Traffic, through [the head of Traffic's label, Island Records] Chris Blackwell, who had signed Bob Marley. We listened to it a lot and really liked it. Of course we could never duplicate it. But that's where my inspiration for 'I'll Take You There' and then 'Kodachrome' came from."

Muscle Shoals is not without its flaws. The film devotes a bit too much time to Hall's tragedies—reenacted to melodramatic effect—and not enough time to the important contributions of songwriters Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham and guitarist Eddie Hinton. And the Swampers/Rick Hall reunion backing Alicia Keys at the movie's end doesn't deliver much of a payoff.

But the documentary does get to the heart of what makes the Muscle Shoals sound and story so special. The people gathering to make music in this tiny Southern town might have seemed like strange bedfellows to the outside world and to less evolved minds—like Alabama Governor George Wallace, who was doing his best to keep the state segregated, even while the civil rights movement was in full swing in the '60s. But within the walls of FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, the color of your skin, where you were from, how many hits you had—none of it mattered. Everyone came to Muscle Shoals to make music, together.

Patrick Berkery

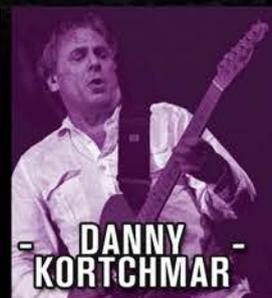
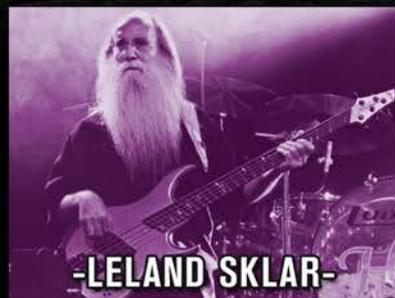


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A Journey to Remember

“On the surface,” Rob Birenbaum says, “there’s nothing special about my kit, except that I made the snare drum and small tom at Sakae Rhythm—the Yamaha drum factory in Osaka, Japan—on September 11, 2001. Yes, *the* 9/11.

“One of the most memorable experiences of my nearly twenty-five years as owner of Drum Headquarters in St. Louis was being part of a special one-week trip to the Yamaha drum factories in Indonesia and Japan with a small group of U.S. drum shop owners twelve years ago. We spent the first thirty-six hours in Jakarta, Indonesia, and visited Yamaha’s drum hardware factory, located inside their motorcycle plant, and midline drum factory, inside the acoustic guitar facility. We then took an overnight flight to Tokyo, followed by a bullet-train trip to Osaka. We arrived at our hotel on the evening of September 11, and all of us fell asleep around 10 P.M., which was 8 A.M. Eastern time on the morning of September 11 back home. We awoke the next morning to news of the terrorist attacks, and after discussing it amongst ourselves, we decided to continue with the rest of our trip as long as we could watch the president’s speech that day and then stay abreast of developments via CNN International.

“After meeting in Sakae Rhythm’s conference room to watch President Bush’s first speech about the attacks, on what was the evening of September 11 in the U.S., we walked onto the factory floor and were each presented with the plies of wood to make our drum shells, based on requests we’d made in advance of the trip. After being given an explanation of Yamaha’s Air-Seal system and a demonstration of how they make shells, we were each paired with an experienced Yamaha craftsman so we could make two of the shells for our kits.

“We each did the hand-rubbed vintage natural finish and complete assembly on our snare drums. Yamaha personnel produced the remaining pieces during the week and presented us with our complete kits during a touching meeting the last day of the trip. Every time I play my Maple Custom Absolute kit, I experience a variety of emotions.”

Rob Birenbaum started Drum Headquarters in St. Louis in 1981 and founded HQ Percussion Products in 1988. He is now involved in community development in a historic neighborhood in St. Louis. He thanks the following for their help with his 2001 trip to Japan: Jerry Andreas of Yamaha America (now with SKB Cases), Dave Jewell of Yamaha America, and Hagi Hagiwara of Yamaha Japan (now retired).

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to kitoftthmonth@modern drummer.com. Show “Kit of the Month” in the subject line.



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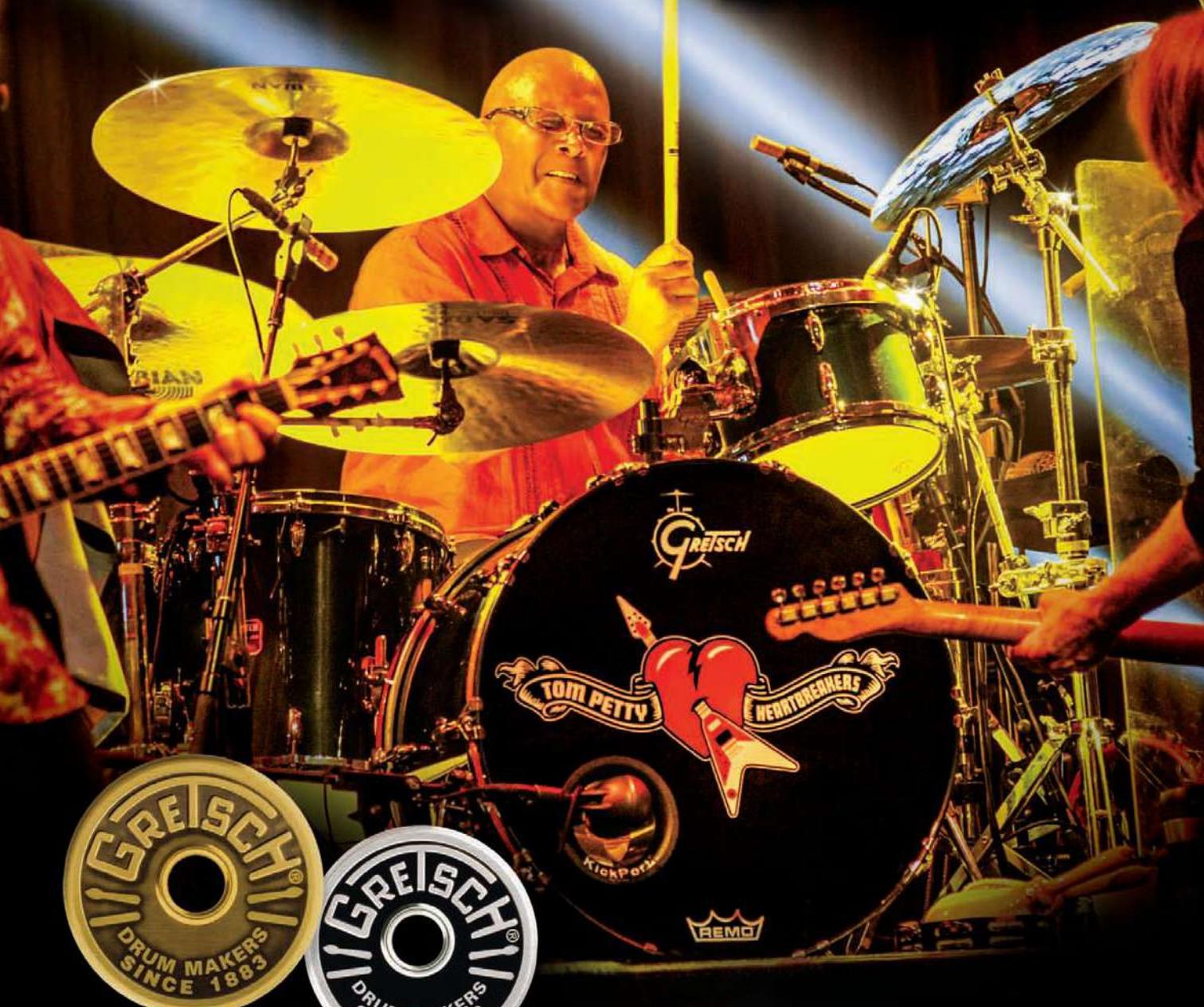


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