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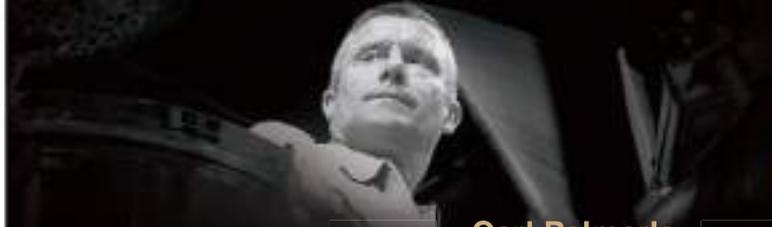


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Toto's Shannon Forrest

"There was something in me that said: *You need to do this.* Listening to myself and deciding to do things that were uncomfortable ended up opening doors."

Like the audience at *MD's* 2010 Festival, where he was conducting his first-ever drum clinic, the Nashville studio great had no idea at the time that his performance there would eventually lead to a gig with Steely Dan's Donald Fagen—or his current one with Toto. by Michael Dawson

Cover and Contents photos by Chad Crawford

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50 STEVEN WOLF. His fingerprints have been all over the pop charts for more than a decade, and his golden touch is stronger than ever. by Billy Amendola

54 GREAT '80S DRUM PERFORMANCES, PART 1.

Everything changed for drummers when the '70s gave way to the '80s, not least of which was the arrival of drum machines. But tons of great records were still being made. This month we look at some of the best, by hot new-wavers and classic rockers alike. by Adam Budofsky

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What Makes Them Tick?

One of the most rewarding components of my gig at *Modern Drummer* is getting the opportunity to sit down with some of my favorite drummers and pick their brains about what they've practiced or focused their attention on to get their artistry to such a high level. Unlike professional sports stars, who are often born with near-superhuman physical attributes—whether it's throwing a ninety-five-mile-an-hour fastball with laser-like precision or being able to thrust a 6' 11" frame 39.5" into the air—world-class drummers are often average-size people with average athleticism. Yet they've somehow managed to rise above the crowd. Why? And how? That's what I try to tap into every time I author a story.



This month I chatted for a few hours with Shannon Forrest, who's one of my biggest inspirations of the past ten years. Shannon has played on more hit records coming out of Nashville than we could ever list, and he's currently touring the world with the iconic pop-rock band Toto. But he doesn't relish the spotlight, very rarely plays drum solos, and has only done one drum clinic to date, which was at the 2010 Modern Drummer Festival. (The significance of that particular event on Shannon's career trajectory reveals itself in the story.) There's an undeniable truth in his playing—and in his words—that lets you know, on a visceral and intellectual level, that *this* is what being a professional musician is all about. What I've been able to deduce is that Shannon has taken many of the personality traits that we all possess—passion, compassion, thoughtfulness, perfectionism, honesty, and humility—and created a powerful form of artistic expression that inspires the best of the best to want to work with him. Is there any higher affirmation of success than that? I don't think so.

In addition to checking out all the great lessons, tips, and stories from Shannon and the other featured artists and columnists in this issue, I'd also like to invite you to check out our free podcast, which is available on moderndrummer.com, iTunes, and most other podcast delivery systems. Each week I sit down with my good friend and regular *MD* contributor Mike Johnston and discuss various topics. We dig a bit deeper into the artists featured in the magazine, share extra insight into some of the drums and cymbals that are reviewed in print each month, and field a lot of listener questions on everything from practice exercises to equipment suggestions. The goal with the podcast, which you can find by searching for "Modern Drummer Podcast With Mike and Mike," is to bring the magazine to life and to build a stronger sense of community amongst fellow drummers. Check it out, subscribe if you like, and feel free to send questions, comments, or suggestions to mdinfo@moderndrummer.com.

Enjoy the issue!

Mike Dawson

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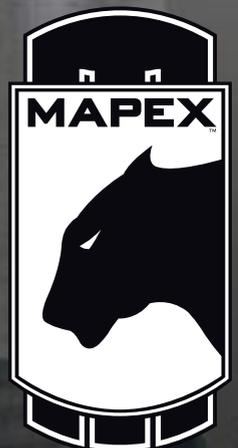
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Favorite 1980s Drum Performance?

This month we're taking a look at twenty-five great drum performances from the 1980s, so we asked our Facebook and Instagram followers for some of their favorites. While the respective catalogs of Toto's Jeff Porcaro, the Police's Stewart Copeland, and Genesis's Phil Collins were among your most popular choices, Rush's seminal prog pioneer Neil Peart took the top spot for most mentions, by a comfortable margin. Here are some responses.

Neil Peart's "The Rhythm Method." This live performance redefined the drum solo as more than speed or the successive demonstration of rudiments by introducing the robust palette of his monster collection of percussion instruments scattered around his kit. It became a part of the performance that you didn't dare miss.

Richard Roberts

Liberty DeVitto on Billy Joel's "Captain Jack" off *Songs in the Attic*. The verses and choruses intensify as DeVitto slowly builds to the crescendo during the outro. It's a wonderful live track, and if you turn up your stereo loud enough and close your eyes, it's almost like you're in the arena.

Andrew DeLaubell

"Caught Somewhere in Time" by Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain. It has the fastest single bass drum part I've ever heard and still continues to amaze me. Also, "Nothing Left to Say" by Mark Zonder of Fates Warning showed me how progressive the band could be and that they'd turned from a hard rock/heavy-metal band into a true progressive act.

John Cahill

The ones that really blew my mind and got me practicing like there was no tomorrow—or the "big three" as I call them—are Neil Peart's performance on *Moving Pictures*, Stewart Copeland's work on *Synchronicity*, and Nicko McBrain's sick single-kick work on Iron Maiden's *Somewhere in Time*. I still practice and play along to these albums on a regular basis.

Patrick Handlovsky

There are so many to choose from so I'll suggest something subtle with a pure groove: "Physical Presence" from *World Machine* by Level 42 with Phil Gould on drums.

Michael Conway

If I had to choose one performance, I'd have to say Neil Peart on "Xanadu" from *Exit...Stage Left*. The first time I saw that performance on DVD, the whole thing mesmerized me: the atmosphere, the music behind it, and even the visual aspect. As far as his performance goes, he absolutely nailed it, especially when the song transitions to 7/8. All in all, it's a great song by a great band that's led by a spectacular musician.

Justin Kitzmiller

Terry Bozzio with Missing Persons on "U.S. Drag." The timing alone in this song is mind blowing. As it progresses, he keeps adding elements to the beat. Of course the fills are very nice as well.

Christopher Walls

I'd say Tony Brock's playing on "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" from Rod Stewart's concert in Santiago, Chile, in 1989. It's on YouTube now, but I'd recorded a VHS off the TV broadcast when I was ten years old. I think Brock is a very creative drummer and connects well with his audience.

Robert Fuentes

For me it's Larry Mullen Jr. on U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday." It's one of only a few songs in which everybody knows it by the drumbeat, and he's supporting the message of the song in a very good way. He's a brilliant drummer and this is a fantastic performance.

Lasse Corus

My favorites will always be by Sheila E. She showed many young girls that we can be drummers, just like the boys.

Kelly Homer

Simon Phillips on the entire *Join Together* record by the Who, and especially on "Won't Get Fooled Again." He brought that song to a new level—signature groove, signature licks, great drum and bass interaction with the late bassist John Entwistle, and it's still a pure Who performance. I miss Phillips on Townshend songs these days.

Zyad M. Akawi

The one that really stands out to me is Ndugu Chancler's drumming on Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." It sounds simple but is so incredibly well done, and it's one of the purest beats ever. In my opinion, it's the '80s beat.

Fabian Schindler

Phil Collins and Chester Thompson's drum duet from the Genesis *Live at Wembley Stadium* DVD. The whole thing had a tribal nature, but contained themes, variations, dynamics, small hints of big band setups and fills, and some special sauce from both of them. It's an amazing composition.

David Anania

I'll be "that guy" and say "YYZ" by Neil Peart and Rush. I didn't come across this song until the mid-'80s. But as a young and very impressionable drummer, to hear those guys trade licks in the middle of the song was just otherworldly for me. At the time nothing was more satisfying to me than hearing a tom run from the 6" to the 16".

Scott Sparks

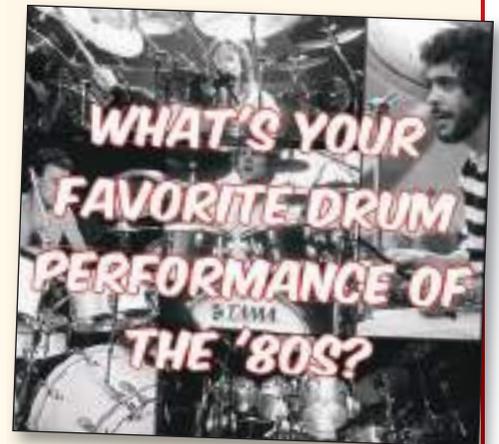
Nicko McBrain, "Where Eagles Dare." The second that intro started I was hooked. I saw him do it at a clinic and was blown away seeing it up close.

Charles Allison

Simple Minds, "Don't You (Forget About Me)." Killer groove and that fill coming out of the breakdown with one open hi-hat note. Mel Gaynor is a god!

Malcolm Larri

Want your voice heard? Follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and look out for next month's question.





Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson



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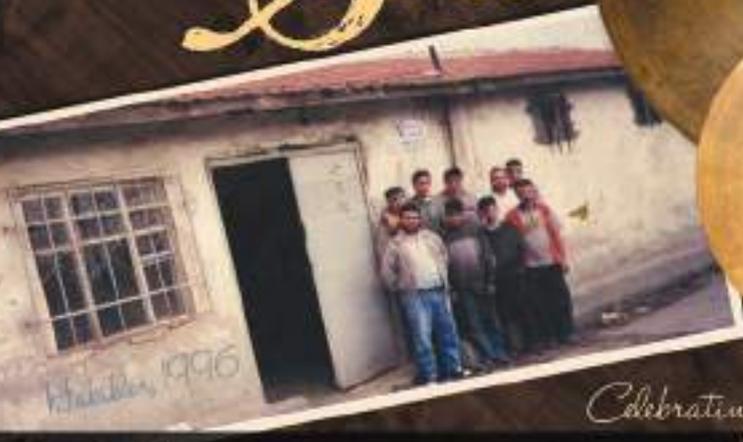


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BRENDAN BUCKLEY

Shakira's drummer, who's out with Tegan and Sara, offers tips for staying organized and healthy on the road.

THE INTERTWINED APPROACH TO GHOST NOTES

Jost Nickel lays out a four-step approach to working ghost notes into grooves.

THE NOTES WE DON'T PLAY

Incorporating rests into odd subdivisions is only tricky at first. Aaron Edgar puts us on our way to internalizing an exciting new rhythmic tool.

Plus the greatest drum-related prizes online, news from around the world of drumming, exclusive *MD* podcasts, and much, much more.



MARK STEPRO

Getting deep into the making of Butch Walker's latest, *Stay Gold*, and the fine art of juggling gigs.





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NEWS

Out Now



Butch Walker

Stay Gold

When he's not busy producing big-time artists like Pink or Taylor Swift, Butch Walker records his own music, and his latest album, *Stay Gold*, rocks that much harder thanks to drummer **Mark Stepro**. Along with help from guests like Ryan Adams and Roger Manning Jr. (Jellyfish, Beck), *Stay Gold* is pure 1970s rock, with big hooks, catchy vocals, and drumming constructed to get the head bobbing. "For that style of music, our reference points are Springsteen and the Eagles," says Stepro, who also tours in Walker's live band. "It's like a natural home base for us stylistically." Stepro's parts on barnburners like "East Coast Girl" play to the back of the arena, mainly because he doesn't sound like a hired gun. "I wanted to approach the record somewhere between 'studio guy' and 'I'm actually in this band,'" Stepro says. "I drove around in my car internalizing Butch's demos, because I didn't want to be writing out a chart, having heard the song forty-five seconds before I was to record. It's that whole 'thoughtful practicing leads to thoughtless playing' thing. That style is a language and a vocabulary, and there are certain things you do and certain things you don't do." (Dangerbird Records) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Islander

Power Under Control

Former Avenged Sevenfold drummer **Arin Ilejay** has joined the Greenville, South Carolina, rap-rockers **Islander** and is featured on the band's second Victory Records release, *Power Under Control*. The muscular "Darkness" and "Bad Guy" rip open the collection and announce Ilejay's arrival with authority. *Power Under Control*, which features an entirely new band lineup aside from founding member and vocalist Mikey Carvajal, was recorded in early 2016 at NRG Studios in North Hollywood. Fusing elements of '90s nu metal, radio-rock tunefulness, and Carvajal's broad palette of vocal abilities, the album is evidence that Ilejay can support the song and still kick some ass when it counts. The set was produced by Cameron Webb (Pennywise, Motörhead, Alkaline Trio), whom Ilejay had previously collaborated with on Confide's *Shout the Truth* album. "He's so much fun to work with," Ilejay says. "He wants what we want. Our methods work together, and it just got better and better as we spent time in the studio together." (Victory) **Ben Meyer**

More New Releases

Warren Wolf Convergence (Jeff "Tain" Watts) /// **The Apocalypse Blues Revue** The Apocalypse Blues Revue (Shannon Larkin) /// **Uri Caine** Calibrated Thickness (Clarence Penn) /// **Of Montreal** Innocence Reaches (Clayton Rychlik) /// **The Color Morale** Desolate Divine (Steve Carey) /// **Dream the Electric** Sleep Beneath the Dark Wide Sky (Joey Waters) /// **Soilwork** Death Resonance (Dirk Verbeuren) /// **Carnifex** Slow Death (Shawn Cameron) /// **The Amazing** Ambulance (Moussa Fadera) /// **Skillet** Unleashed (Jen Ledger) /// **Ed Roth** Mad Beatnik (Chad Smith) /// **Courtesy Tier** Everyone's OK (Layton Weedeman) /// **The Pineapple Thief** Your Wilderness

For more with Mark Stepro and Arin Ilejay, visit moderndrummer.com.

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Brendan Buckley with Tegan and Sara

Brendan Buckley is well known as Colombian superstar Shakira's regular drummer. But the New Jersey native's résumé is deep, wide, and multinational. Skim his workload over the past few years and you'll notice performances with pop singer Miley Cyrus, alt-roots vet Shelby Lynne, and indie chanteuse Minnie Driver, as well as live dates with Chinese singer Jason Zhang, Chilean rocker Beto Cuevas, Singaporean multi-talent JJ Lin, and Brazilian legend Roberto Carlos. Right now Buckley is out with the Canadian pop duo Tegan and Sara, a gig that makes lots of sense for someone with his varied skills and modern disposition. "It was important for me to be able to offer them a variety of approaches for each of their songs," Buckley tells *MD*. "The fully sampled electronic version. The acoustic drum version. A broken-down, unplugged version. They wanted to experiment a lot during rehearsals.

And they wanted to get away from their previous arrangements from prior tours. Therefore, qualities like flexibility, patience, and sensitivity were all equally important as playing to a click."

For a musician who's unbound by style and location, scheduling can be among the most demanding and frustrating aspects of the business. For his part, Buckley relies on more than his own organization skills to avoid conflicts. "Although I keep a very detailed and organized iCalendar," the drummer says, "everything always seems to shift over, shorten, double, or get postponed or canceled. And when jobs overlap, it's important for you to handle it professionally. Fortunately, I have some fantastic drummer friends that can fill in and slay the gig on a moment's notice. A network of talented peers is priceless."

Adam Budofsky

For more with Brendan Buckley, go to moderndrummer.com.

Also on the Road

Riley Breckenridge with Thrice /// Bill Stevenson with Descendents /// Mike Calabrese with Lake Street Dive /// Dennis Wilson with Saves the Day /// Steve Gere with Built to Spill /// Nekoro Williams with People's Blues of Richmond /// Emmett "Murph" Murphy III with Dinosaur Jr. /// Matt Hayward with Band of Skulls /// Ted Poor with Andrew Bird /// Blake Richardson with Between the Buried and Me /// Kenny Bernard with Ra Ra Riot /// François Comtois with Young the Giant /// Sal Rodriguez and Marcos Reyes with War

Who's Playing What



Bisquera

New **Vater** artists include **Curt Bisquera** (Michel Polnareff, pictured), **Stacy Jones** (Miley Cyrus), **Chesley Allen** (Meghan Trainor), **Longineu Parsons** (This Legend, Ten Foot Pole), and **Jimmy D'Anda** (Lynch Mob).

Donn Garrett (Brilliant Mis-Takes, Woodstick) has joined the **Mapex** artist roster.



Donn Garrett

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The Story Continues...

For the first time in its history, Yamaha Recording Custom Series snare drums are available in a variety of metal shell options. Utilizing the invaluable insight from Steve Gadd during the entire design process, the simple snare drum design incorporates a heavy-duty Q-type strainer that is robust yet smooth and features a shell with an outer center bead which helps open up the tone of the drum for crisp, articulate performance. With seven sizes in 1.2mm aluminum, brass, and stainless steel, there is a Recording Custom snare drum to fit your style.

Give the newest snare drums a listen here: 4wrdr.it/RC_Snare_Solo



Joshua Simonds Named PAS Executive Director

The Percussive Arts Society has appointed Joshua Simonds to the position of executive director. Simonds, who has held that title with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, holds a master of arts in arts management from American University in



Washington, D.C., and a bachelor of arts in percussion from California State University, Long Beach. During Simonds' tenure with the CYSO, the organization built one of the largest youth steel pan programs in the Midwest, performed with Chicago's Blue Man Group in the city's Millennium Park, collaborated with the Third Coast Percussion ensemble on multiple occasions, and most recently secured Glenn Kotche as 2016-2017 composer in residence.

"I'm honored that the board of directors has entrusted me with leading this distinguished organization and am eager to start working with members around the world to build on fifty-five years of amazing history," Simonds says. "Together we'll ensure that PAS continues to be the global leader in percussion and drumming, and, as our mission states, inspire, educate, and support percussionists and drummers throughout the world."

Pearl Welcomes Artist Relations Manager John Farquharson

Pearl Corporation recently appointed John Farquharson to the position of artist relations manager.

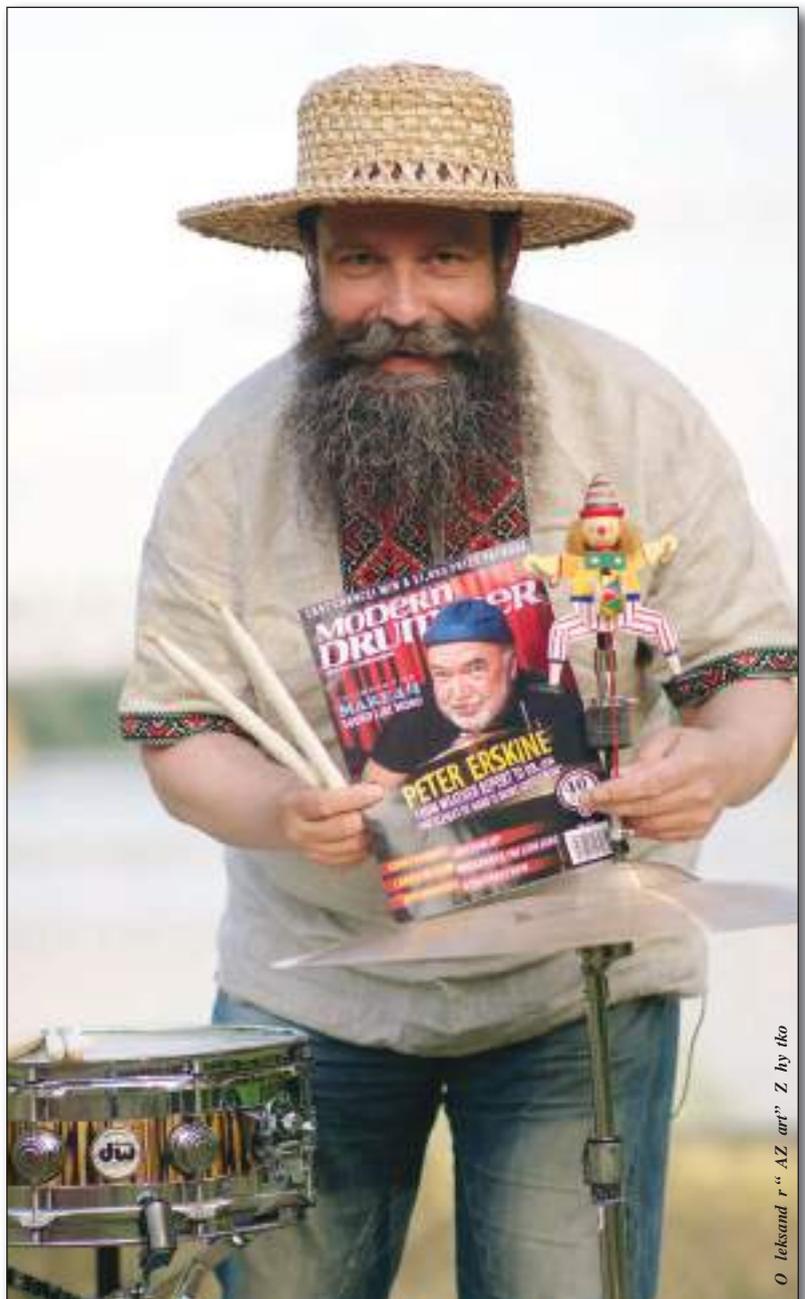
Farquharson, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a graduate of Berklee College of Music with a degree in music business management and marketing, completed



internships at Zildjian and Pearl before accepting the new position. "Pearl is an iconic brand with legendary artists, and it's my privilege to be a part of this team," he says. "I look forward to building on the relationships with each artist."

Ukraine's Victor Gerchev Wins DW's "White Room" Competition

Congratulations to Victor Gerchev on winning DW's White Room contest. To enter, contestants submitted a video of themselves performing a drum cover of "White Room" by Cream. Representatives from DW, Zildjian, and *Modern Drummer* narrowed submissions down to ten semifinalists before Cream's Ginger Baker personally selected the winner. Gerchev's grand prize included a trip to the Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp in Los Angeles last November, a custom DW snare played by Baker during the camp, a set of Zildjian cymbals, and a one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer* magazine. A video of Gerchev's performance can be found at dwdrums.com/whiteroom.

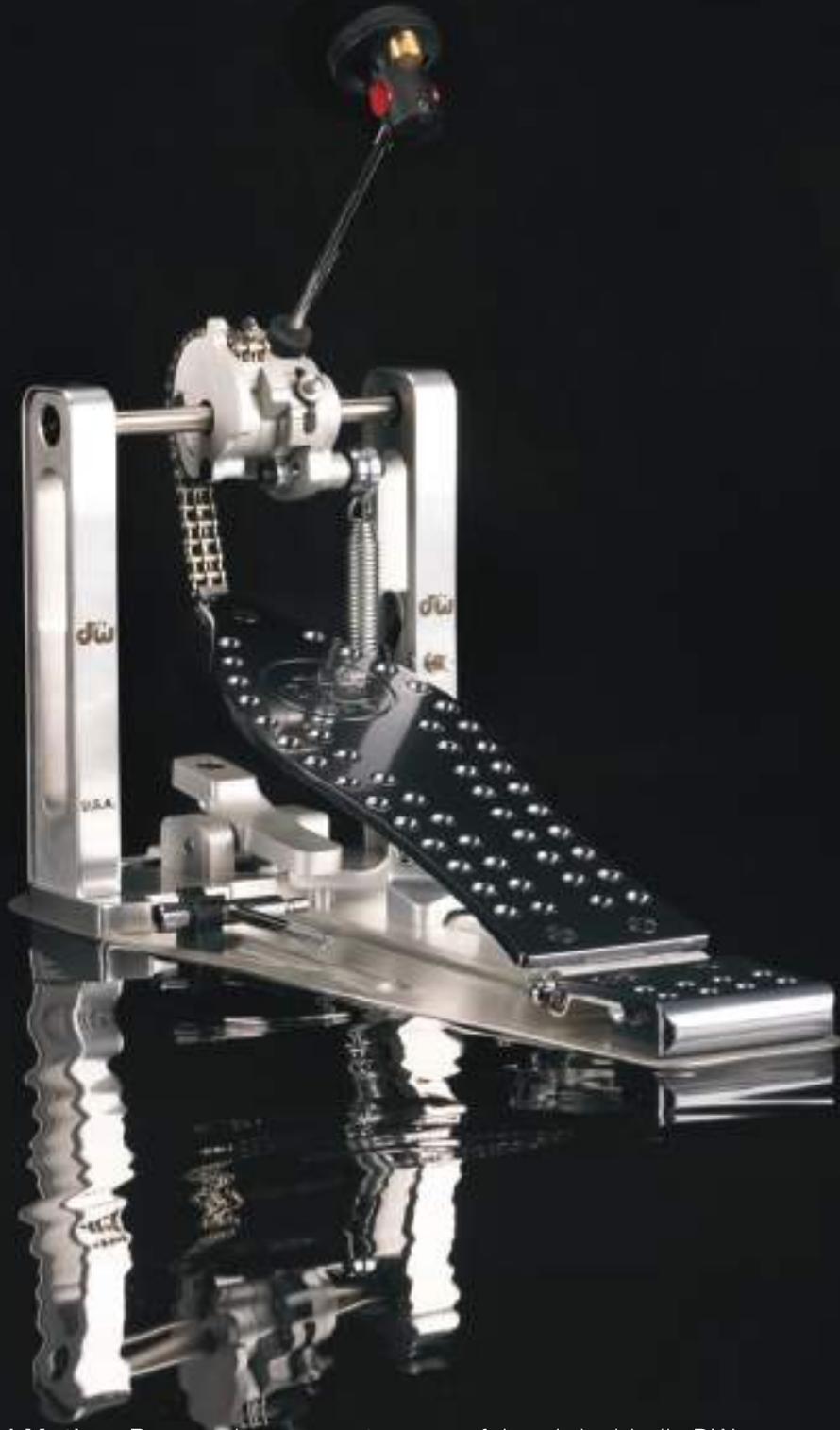


Oleksandr "AZ-art" Zhytko



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Drummer Royalties: Am I Missing Out?

I play original material for a band. I write and record the drum parts, we play gigs regularly, and our songs are often played on the radio. I'm not credited as a songwriter in the band, however, as I don't have any input on the melodies or lyrics. Am I missing out on royalties?

Finn

Entertainment attorney Paul Quin responds: "This is a great question that gets to the

heart of the drummer royalty dilemma. You mention that you don't write the melodies or the lyrics and that, despite writing the drum parts, you aren't credited as a songwriter. The ownership of the copyright generates royalties, and the only things that you can copyright are lyrics and melodies.

"But you can always advocate for an agreement with the songwriter that states that your drum part is integral to the song. Did your contributions lead to a change

in the song's vibe, melody, or lyrics? If so, you can request to receive a percentage of the copyright. That negotiation should occur before the copyright is filed. However, the songwriter is usually under no legal obligation to grant your request. Be judicious as to when you ask, and make sure you've outlined a good case.

"It's not uncommon for a band to share copyright among all members, which can help prevent a lot of arguments down the road. That can be outlined on a song-by-song basis, or the band can agree to split all royalties equally. If you and your band decide to go down that road, make sure to commit the agreement to a signed contract. In order to collect future royalty payments, you must belong to a performance rights society, such as BMI, ASCAP, or SESAC.

"Performance royalties raise a different issue. Unlike in Europe, in the United States performance royalties for songs played on terrestrial radio are generally not recognized. Performance royalties can be available for songs played on satellite radio and other digital platforms, however. The legwork to register these performances can be a little daunting, but it can be quite lucrative in the case of a major hit. To learn more, visit soundexchange.com.

"Performance royalties are split between the owner of the sound recording copyright (50%), which is often the record company, and the featured performer (45%). The remaining 5% is for non-featured artists, such as session musicians, and is distributed through a royalty pool managed by the American Federation of Musicians (AFOFM) and SAG-AFTRA. The SoundExchange program is run through the federal government, and the website is self-explanatory.

"There's a current movement to urge the United States to fall in line with other countries and pay musicians performance royalties regardless of the radio platform. You can become involved through musicfirstcoalition.com and futureofmusic.com. Good luck in negotiating with your bandmates!"

Paul Quin is a partner at the law firm of Saxon, Gilmore & Carraway, PA, where he focuses his practice on entertainment law. You can contact him directly at pquin@saxongilmore.com.

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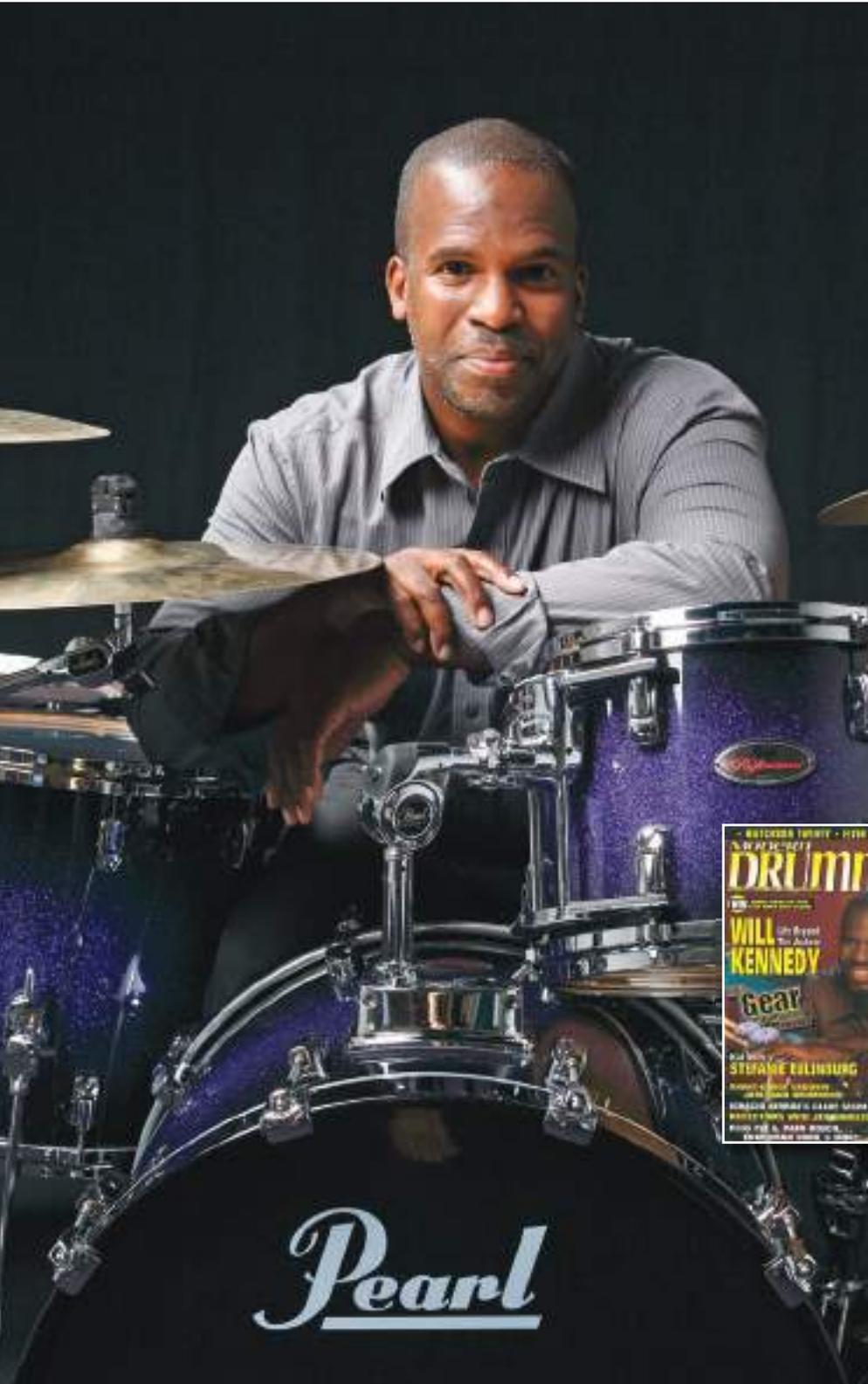
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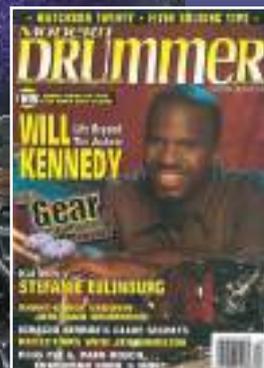
Feeling good to be right back in the Yellowjackets' swing of things.



The future was a mystery for Will Kennedy at the turn of the millennium, after he announced that he'd leave the high-profile electric jazzers Yellowjackets to focus on other projects. Now, after returning to the band in 2010, he's sounding fresher than ever all over the group's latest release, *Cohearence*.

"It was like riding a bike," Kennedy says of being back in the fold. "Yellowjackets have always been a family environment. I thought I had put my time in and it came to a conclusion. Even though I was out for ten years, we remained in contact. We did a gig on the side at the Baked Potato in L.A., calling ourselves the Hornets. A seed was planted. We tried it on and it felt good. And here I am. I'm happy. It feels like home."

Has anything changed now that the band is thirty-five years into its career? "There's something special that occurs," Kennedy says. "Of course you have to get along personally. It's important to like and love the people you're performing with. When you've spent that length of time with a musician, there's a built-in exploration that occurs. You know where to stretch somebody or when to give



Will Kennedy last graced the cover of *Modern Drummer* in December of 2000, when he was set to take a hiatus from the Yellowjackets. Kennedy, who has won numerous readers polls in the magazine, has been the house drummer for *The Wayne Brady Show* and *The Martin Short Show* and toured with Chaka Khan, Lee Ritenour, and Jonathan Butler. To watch Will's performance at the 2014 PASIC convention, go to *Modern Drummer's* YouTube page. And be sure to check out Kennedy's YouTube channel—search for Will's Music Room.

Bun E. Carlos

These days it's out with the old and in with the new for the former Cheap Trick drummer.

them a little push or when to lighten up. You get a good idea of how to nurture or develop someone's solo. You know how they speak on their instrument. You develop an unspoken vocabulary."

Cohearance, which features new bassist Dane Alderson ("He has a knack," Kennedy says, "for settling into a groove and making it feel like a big living room couch"), continues the band's tradition of beautifully crafted tunes that are hummable but also act as springboards for soaring improvisational flights from each player. Kennedy's tricky "Fran's Scene" fits the bill with excellent cymbal work and dynamics. "An odd-meter groove can sometimes feel a little strange," the drummer explains. "I found some approaches that gave the odd meter an even feel. The faster 7/8 can be counted in the longer seven that begins the tune. Sometimes your chords sound bigger when you leave certain notes out. The same with a groove. There's a lot of 1's that I'm leaving out. To not mark where the 1 is, it gives the illusion of a longer bar."

After all the touring that the Yellowjackets have continued to do, Kennedy still finds time to connect with other drummers. "Clinics continue to evolve," he says. "Lately I've had so much fun making the clinic interactive. So it's not just me up there blowing away and then standing up and asking if there are any questions. I've grabbed people from the audience and had them demonstrate some of the points that I'd been making about drumming or music. Suddenly you see that epiphany in their eyes when they're playing it. That makes it almost like a one-on-one drum lesson in public."

As for the future of the band, Kennedy says, "I'm looking to grow, expand, and bring in new ideas. It's a never-ending cycle. You can never know it all. I'm just keeping open ears, keeping the inspiration going, and hoping to keep inspiring up-and-coming musicians." **Ilya Stemkovsky**

While the current members of Cheap Trick used the run-up to the band's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction to promote a new album and take potshots at former drummer Bun E. Carlos in the press, the famously bespectacled sticksman seized the opportunity to make the solo album he'd been forever threatening to release. Carlos describes *Greetings From Bunezuela!* as "a drummer's mixtape," with musician friends including Guided by Voices' Robert Pollard, Soul Asylum's Dave Pirner, Wilco's John Stirratt, and original Cheap Trick singer Randy Xeno joining him for obscure rock covers that sport his typically punchy pulse.

"I'd been talking about this since the 1970s," Carlos says. "Then the Hall of Fame made its announcement in December. And in January, much to the dismay of everyone, I said, 'Yeah, this is a good time—I think I'll do this.' And management said, 'Okay, we need it in six weeks.'"

Beyond a couple of shows in the Midwest, Carlos doesn't see himself doing many gigs to promote the album. "I'm not going to throw the drums in a van and drive a thousand miles to go play a club in North Dakota or something," he cracks. Carlos has got plenty to keep him busy these days anyway. He's playing regularly with two local groups, the Monday Night Band in his hometown of Rockford, Illinois, and the Jimmys in Monroe, Wisconsin. And a new album from Candy Golde, a group that includes Stirratt and Rick Rizzo of Eleventh Dream Day, is being shopped around.

Bun E.'s celebrated collection of drums has also been occupying a fair amount of his time recently, because he's in the process of downsizing. "I'm actively disassembling it," Carlos says. "I turned sixty-five in June. It took me about thirty years to put together, and I figure I've got about ten years to get rid of this thing, if I'm lucky, before I fall over walking down the street one day.

"So last year I started calling people and saying, 'Before you go to the [Chicago] Drum Show, come over and have a look.' The guys from Canopus came over and bought four kits. A couple guys got some snare drums. Another guy was over recently and bought some stuff. I've still got about forty kits and a couple hundred snare drums. But a lot of my eye candy is going away really fast." **Patrick Berkery**



Matthew Bowler



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Roland recently made some changes to its V-Drums lineup, including discontinuing the TD-15 series and adding two mid-level kits with the TD-25 module. This new series capitalizes on a lot of the technology found in Roland's flagship TD-30 line, but delivers kits at a lower price point.

The TD-25 kits offer a beautiful playing experience and a lot of great features that can be utilized both for practice and performance. We were sent the TD-25KV model for review (list price: \$3,499).

What's in the Box?

The TD-25KV came equipped with two PD-85BK 8" pads for rack toms, two PDX-100 10" pads for the floor tom and snare, one KD-9 kick pad, two CY-12C 12" crash cymbals, one CY-13R 13" ride cymbal, the VH-11 V-Hi-Hat, which mounts on a regular hi-hat stand (not included), and a rack with all the necessary clamps and boom arms. The lower-priced TD-25K kit (\$2,499) comes with just one crash and includes two PDX-6 6.5" pads for the rack toms and one PDX-8 8" pad for the floor tom. Everything else is the same.

Drum and Cymbal Pads

Roland has been a long-standing industry leader in electronic drum and cymbal pads because of how well they perform and look. With the TD-25 module, the PDX-100 mesh-head snare pad responds to "positional sensing," which provides the tonal characteristics that you would experience by playing on different areas of an acoustic drum. This technology translates incredibly well as you explore tight rolls at the edge of the drum, soft ghost notes, and hard rimshots. In addition to responding to chokes, Roland's CY-12C cymbal pads also provide bow and edge sounds. The ride cymbal pad has three different playing zones: bow, edge, and bell. Those three playing areas transition very naturally to offer a lot of dynamic expression and creative freedom.

The same can be said for the VH-11 V-Hi-Hat, which is mounted on a conventional hi-hat stand. The hi-hat pad allowed for foot splashes, and it's exceptionally responsive to quick flurries of double strokes or a subtle release of the foot for a hint of partially open slesh.

The bass drum and tom pads expressed articulate patterns wonderfully as well. The kick pad responded great to as much double-pedal madness as we could dish out.

TD-25 Module

The TD-25 module was designed with one main theme in mind: to put the user in control of the sound. The higher-end Roland TD-30 module offers tons of preloaded kits and customizing options that are built deeper into the menus. The TD-25 has thirty-six kits, and you can easily change the instrument, tuning, muffling, and balance by twisting dedicated knobs on the face of the module. (If you aren't interested in messing with the nuances of drum and cymbal sounds, you may want to check out the TD-11 kits. Those run about \$1,000 cheaper and have fifty preset kits.)

Adjusting parameters for the drums and cymbals on the TD-25 module is easy; just strike the desired pad, and then turn the appropriate knob. All changes are automatically saved. The toms can be adjusted as a group or individually, which we found to be a great timesaving feature. It was also very easy to restore kits to their original version. The eighteen preset kits are divided into six musical genres, which are selectable by the large dial on the module.

The module also features a dedicated knob for adjusting bass and treble frequencies, backing-track volume, and master volume. There's a knob for the metronome as well, which allows for easy tempo adjustment.

The TD-25 module also incorporates Roland's SuperNATURAL Behavior Modeling





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of this kit, visit
moderndrummer.com.

feature. This technology was originally created for Roland's flagship TD-30 module and is a big part of what makes playing a Roland kit so special, as it enables the module to respond to your touch in the same way that an acoustic kit would. From cymbal swells to rimshots, rimclicks, and sensitive snare strokes, the TD-25 pads and module provide a realistic and inspiring playing experience.

Other important features of the TD-25 module are the Coach

practice functions; the ability to play, loop, and tempo-adjust WAV and MP3 files; and the option to record and save performances and play-along tracks to a USB memory stick. You can also utilize the .125" input to connect an external audio device, and Roland included a USB port for recording audio and MIDI data into DAW software on your computer. High marks all around!

Miguel Monroy

Bosphorus

20th Anniversary Series Cymbals

A throwback to the '60s, with musicality and expressiveness at its core.

Bosphorus, one of the leading cymbal manufacturers in Turkey, is commemorating two decades of operation with the new 20th Anniversary series, which comprises a limited range of thin, vintage-style pies. These cymbals are made from the same bronze formula as all other Bosphorus series, and they feature a dark-gray, antique-looking finish and a simple white twentieth-anniversary logo. We were sent a pair of 14" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, and 20" and 22" rides to review. (The series also includes 13" hi-hats, a 17" crash, and a 21" ride.)

The Look and Feel of Yesteryear

Since its inception, Bosphorus has focused a lot of effort into recreating the classic warm-sounding and soft-feeling cymbals of the '60s, which can be found in various series, such as the all-purpose Traditional, the softer Master, and the drier, unlathed Master Vintage. (More contemporary tones are also available in the bright and crisp-sounding Gold series and the raw, dark Turks.)

The 20th Anniversary series sits somewhere between the Master and Master Vintage lines. The cymbals are lathed on top and bottom like a traditional cymbal, but they're treated with a special process that darkens the appearance to make them look like they're decades old. They're not raw and earthy like the Master Vintage, but the bronze isn't clean or fresh looking either. Swipe away the white logos, and you'd swear these were some pristinely preserved old Ks.

The bells on the 20th Anniversary rides and crashes are fairly wide and flat, while the bells on the hi-hats are smaller and steeper. The 16" and 18" crashes are thin and flexible. The 20" and 22" rides are a little more rigid, with the 20" being the firmer of the two. The hi-hats have a medium-thin top and a medium bottom. The crashes could be classified as paper-thin, the 20" ride is medium-thin, and the 22" is thin.

Sensitive Old-School Sounds

We tested the 20th Anniversary series cymbals in a jazz/funk style in the recording studio and on a few moderate-volume club gigs that included a wide range of genres, from Dixieland to progressive rock.

For recording drummers, these cymbals are a great option for situations where you need rich, smooth, and warm sounds that speak quickly and easily but don't get overly loud. Even when I struck the crashes hard and laid heavily into the hi-hats, they never oversaturated the mix with excessive wash or harsh overtones. The crashes opened up immediately with a fully realized tone from super-soft strokes, and they stood strong against harder hits without choking or spraying too wildly.

The 22" ride has a tendency to get washier than the 20", especially when played at faster tempos and at higher volumes. The 22" wasn't ideal for the aforementioned club gigs, which demanded a lot of stylistic and dynamic versatility. But for lighter contexts, like acoustic jazz and more subtle recording applications, it provided a lusciously dark and warm tone that blended well with the kit. The bell sound is complex and integrated, so striking it activates a fair amount of wash. The 22" ride also crashes very well, producing a huge, dramatic push when hit on the edge with the shoulder of the stick.



The 20" ride has a slightly cleaner stick attack and more focused overtones, making it better suited for a wider range of styles and applications than the 22". It's medium-thin, so it won't cut through loud or dense mixes, but it records beautifully, has very even and balanced sustain, and has enough control to work as a main ride for lower-volume jazz, singer/songwriter, and soft-rock gigs.

The 14" hi-hats fall in line with the rest of the 20th Anniversary series, providing a warm, balanced sound with crisp but complex articulation and controlled volume. They would be an excellent choice for most recording situations because of how well they

respond to subtle shifts in dynamics and touch and because they don't throw out so much sound that they bleed into all the mics on the kit. They also have a dark yet clean foot chick that's great for jazz, and they have a pleasant, soft feel that made them a joy on live gigs. I had a great time exploring their nuances of texture and tone within slippery, funky grooves like the Meters' "Cissy Strut."

If you're in the market for some thin, dark, and expressive cymbals with a classic old-school look, then check these out. They're spot-on.

Michael Dawson



For a video demo of these cymbals, visit moderndrummer.com.

Turkish

JC Soundscape Series Cymbals

Esoteric and worldly tones for those exploring the unknown.

The **Soundscape series is a collaborative** collection designed by U.S.-born/Europe-based drummer/percussionist Jarrod Cagwin and the Turkish cymbal company out of Istanbul. Much of Cagwin's work is in traditional Middle Eastern and Northern African genres, world-influenced jazz, contemporary classical, and film scoring. To suit those specialized situations, Cagwin sought to develop a unique palette of sounds that exhibits a wide range of earthy tones with controlled volume and the flexibility to be expressive when played with hands, mallets, and brushes in addition to drumsticks.

Each of the JC Soundscape models is named in relation to something in nature, such as wind, water, snake rattles, geographical climates, and astronomical events. The series is organized into five groups. There's the super-dry Atacama, which includes a 14" Arid crash and a 20" Precision flat ride; the 21" Snake sizzle ride and 12", 13", and 14" hi-hats (with rivets); ultra-thin Water crashes (18", 20", and 22"); 9", 10", and 11" Satellite discs; and a trio of effects cymbals (6" and 7" splashes and a 22" China). Let's take a look at each.

Atacama 14" Arid Crash and 20" Precision Flat Ride

The Atacama is a large desert plateau in the Andes Mountains of South America that's known as the driest place on Earth. As you'd expect, these are super-dry, earthy, and raw cymbals. The 14" crash is thin and completely hammered except for the bell. This cymbal has a dark and splashy sound with minimal overtones and a fast decay. It's great for lower-volume live gigs or recording situations where you want to be able to hit quick accents without them being too loud, bright, or excessively "splashy."

The medium-thin 20" Atacama flat ride sounds extremely dry and has almost no overtones, which results in incredible articulation and utmost dynamic control. This would be the cymbal to go to when all other ride options at your disposal simply produce too much volume, such as light jazz and unamplified world percussion gigs, chamber

percussion concerts, and studio sessions.

Snake Hi-Hats and Ride

Like the Atacamas, the 12", 13", and 14" Snake hi-hats and 21" ride are unlathed and heavily hammered everywhere but at the bell. They have a very dry, dark tone, but they also feature rivets to provide some extended sizzle. The hi-hats, which have a thin top and medium bottom, come with two clusters of two rivets installed on the top cymbal and one cluster of two rivets on the bottom. The rivets add a controlled rattle to the cymbals' minimal sustain when struck partially or fully open or when splashed with the foot. The sizzle is subtle; you don't really notice it, but it gives the cymbals' sustain a darker and more complex tonality with no clear, discernable pitch.

The 12" hi-hats are a good choice for quiet playing, as well as for electronica-inspired beats or for use as higher-pitched secondary hi-hats. The 14" hi-hats, which were my favorite, provide a wider, darker, and less defined sound that translated well on a moderate-volume club gig where I wanted the hi-hats to blend with the band rather than cut above it. The 13" Snake hi-hats split the difference between the others, providing quick articulation for modern jazz and fusion playing styles while remaining dark, complex, and controlled.

The 21" Snake ride has eight rivets around the perimeter that simultaneously control the cymbal's sustain while also adding an underbelly of complex rattle to each stroke. The bell is wide and flat, which produces





a rich, integrated tone. Crashing on the edge elicits a dark, moody texture, and riding on the bow gives off a warm, classic “old K” vibe with tight sustain and defined articulation. This is another excellent choice for gigs requiring extreme control and expressivity.

Water Crashes

If surrealist Salvador Dalí had designed crash cymbals, they’d look like these. Available in 18", 20", and 22" sizes, the Soundscape Water crashes are extremely thin, unhammered, and intentionally warped to give them a floppy, droopy appearance. Striking them causes the entire cymbal to shimmy. The shimmy adds visual drama, but also vibrato to the sustain. Water crashes are designed to produce a concert gong/tam-tam sound rather than a traditional crash. They are super-expressive at all volume levels and respond well when struck with all types of implements, including fingers.

The 20" Water crash was my favorite of the three. It has the most balanced blend of clean attack and trashy overtones, and the vibrato is less dominant. The 22" can double as a unique-sounding specialty ride in lighter situations, and the 18" has a more splashy and wobbly tone when struck aggressively. Definitely not for all-purpose use, the Water crashes would be something to consider when you need a dramatic gong-like tone from a more portable and easily mountable instrument.

Satellite Bells

The most esoteric items in the Soundscape series are Satellite Bells. These small, flat discs are essentially miniature versions of the flat ride—they’re unlathed and heavily hammered—and they come in three sizes (9", 10", and 11"). The volume output of these cymbals is very limited; the 9" barely puts out any audible sound when hit like a splash within a moderate-volume funk groove. But they’re quite expressive at low volumes. You get identifiable bell-like tones when you strike them with fingers and mallets, and you can get articulate ride sounds when struck on top. Harder hits on the edge bring out a choked splash effect with some interesting metallic undertones. These would be unique additions for

drummers/ percussionists looking for unusual sounds for super-quiet situations.

Splashes and China

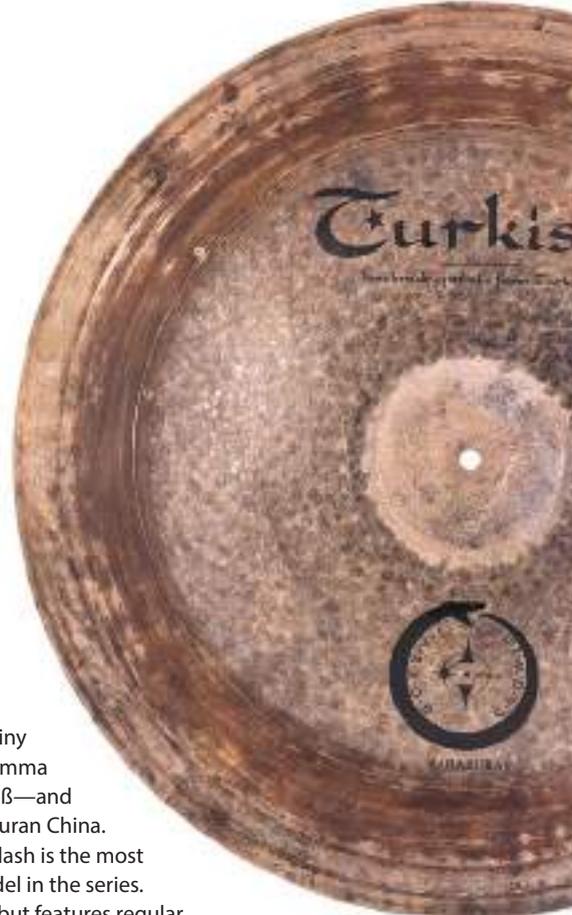
Rounding out the Soundscape series is a pair of tiny cymbals—a 6" Gamma splash and a 7" Löß—and a larger 22" Karaburan China. The 6" Gamma splash is the most conventional model in the series. It’s unhammered but features regular lathing and a shiny brilliant finish. It’s designed to produce a sharp, short sound, which is why it’s named after an ultra-penetrating form of electromagnetic radiation called a gamma ray. This clean, glassy-sounding splash provides a nice contrast to the dry, dark tones of the rest of the series.

The 7" Löß splash, which is named after a very thin and fragile rock, is a paper-thin accent cymbal with a brilliant outer edge, a regular-finish inner bow, and a raw bell. It sounds wider and less focused than the Gamma, and it has a touch of China-like trashiness that allows it to blend well with any type of cymbal setup. It has a flashy attack, rich sustain, and fast decay—all of which is exactly what I look for in a splash cymbal.

The 22" Karaburan China takes its name from the powerful wind that blows across the Gobi Desert in central Asia during the spring and summer months. Fittingly, this cymbal possesses a deep, dark tone that can wash away everything in its path when played aggressively while also providing an amazingly dry and articulate tone when coaxed with more gentle strokes. I loved its rich and controlled ride and bell sounds, and it produces an awesome deep, funky crash when hit to accentuate fills and phrase endings. The flange at the edge of the cymbal is less acute than it is on most other Chinas, which helps minimize harshness and tame a bit of trashiness. While it could be used as a massive accent cymbal, the 22" Karaburan China also functions very naturally as an alternative ride source.

Michael Dawson

For a video demo of these cymbals, visit moderndrummer.com.



Cask Drum Craft

Block- and Segment-Shell Snares

Dense, gorgeous drums that sound as good as they look.

The **Cask Drum Company** is a boutique manufacturer out of Post Falls, Idaho, owned and operated by Micah Doering. He sent us two snare drums for review.

The first has a 6.5x14 block shell made from a hand-selected piece of lacewood and bubinga inserts. As Doering explained to me, the lacewood proved to be quite a challenge during construction because its deep grain pockets drank twenty-two coats of high-gloss clear coat. The shell is .625" thick and features solid bubinga inserts that accent the badge. The shell features an inside 45-degree bearing edge and a round-over back cut. The drum is fitted with black chrome hardware and black die-cast hoops, which further add to its elegant look. The tube lugs are beautiful complements for this drum.

It could be an illusion caused by the grain of the wood and the joins of the blocks, but the shell of the lacewood snare looks somewhat like a barrel on the outside. The blocks seem to meet at an edge under a sea of lacquer. The shell is gorgeous, and no attention to detail has been overlooked. The deep pockets of grain reflect the clear coat in a striking manner.



At a medium tension, this drum has a pleasing, thick tone. The lacewood shell lends a dry, controlled tone. Ghost notes are a pleasure to play, and when struck in the center of the head, the drum gives off a fat, woody crack. I cranked up the tuning a bit and found that the thick throatiness remained intact. This drum has a wide tuning range with a lot of fatness. It sounds thick at all tunings, doesn't become flabby when tuned down, and can go quite high before choking.

Although the lacewood drum is responsive, it seems to be missing some wire sensitivity at low volumes. I also found that its rimclick was just slightly metallic sounding. Yet I got a strong, guttural knock that was full of pleasing overtones when I laid into the drum with rimshots. List price is \$799.

The second drum is a 5.75x14 beauty featuring a thick segment shell made with a whopping 240 blocks of South African bloodwood and American maple. This drum is perfectly made and features ply-maple hoops with a bloodwood outer veneer. The top hoop also features a black walnut star inlay. The staggered single-point gold lugs are offset to accentuate the spiral look of the shell blocks.

This drum knocked my socks off. It has a crisp, woody bite that makes its presence known without being overbearing or painful to the ears. I played this snare on modern country gigs over a couple days, and it sat perfectly within the music. Tuned down, the tone got swampy and fat, but the drum never lost sensitivity. It choked just a little at high tension. Rimclicks were woody and sweet, and rimshots were thick and authoritative. Snare sensitivity was excellent, even at the lowest volumes. And the wood hoops helped reduce the drum's overall weight. List price is \$1,350.

Nick Amoroso



Index Drums

Forest King Series Wooden Drumheads

Earthy percussive sounds for your everyday drumset.

If you're looking for new

percussive sounds for low-volume gigs, then you might appreciate what the Forest King line of wooden drumheads from Index Drums has to offer.

We received a set of Forest King heads for a bop kit with 12" and 14" toms (top and bottom), a 14" snare (top only), and an 18" bass drum (front and back). The snare batter is the 125 model, which denotes its 125mm thickness. The rest of the heads are 100 models. All of the heads are made from three plies of luan mahogany.

The heads were easy to mount on the drums; just replace your normal heads with them as you would any drumhead. I found that I needed longer tension rods for the bass drum to accommodate for the fact that the Index head doesn't stretch to conform to the curvature of the bearing edge. The bass drum resonant side head has a hexagonal port for miking purposes, but it can be ordered without a port. Ports are available on 18" to 24" heads.

With the Forest series heads mounted, my drums took on a different tone that I wasn't used to hearing. When I kept them loose I was able to get a nice slap between the head and the bearing edge, which added an appealing percussive texture. I could get an earthy, musical timbre out of the drums by tuning up the heads a bit and hitting them with my hands. Using mallets on the toms produced a round, warm, and full tone that was almost bell-like. Rods, broomsticks, and brushes brought out a dark, slappy "thwack" that I'd never experienced with Mylar or calfskin heads. The bass drum, when set up with no muffling and hit with a square felt beater, sounded big and warm with pleasing, round overtones. Using a vintage-style lamb's wool beater made the drum sound even rounder and warmer.

When I outfitted my 6.5x14 wood snare with the Forest series batter head, I had a blast playing a train beat with plastic brushes. All of that awesome midrange "honk" you get when you hit a regular snare with a brush is there—and then some. Even playing the Index-outfitted snare with my fingers sounded cool. It was easy to get a lot of earthy, out-of-the-ordinary tones.

The only implements that weren't quite at home on the Index heads were regular drumsticks. They produced a lot of attack but not nearly as much tone as when using softer mallets or multi-rods. Although the manufacturer says that sticks are relatively safe to use on the wood heads, the company advises against hard-hitting

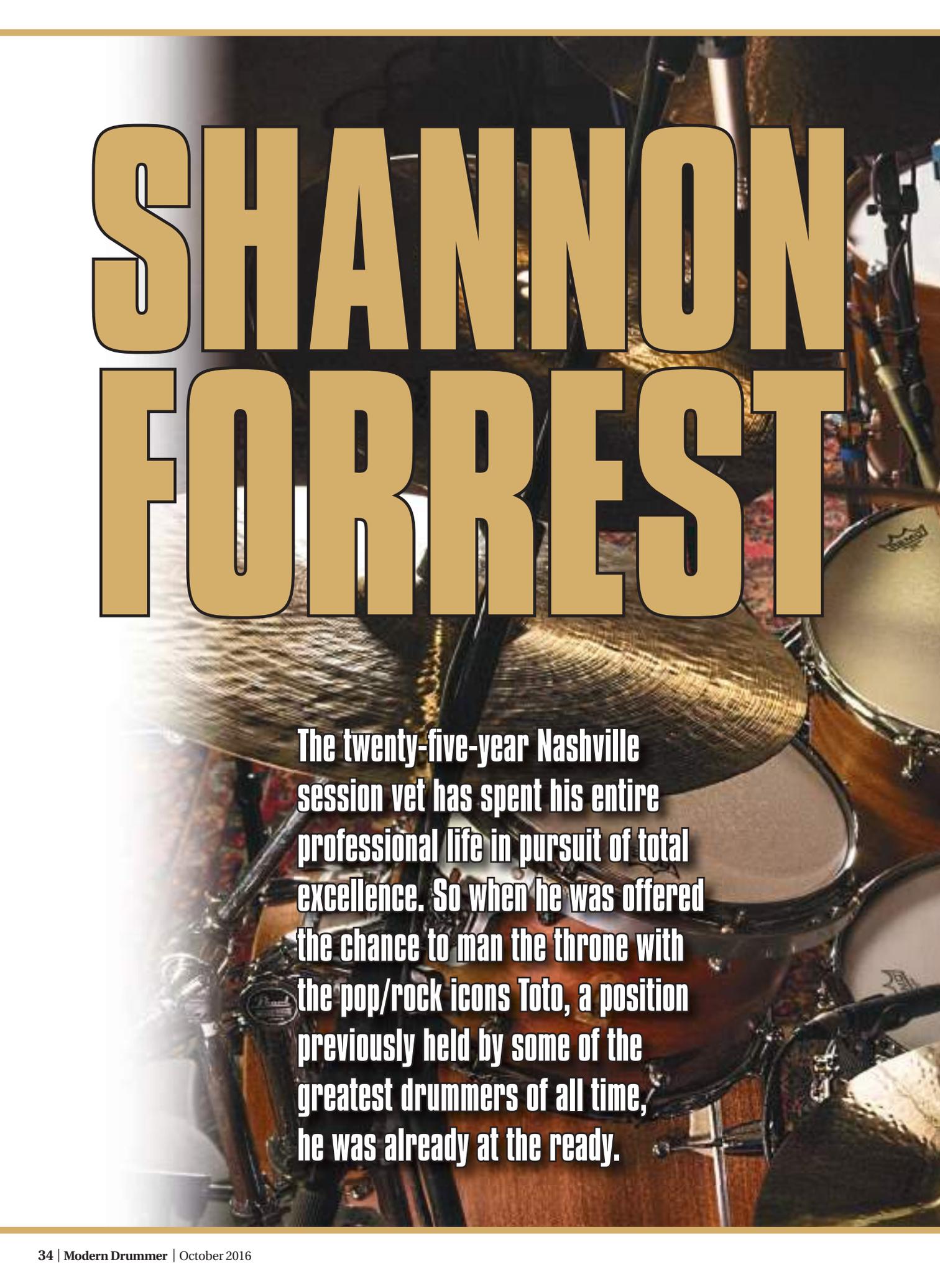


playing. My advice is to use a light touch with whatever implements you strike them with, and the heads will likely last for a long time. Likewise, I don't recommend using anything denser than a felt beater on the bass drum head.

Obviously, these Index Forest series wooden drumheads serve a niche market and aren't meant to replace Mylar drumheads for everyday use. But if you're looking for different percussive voices, they're worth your time. Prices range from \$18 for an 8" model to \$40 for a 24" ported bass drum head.

Nick Amoroso





SHANNON FORREST

The twenty-five-year Nashville session vet has spent his entire professional life in pursuit of total excellence. So when he was offered the chance to man the throne with the pop/rock icons Toto, a position previously held by some of the greatest drummers of all time, he was already at the ready.



Story by Michael Dawson • Photos by Chad Crawford



Shannon Forrest has won the Academy of Country Music's award for Drummer of the Year seven times in the past decade, has played on thousands of sessions since arriving in Music City in 1991, and has provided the rhythmic bedrock for dozens of number-one hits by country music's most successful artists, including Martina McBride, Tim McGraw, Luke Bryan, Blake Shelton, Darius Rucker, Rascal Flatts, and many others. But the focus for this session ace, who has also spent the past two-plus years stepping outside the studio to tour the world with the legendary pop/rock band Toto, has never been on building an impressive résumé. "When I'm on a session, I'm not done until I feel like you could start over with my drum track and the vocal and still have a hit record," says the forty-three-year-old drummer from his commercial-quality home studio outside of Nashville. "Whether it's for a demo, a new artist, or someone I've wanted to work with for a long time, the motivation is the same."

As did all the session greats before

him, including top influences like Bernard Purdie, Steve Gadd, and the late Toto drummer Jeff Porcaro, Forrest enters the studio with one objective in mind: to provide excellence. And in an era when some drummers and producers are content to allow lesser performances to slide through and be "fixed in the mix" later due to advancements in editing technology, Shannon's determination to always serve the music in the most complete, compelling, and compassionate way possible is what makes him a hot commodity among those who understand that there's more to producing a successful song than writing a catchy chorus.

"I believe that the reason the music industry is struggling has much less to do with piracy and much more to do with apathy," says Forrest. "If you're not working hard enough to develop your skillset to the point where you don't need that safety net of technology behind you, or you're willing to accept being edited, then how much are you really giving up

of yourself? And what do you think you should expect in return?"

Those are poignant questions, and if you're really honest with yourself, the answers could be tough to swallow. But if you have aspirations to do what Forrest is doing, whether it's recording on major-label records or touring the world with icons like Toto, Boz Scaggs, Michael McDonald, and Steely Dan's Donald Fagen (the drummer supported the latter three from 2010 to 2012 on Dukes of September tours), then maybe it's time to reevaluate your own efforts versus expectations. For Forrest, success has not come via crafty marketing ploys or leveraging one gig to get to another. Rather, it's been a direct result of a relentless inner drive toward excellence that permeates every note he plays when he sits down at the drumset.

We begin our conversation with Shannon by discussing how he ended up stepping outside Nashville's sphere of influence to take over the drum seat in one of most revered bands of the past forty years.

MD: How did a top Nashville session musician end up drumming in Toto?

Shannon: You have to have something in your résumé that will reach their ears; you can't be completely out of context. I'd worked my way into being a session musician in Nashville because I wanted to play on records. That's a separate thing from being a broader musician outside of that community. So I started turning down sessions in '98, and in 2000 I started a rock band. That became this energy of pursuing my own voice. It was music that reflected me.

But really the thing that led to the next thing was when I met Mike McDonald. I was recording with my band at his studio, and he heard what we were doing and asked me to stay set up to record something the next day for an artist he was producing. I ended up staying set up there for seven years.

Through Mike, I started to build something that was more relevant to somebody like Toto. He was working with Boz Scaggs, so through Mike's management I got introduced to Boz. And earlier in my

“The biggest thing you can do to combat losing work is make sure you're still moving forward as a player.”

session career, when I was nineteen, I'd met David Hungate, the original bassist in Toto. That put me on Toto's radar much earlier than what we're talking about now, which gives you an idea of how long it takes for things to transpire.

But through working on my own music and working with Mike, I established myself in a different form of music, and I was no longer dealing with being known as just a country musician.

MD: You had an opportunity to play with Toto for an awards ceremony a few years back, right?

Shannon: Yeah. In 2010, Toto was being inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame, and David asked that I “sit in” for Jeff. That was the first time I played with those guys. I knew [Toto guitarist Steve] Lukather from several years before, but we hadn't played music together.

But it was a limited thing—we only played four of the hits. There are a lot of other things they do that are more complex, so even though I played with them, I hadn't really qualified myself as being up to the





task. Then, through Mike McDonald's management, I ended up recording with Boz Scaggs, and he brought in David Paich, the keyboard player in Toto, to record at my studio. After that, we had a much deeper knowledge of each other.

MD: You also mentioned that your appearance at the 2010 Modern Drummer Festival played a role in your branching out beyond country music.

Shannon: Right. After I did the record with Boz, he called up [Steely Dan frontman] Donald Fagen to get me on the Dukes of September tour, which was Boz, Mike [McDonald], Donald, and most of the Steely Dan rhythm section. Donald went to

YouTube to check me out. The only things that came up were clips from the festival, and I was playing specific things like the half-time shuffle. I'd never done a drum clinic before, so I was really insecure about doing it. But there was something in me that said: *You need to do this*. So listening to myself and deciding to do things that were uncomfortable ended up opening doors.

Another thing that led me to Toto was producing a record for Mike McDonald. We brought in David Paich to play B3 [organ]. I spent a couple days at his studio in L.A., so he heard me on a bunch of those tracks, which gave him additional context to put to my name.

MD: What do you think Paich heard in your playing that ultimately led to him suggesting you for that first tour with Toto?

Shannon: When I was sending tracks back and forth to him, it was the grungier rock stuff that my band was doing that lit him up the most. I think that was because he was hearing me in a sound that was unique to me, and he could recognize something about that more easily than when I was playing in a context that was more reminiscent of Jeff [Porcaro] and the things they were doing with Toto. I think having something musically of your own goes much further to open other doors than playing 3,000 sessions. The session thing feeds a different goal, and it bears fruit there but not really outside of that.

MD: Were there any surprises when you sat in the drum chair with Toto for the first time?

Shannon: The biggest thing is that they all have incredible time. From playing in the studio with different rhythm sections, I learned how to dictate the time to hold

Favorites

Toto IV, Kingdom of Desire (Jeff Porcaro) /// **Led Zeppelin** Houses of the Holy (John Bonham) /// **Steely Dan** The Royal Scam (Rick Marotta, Bernard Purdie) /// **Sting** Ten Summoner's Tales (Vinnie Colaiuta)

everything together when guys would rush or pull back. With Toto, that's not necessary. I've played for so long being malleable and compensating that it was a bit of a challenge to turn that off. The adjustment was to let go of my role as caretaker of the time and just ride along. It's a very positive change, but I had to get used to not falling into old patterns. Everybody in Toto listens acutely, so the reaction time is quick and effortless. We had a technical issue with monitoring one night and a phrase moved by about a quarter note, and everybody turned the phrase back around before a measure went by. That's how dialed in and focused everyone is.

Learning as a session musician how to negotiate the best-feeling groove ultimately ended up compromising my own time. I was constantly changing things to make the track tighter, like reaching out through

a transition and bringing the acoustic guitar player back into the pocket. With Toto there's none of that, which gave me more subconscious space to reach for other things in my own playing.

MD: When you're talking about adjusting the time in the studio, is this with click tracks or without?

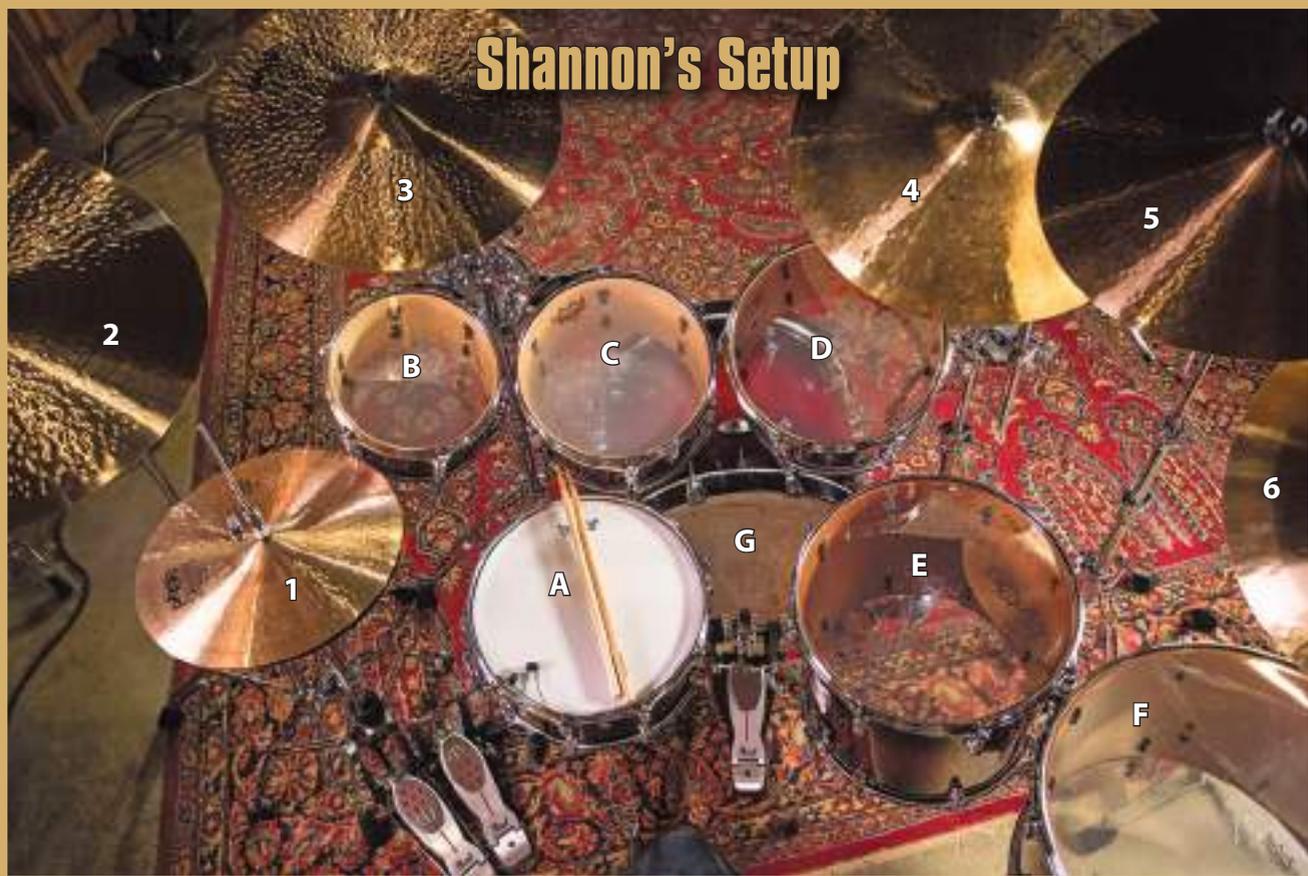
Shannon: Both. Luckily I did a lot of recording in my youth without click tracks, so I had to be able to keep good time and not speed up. When I started playing with clicks, it was off-putting, because I could already do what the click was trying to do. And the click would have an adverse effect on other people's time.

When I started playing on records, it was a few years before we started using audio editors like Pro Tools. So what was getting me work was that producers were noticing that the same rhythm section that would

get loose and sloppy at times wasn't getting loose and sloppy when I was playing drums.

MD: Why do you think that was the case?

Shannon: Like I said, I learned to play time in a way that I could make fluid adjustments without anyone feeling it change. That kept the band tighter. For example, when you play a fill going into a chorus, some people sense that energy and start rushing. As a result, the first backbeat is flammed. To keep that from happening, I subconsciously took on an approach where if I wanted to lean on top of the beat for a fill going into the chorus, I would pull back a little bit over the course of the two measures before the fill to free up some space. You're not going to hear those two measures slowing down. I'm just trying to buy myself ten milliseconds to give me enough room to play the fill with some energy and still land right on the click when we get to the chorus. I also pick a click



- Drums:** Pearl Reference Pure
A. 6.5x14 or 5x14 Hybrid Exotic cast-aluminum snare
B. 8x10 tom
C. 8x12 tom
D. 9x13 tom
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 16x18 floor tom
G. 16x22 or 14x24 bass drum

- Cymbals:** Paiste (various)
1. 15" hi-hats
2. 18" crash
3. 19" crash
4. 22" ride
5. 20" crash
6. 22" China

Sticks: Innovative Percussion 8A, nylon brushes, and various mallets

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador snare batter and Clear Ambassador snare-side, Coated or Clear Ambassador tom batters and Clear Ambassador or Diplomat resonants, and Coated or Smooth White Ambassador bass drum batter and Ebony Ambassador front head

Hardware: Pearl, including Redline pedals

sound that's short enough to be defined but not so short that it exposes every little flam.

MD: Is it a shaker?

Shannon: Yeah, it's a Roland shaker sample that I've used since '91, and I roll off the high frequencies so it's a little duller sounding. As things have evolved with Pro Tools, I'll just play to whatever is in there, like Cowbell 1, and put on a low-pass filter at 3 kHz. It's a horribly nonmusical thing to play to, but it's better than some of the other things people use that sound like your spinal cord is being assaulted with a rubber mallet. [laughs]

MD: With the tendency for people to grid everything in Pro Tools, are you still focusing on these nuanced adjustments to the time?

Shannon: It depends on who I'm working for. I'm also an engineer and producer, so I'm always evaluating things from that perspective. How tight does it need to be? What does it need to feel like? You have to get beyond five milliseconds to actually hear separation between the parts. That's pretty damned tight in most instances.

But the implementation of audio editors has marginalized everything. The great thing about playing on a recording is being able to hear yourself back. But the second it's manipulated, it's not you anymore. The clock in Pro Tools is so infinite that it feels inhuman. When I hear quantized music from a computer, I immediately know it. It hits something in my psyche that feels wrong. Human beings don't make those sounds, and I think that has had a massive impact on the human spirit in music.

MD: How so?

Shannon: The way I approach playing a track is to create something that's a hook, even if it's within the groove. There should be something in it that's beyond just squared-up 8ths and backbeats on 2 and

4. You should be able to find something to make yourself sound unique. When things get manipulated, that's taken away.

The thing that makes a musician or artist great is their commitment to their own excellence, and I'm not talking about technical precision. You can be a sloppy player, but you have to refine that style to a point of excellence. Bob Dylan is in complete control of his approach, even though it's a looser style. And the level of precision on Steely Dan records is massively appealing because that's them being a hundred percent true to who they are. That's their form of expression.

I think the same thing that makes guys work toward a level of excellence in execution also makes them great at interpreting someone's songs and coming up with great parts. When musicians are content with—or dependent on—being corrected by a machine, that's a telltale sign of something being flawed. You're not taking ownership, and I can't relate to that.

As drummers, we tend to focus on time relative to a click track. If you're willing to look at your time honestly and work to improve it, then that's also the thing that gets you to the level where you're listening much more reverently to evaluate what the song needs. Maybe I'd like to be playing something more complicated, but the song needs something else. It's that kind of humility that leads to the refining process. You can't just say, "The computer is going to fix my time." If you're willing to make that

exception, you're probably not going to go deep enough with the music to find the things to help express the song in the best way possible.

MD: I find it impressive how you're able to throw in some more adventurous fills and groove variations without them sounding out of context, even on huge hit records. Is it because you have such control of your time that you're able to play a bit more freely?

Shannon: For every level of nuance and dynamics you want to introduce into a phrase, there's another muscle memory that needs to be developed. So it's good to work on everything at every volume. Play something loud, and then see if you can play it soft. The things I love about someone's playing are the dynamics. Think about a great orator who speaks passionately. There's always a lot of up and down to the volume of the phrases. It's a point of emphasis, and that should be part of our playing.

The drummers that I tried to emulate early on had a similar thing. Jeff Porcaro had infinite control of the inner dynamics, and that's why he sounds so expressive. The reason his half-time shuffle sounds so great is because there's a lot of distance in volume between the accents and the in-between strokes. And for every one of those nuances, there's a neural path that you have to develop. That was always my point of emphasis. I wasn't sitting around blasting rudiments and odd time signatures, even though I do now as a practicing tool. What I was spending my time on was being able to have control of the tempo so I could introduce some snaky little thing between the hi-hat and snare and it wouldn't feel like the time shifted. I want it to feel fluid, like it's breathing and moving in the same wave as the rest of the groove.

Jeff's playing was always so wrought with control of those things. The inner dynamics of his fills is what gave them attitude. It's expression on a much deeper level than blasting an even series of notes really fast and loud. But when you add those inner dynamics, all of a sudden it's a lot harder to keep the time together. The half-time shuffle can sound like a rudiment gone wrong if you don't play with the right dynamics. What makes it sound fantastic is when you have infinite range within the sticking

Recordings

Brooks & Dunn Steers & Stripes /// **Tim McGraw** Two Lanes of Freedom /// **Michael McDonald and Robben Ford** Unfinished Business /// **Mindy Smith** One Moment More

Toto's Steve Lukather on Shannon Forrest

"I first heard about Shannon through our original bass player, David Hungate," Toto guitarist/songwriter Steve Lukather says. "David also helped [original Toto drummer] Jeff Porcaro get his career started when he was seventeen on the Sonny and Cher gig. So when Hungate talked, we listened. He said, 'There's this guy in Nashville, Shannon Forrest, and he's the closest thing to Jeff I have played with since Jeff's passing.' Those are some heavy words. Hungate would never say that unless he felt it was something real.

"The first time we all played together, it just clicked in a huge way. Shannon had studied Jeff, and it is very clear to hear—but he has his own thing as well. He knows all our songs better than I do! He kills it every night, and his time, groove, and taste are world class. It's no accident that he's top call in Nashville. We're honored to have him with us."



Rob Shannon / Shannon

without breaking the time.

I've seen many YouTube posts of guys playing things that I'd have to work really hard at to play. What usually puts me off is that every note is at the same dynamic. But when someone like Vinnie Colaiuta plays relentlessly like that, he's able to feather in dynamics. That's why he's Vinnie. He knows it's about expression and communicating emotions.

MD: How do you maintain a session career when you're touring most of the year?

Shannon: The first thing you're supposed to do is call everyone and let them know when you're coming back. But I've never called anybody for work, so I just come home and word spreads. It's been slower lately, so thankfully I'm doing enough other things. If I were solely dependent on sessions, I would have to make those calls. The people that really want me to play are going to call whether I'm home or not, and those are the people I want to work with anyway. But the biggest thing you can do to combat losing work is make sure you're still moving forward as a player. That way they notice what they were missing while you were out.

MD: Does playing live affect how you approach sessions?

Shannon: I think it's really important to play live, because in the studio everything is at such a fast pace that there's no time to be creative. You have to bring creativity with you. You're going to play the same type of songs a thousand times, and you might only play it down four or five times, so it's hard to steer the ship toward anything new. Playing live gives you the chance to discover new approaches that you can then bring to the studio to keep things from becoming stagnant.

MD: How much of your session work is transferring over to your studio?

Shannon: As budgets are different, everybody thinks they can fix whatever's wrong with things in the computer later. And to some extent you can—you can use Steven Slate Drums or retrigger anything to bring in different room sounds. But any time somebody looks to book a session, and it's not at Ocean Way or Blackbird, I try to get them to come to me, because I feel that my room sounds better than any other room in town.

MD: Do you have one kit that's always set up, or do you build it from scratch per song?

Shannon: When I'm at home, it's song-specific. But that's not conceptually the

work flow in Nashville. The pace is so fast that there's no time to change out drums. So what happens is guys put up something general that gives them a clean and up-the-middle sound. I usually set up four toms, and then I pull down whatever I'm not playing on that song. I use a 22" bass drum most of the time. I've gravitated to the drums I use because they can cover the most ground. That's why I used Gretsch for so long, because I can tune them high or low and they sound great. And I can make my 22" Brady sound like a 26" with the right heads and tuning.

MD: How do you pick your snare?

Shannon: If you reduce it down, it's the snare, kick, and hi-hat that set the feeling of the groove of the song. Lower tunings give the snare a longer note. So at faster tempos, lower-pitched drums can feel like they weigh it down. In certain styles, that's a really cool thing. But typically I'm feeling the tempo and thinking about how much weight I want the backbeat to have. That weight is created from your placement, the length of the note, and the balance of the overtones to the center pitch. That's why I have a lot of drums with me; I want to have as many options as possible.



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MD: What would be your snare palette if you couldn't take all of your drums with you?

Shannon: I'm not looking for a drum that does just one thing; I want it to be able to cover everything. Can I tune it low in an Al Green kind of way? Will it tune in the midrange? A deeper shell gives you more resonance, which supports lower tunings, but it doesn't drop the basic pitch that the head can make. So a 14" drum should be

drum. I'm also really enjoying some new snares by Angel Drums. But if I can take something that's 6.5" deep and something that's 5" deep, I'm pretty confident I can get whatever we're going after.

MD: Do you have a starting point for tuning the snare, or does it change from drum to drum?

Shannon: I always have the bottom head cranked, even when the top is pitched low. Then I look for a spot where the drum

MD: Is your tuning different live versus in the studio?

Shannon: The snare is tuned the same, but I'll swap drums a few times throughout the show, because the snare sound really changes the emotion of the song. When I was playing the song "Hey Nineteen" with Dukes of September, I used a lower-tuned drum that's closer to the original, because I was trying to make it feel like the record. I tune the toms a little higher to get my fills to articulate a little better in bigger rooms.

MD: How much higher?

Shannon: It's probably a major second, so it's not that much. I just tighten the heads so the in-between notes speak faster.

MD: What are you practicing these days?

Shannon: I spend a lot of time on muscle development. I found that I had started playing the bass drum a little flatter, so I wasn't able to articulate certain things like I wanted. I'm working on getting up on the ball of my foot and sliding more. The muscle groups change dramatically when you make that adjustment, so I'm doing things to address those muscles while keeping the other ones in shape so they don't atrophy. I also started messing around with double bass a couple years ago because I want to get a better command of it.

I've found that the things I really want to improve—time, groove, and articulation—are getting much better when I'm working on things that aren't specifically related to them. You really can't work your muscles hard enough to develop a high level of control of nuances by just playing grooves and fills. So I practice a lot of things I'm probably not going to implement, like speed metal, just for the impact they have on other things. I'm practicing more now than I ever did in my youth.

MD: What inspires you to practice? Is it something that arises on the gig, or is it a result of your own curiosity?

Shannon: It's a combination of both. My point of emphasis has never been drum aerobics. But what I've found as I've spent more time with the drums on my own is that the opportunities that have come up have looked significantly different. I still prefer playing songs and grooving behind a vocalist, but as I've dug deeper into the instrument I've realized that that is what has put the energy out there to get me on the radar for these other things. It's been a reawakening. You have to make the effort first. Find something that feels sincere and genuine to you, and go toward it. It will bear out well.



able to tune up as high as a piccolo, but that extra depth might make it too thick or choked sounding.

Chris Brady made a baritone snare that can sound like a wood or metal drum. It's the one drum that I feel can do everything with no compromise. But you can always take a 6.5x14 Ludwig Black Beauty to a date and be able to pull off just about everything. And one of my favorite drums is a 5x14 chrome-over-steel Ludwig from the late '60s. I prefer it to the Supraphonic because it's a little more centered in the overtones. You can tune it low and it gets really grippy with the snares for that Stax type of thing. It's a Swiss Army knife-type

produces the most resonant note with the fullest fundamental and the best balance of overtones. If I'm looking for a certain pitch or length of decay, I pick a drum based on where that center point is. I try not to make a drum do anything outside that range. And I like to use Coated Ambassador heads because I like to let the drum be wide open and then find ways to get rid of certain frequencies with tuning. Heads with a dot knock down some of the high-frequency response, so it's not as crisp and bright. But I like to keep that brightness, because the more you can get that at the drum, the less high frequency you have to add at the microphone, which means less hi-hat bleed.





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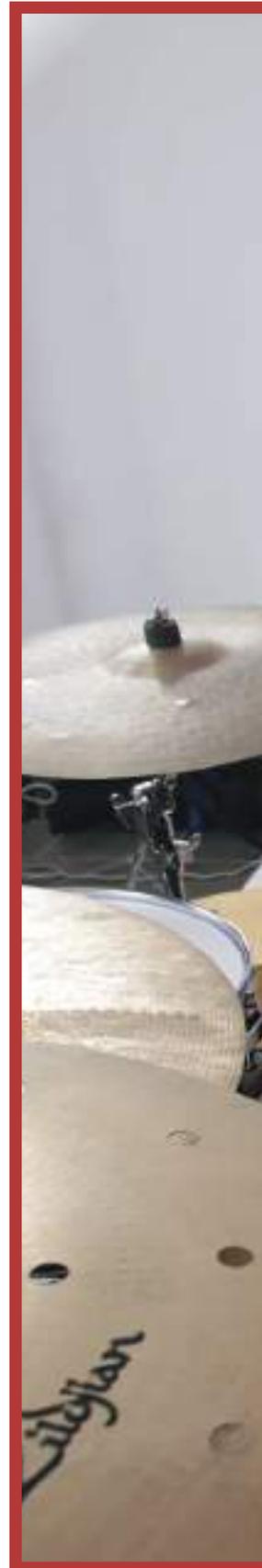
The secrets to this multi-threat's success?
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Charles Haynes is a true drumming multi-talent. The forty-year-old Boston resident has toured the globe with the pop stars Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Ed Sheeran, and Queen Latifah. His beefy beats and crafty production have invigorated the R&B of Meshell Ndegeocello, the jazz of saxophonist Marcus Strickland and keyboardist Jason Moran, the blues of singer Ruthie Foster, the fusion of bassist Marcus Miller, the big band blowouts of Kendrick Oliver's New Life Jazz Orchestra, and Latifah's early-jazz tribute soundtrack, *Bessie*.

Performing with keyboardist BigYuki's trio at Revive Records' recent ten-year anniversary concert at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City, Haynes took that old Frank Zappa adage "beat it with your fist" to new heights. BigYuki's music is equal parts progressive hip-hop and power-driven prog, melded into a kind of super funk-fusion. Staring down his kit like an action hero, Haynes delivered deep funk satisfaction with his monster beats and silken grooves, while his blazing combinations dazzled the audience and fired the music. Haynes' flashy groupings impressed, while his alternate left-hand snare drum recalled an old-school Akai MPC and acted as a trigger point for myriad sampled sounds.

Beyond the beat, Haynes has provided production skills for Ndegeocello, Latifah, country singer Christa Gniadek, jazz keyboardist Brett Williams, and gospel artist Isaiah Grigg. And he's written for almost as many acts as he's produced. Across all of these platforms, and with all of these artists, he's had one goal in mind: to serve the music.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Paul La Raia





MD: You drummed on Kanye West's *Glow* in the Dark tour from 2008 to 2010. What's the most important thing the drummer has to be aware of on such a major gig?

Charles: With Kanye I played drums, percussion, and timpani. One of the hardest things was being on point with the timpani. Luckily I could draw on the timpani lessons I had in my high school years. I also went to Eastern Illinois Percussion Camp in the late '90s. We had great teachers, including Ndugu Chancler, Buddy Williams, and Lewis Nash. We studied marimba, timpani, and drums. Kanye's gig brought me back to that. I'd be playing to a click and playing in the pocket, then jumping up, tuning the timpani real quick, and—boom!—into the next song. It was a serious multitasking gig.

MD: Did Kanye express what he wanted to hear from you, or were you expected to replicate the record?

Charles: We had to play the record. I had moments of freedom. We would do duets where I would play breakbeats as Kanye rapped. Playing that show is going

“I played with triggers with BigYuki, Marcus Strickland, and Jason Moran. I'm infusing the pop world into the jazz world.”

for blood, because his music is not your regular mom-and-pop music. If you're playing it right and it feels right, that is an accomplishment in itself.

MD: Was there any triggering with Kanye?

Charles: I used a Roland SPD-SX for claps sampled from the record. But he was in his organic mode then.

MD: And what was the challenge working with Lady Gaga?

Charles: I worked with Gaga for four months while I also worked with Kanye and M.I.A. Sometimes she said what she wanted to hear, but not very often. And that can be a problem. Some artists don't know how to express what they want to hear. Every blue moon Gaga gave me something to grab

on to. At that time we played the record, straight up, though we did have [live] arrangements and segues. I did Ed Sheeran in that time too.

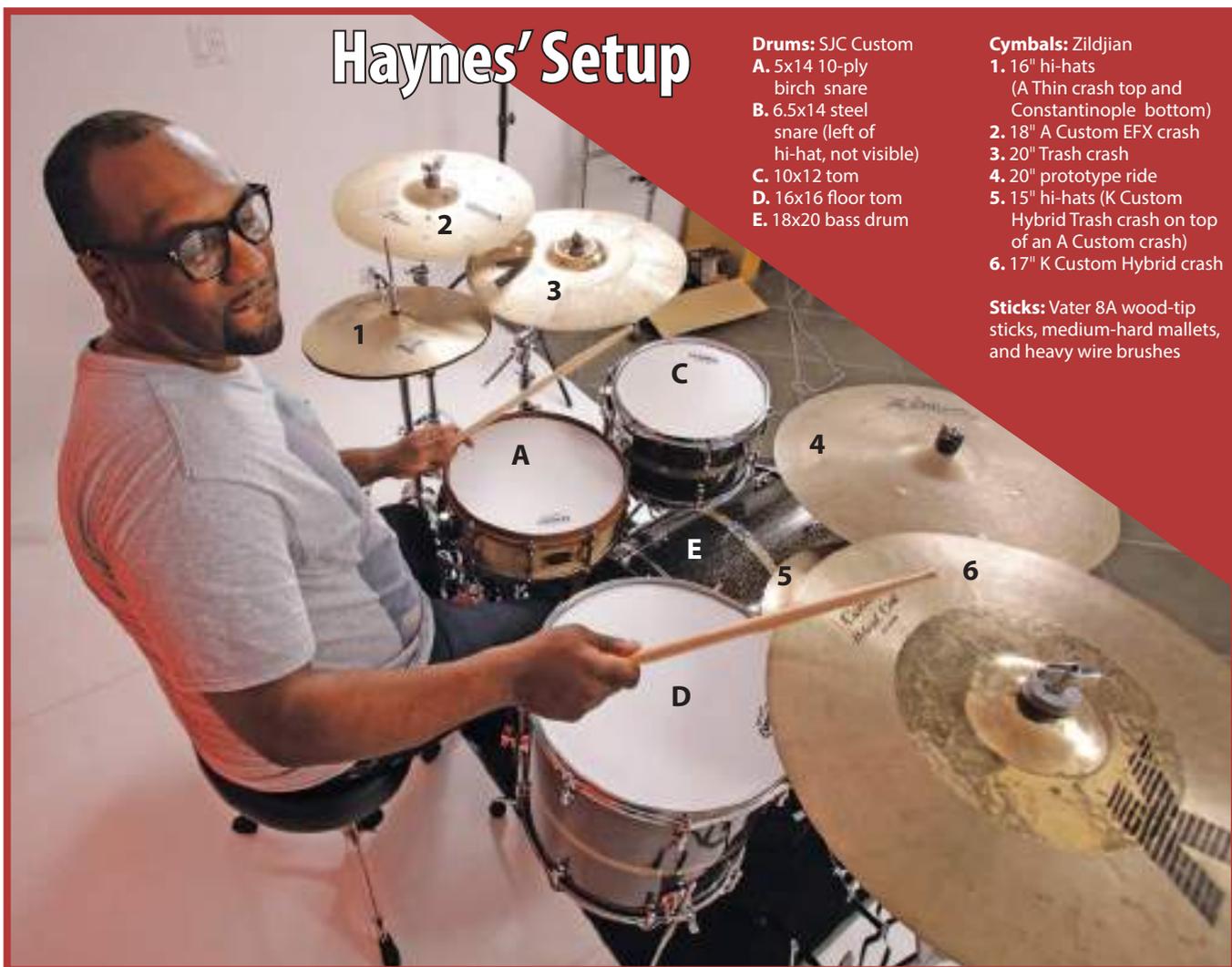
MD: Was working with Meshell Ndegeocello a door to playing with bigger artists?

Charles: Producer Jeff Bhasker is a friend, and he helped a lot. He called me for Kanye. He and Adam Blackstone were the MDs for Kanye. Queen Latifah came from Blackstone; I played on her new record, which will be released next year.

MD: Did Queen Latifah request specifics?

Charles: We turned on the click and she said “Play.” We developed a song as she was singing. A vibe would happen. Then she would pick a part she liked and piece it

Haynes' Setup



Drums: SJC Custom

- A. 5x14 10-ply birch snare
- B. 6.5x14 steel snare (left of hi-hat, not visible)
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 16" hi-hats (A Thin crash top and Constantinople bottom)
- 2. 18" A Custom EFX crash
- 3. 20" Trash crash
- 4. 20" prototype ride
- 5. 15" hi-hats (K Custom Hybrid Trash crash on top of an A Custom crash)
- 6. 17" K Custom Hybrid crash

Sticks: Vater 8A wood-tip sticks, medium-hard mallets, and heavy wire brushes



together on the spot. Pure improvising in the studio. I'm going to tour with her soon, and I have a coproduction credit on her album. I played on the soundtrack to her movie *Bessie*.

MD: When did you work in Meshell's band?

Charles: For three years between 2005 and 2008. I'm still in her band. Deantoni Parks also does the gig. I left Meshell for Kanye's gig, but I still play with her and do production on her records. Working with her led to Jason Moran. She told him, "If you want a hybrid drummer who can play hip-hop and jazz and Afrobeat, call Charles."

MD: When producing artists, as you did on Marcus Strickland's *Nihil Novi*, are you drumming and programming?

Charles: Yes. Marcus's album is 95 percent natural drums. I play the deeper left snare as part of my setup there. That's my secret weapon. Everybody tries to steal that SJC snare drum from me! I spent a lot of time getting that drum to sound like a snare from an old-school hip-hop, boom-bap record. I tune it down, find the sweet spot. I finally put a new head on it.

MD: Are there any similarities between working with Kanye West, Meshell Ndegeocello, Queen Latifah, and Lady Gaga?

Charles: Kanye and Latifah are both MCs, so they want the drums to feel like the records. With Gaga, she cared for the music, though not as much as she does now. We would rehearse, then she'd be off to dance rehearsal or something else. Some artists will trust you, some won't. If an artist has

the right manager, they will insist the artist spend time with the band. We rehearsed for three weeks with Gaga, twelve hours a day. With Kanye I learned the show on the plane to L.A., landed, and we rehearsed until 2 A.M. The next day we rehearsed all day, left for China, and toured for two years.

MD: On "Celestlude," from Strickland's *Nihil Novi*, you play very linear patterns that recall David Garibaldi or Dennis Chambers. Did both drummers influence you?

Charles: I am so happy that somebody actually noticed that I'm playing some straight-up David Garibaldi! I had his *Future Sounds* book in high school, and I sight-read and shedded out of that book. I'm a huge Garibaldi fan. That's "Oakland Stroke" all day! I'm doing David Garibaldi with a little J Dilla on it. A lot of people don't give it up for Garibaldi. If it wasn't for David Garibaldi, a lot of drummers today wouldn't be playing what they're playing.

MD: And you're also a fan of Jack DeJohnette?

Charles: DeJohnette, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Elvin Jones, and Philly Joe Jones were my guys in high school. They were all I listened to then.

MD: When you're soloing, are you thinking of the form of the tune, or is your approach looser than that?

Charles: It really depends on what I'm playing and who I'm playing it for. If there is a form, then yes, I play the form, but if not then I'm in my own little world. People ask what I'm thinking when I solo, and for me it's like crashing buildings and butterflies. That's my thing.

MD: In a Zildjian online interview you talk about playing the rudiments backwards.

Charles: I had an instructor who asked me to play in reverse. In college I would challenge myself to be different. When the Beastie Boys' *Paul's Boutique* came out, I wanted my drums to sound like that. I didn't know the drums on that record were programmed. But I wanted to challenge myself. I didn't want to sound like anyone else. I realized that all the drummers I respected had their own sound: Garibaldi, Dennis Chambers, Jack DeJohnette—all those guys playing the same four-bar pattern would sound entirely different. I wanted to be that guy.

MD: Did you play rudiments backwards as a routine?

Charles: Some rudiments I would play in reverse; a lot I couldn't play in reverse. It was a challenge to see how far I could push myself beyond my ready-set-go chops. But I never worried about patterns or licks—I worried about being consistent.

MD: What else did you focus on when you attended Berklee College of Music?

Charles: Again, being consistent. Can I play eight bars exactly the same way? Can I sound like an MPC? If I need to loosen it up, can I do that? I shedded playing everything evenly. I learned the entire *E.S.P.* record by Miles Davis, then Missy Elliott's second-to-last record with Timbaland, *This Is Not a Test!*

MD: Did you study staples like Morris Goldenberg's *Modern School for Snare Drum*, Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, and George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* at Berklee?

Charles: Definitely. John Ramsay was my instructor. At the time I couldn't afford a set to practice on. My first year at Berklee, I was the best air drummer you ever saw! There were no drums at Berklee in 1995. Later they had practice sets.

MD: What did you practice to become so exceptionally fluid around the kit?

Charles: Playing at all dynamic levels. Drummers are often told we're playing too loud. It springs from that. Can I play super-intense, on the edge, but not blast the musicians out of the room?

MD: Can you give some tips on developing facility around the kit?

Charles: Back to the world of rudiments! I'm bobbing and weaving like Muhammad Ali! Being dynamic gives the music shape.

MD: You have deeper jazz roots than most guys we see on a major pop or hip-hop gig.

Charles: I've learned that when you're playing in an arena, all the crazy notes are not going to mean a damned thing. Genesis playing live with Chester Thompson? He's not playing super chops. You need the drums to project to 20,000 people. Simplicity projects. People can feel it and hear it more than a bunch of ghost notes.

MD: How did you develop your speed, as on the BigYuki gig?

Charles: I practice differently now than I did in college. I practice on the drum pad with marching-band sticks. I play rudiments, top to bottom. I don't try to play them fast; I try to play them with consistency and at a medium tempo. It springs from that.

MD: What was your breakthrough gig?

Charles: Arturo Sandoval, when I was in high school. He played in our high school band as guest trumpeter, and afterwards he wanted me to tour. My mom said no, but I did some dates with him and my mother came with me. I was so happy to play drums; I didn't really self-promote.

After Arturo I went to Berklee, and those were my heavy woodshed years. Then I played in the New Life Jazz Orchestra; the leader and Jason Moran knew each other from school. That's how I got that gig. Meshell's gig came from working with the bass player, Mark Kelly. He



called me for that in 2006.

MD: How do you typically negotiate your fee on tour?

Charles: I look at it like the stock market. I just did a gig with Smokey Robinson at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. After that my stock went up! You have to be smart. If it's a first-time pop artist, not jazz, which is totally different, play it by ear. They should know your worth and try to reach a decent number with you. If I'm with a new artist, I will do it for \$3,000 or \$4,000 a week. They might want to pay you \$2,000 a week,

so that's when you negotiate something on the back end. That's where my production [business] kicks in. I ask for time in the studio with the artist to write. It's a give-and-take.

MD: How do you produce an artist?

Charles: I write beats but also cover melodies and arrangements. Sonically I have a good ear. I produced Christa Gniadek, a country singer-songwriter, for her record *Leaving Boston*.

MD: Are you using any electronics in your kit?

Charles: I played with triggers with BigYuki, Marcus Strickland, and Jason Moran. I'm infusing the pop world into the jazz world. I have triggers on the snare and kick and the pads. I have a Roland SPD-SX and my laptop running Logic Pro's MainStage 3 program. It lets me access different software.

MD: Is the competition for the major hip-hop and R&B gigs intense?

Charles: There's room at the top, but it's very thin up there. Last year I was with Ed Sheeran. You have someone like Brian Frasier-Moore—he's on top of the pop world; he did two years with Madonna. He's undeniable. There's only a few guys who can play the giant gigs, and it's about more than the drumming. Are you cool enough to hang out with after the gig? That's a huge thing, man. I learned that with Patti LaBelle. Are you reliable? I'm super-reliable. If it's about reading charts, I can do it. I can play big band, Motown, and read charts. Whatever you're doing, it has to be undeniable. That is my motto when producing artists now: No matter what the style is, it has to be undeniable.



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Steven Wolf

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Story by Billy Amendola • Photos by Paul La Raia

Steven Wolf—simply Wolf to many of his friends and associates—has played on countless hit records, including three of the biggest chart-toppers of the past decade: “I Kissed a Girl” by Katy Perry, “Girlfriend” by Avril Lavigne, and “Wrecking Ball” by Miley Cyrus. In recent years he’s largely made his contributions behind the scenes, but over the course of his twenty-five-plus-year career, the Berklee-trained drummer has made a huge impact on the musical landscape, playing, programming, producing, and writing for a wide range of acts, from the pop and soul singers Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, Joss Stone, and Britney Spears to the jazz and fusion artists Screaming Headless Torsos, Tribal Tech, Larry Coryell, Lenny Pickett, Patti Austin, Alex Bugnon, and Grover Washington Jr. “I loved playing with Grover,” says Wolf, who worked with Washington until the saxophonist’s passing in 1999. “I learned a lot from him. We stretched out, and there were drum solos, but that gig was *always* about the groove.”

It’s no surprise that Wolf embraced Washington’s rhythmic side so fully; according to his mother, Steven was already drumming when still in her womb. (“She told me that when she was pregnant with me, whenever music was playing I’d start kicking repetitively.”) Growing up, music was always in the air at home—on the radio, on the stereo, and during jam sessions led by Wolf’s father, who played piano and trumpet. It was the perfect environment for a budding musician. These days Wolf is still kicking—often, and with great success. In this, his first *Modern Drummer* feature, he shares his honest assessment of the difficult new reality of studio drumming but offers plenty of tips and encouragement for those who believe they have what it takes to break in.



MD: What’s a typical day in the studio for you today?

Steven: It’s always different. It all depends on who I’m working with, the type of material, and what they need from me. Most producers I work with know I play drums and program, and they have me do both. But there are producers who only use me as a drummer and other producers who only use me as a programmer. Usually—and more and more—it’s a pretty even mixture; people are hiring me to drum and program on the same tracks.

I do a lot of programming work from home. On Beyoncé’s 2014 self-titled album, I did numerous sessions. I think she recorded at least thirty songs and then narrowed it down to whatever ended up on the album. On some songs they gave me minimal direction and let me go wild, while on others they had very specific grooves in mind. I mostly played live drums on those sessions, but I ended up doing a little programming on one of the tracks.

The only consistent aspect of all the sessions I do is the approach to the sounds. On pop records especially, the drum sounds are just as integral to the recording as the drum parts. Recording is a very different headspace. You’re under the microscope. You’re taking part in the creation of a piece of art for mass consumption. Granted, many people wouldn’t necessarily consider a Britney Spears record a work of art, but it very much is.

MD: How did you get into session work in the first place?

Steven: I was always interested in recording, and when I was a kid I’d do makeshift multitrack recording at home with two boom boxes, bouncing tracks back and forth. My first recording sessions in real studios were when I was in high school, with friends. That was the first time I ever played with a click. When I was at Berklee I did more sessions at school and around Boston.

Sessions didn’t start to become a priority for me until the mid-’90s. The first hit record I played on was on Celine Dion’s album *Falling Into You*. I basically got the call because Steve Ferrone wasn’t in town. I was on the road with Annie Lennox at the time, but I was off that week and happened to be home. Anyway, there were charts, and it was a full band but no singer. I didn’t even know who the artist was. Then the album came out and it went multiplatinum and won two Grammys, including Album of the Year. I’d played on a platinum record prior to that, with the Bee Gees. But the Celine Dion album



was massive [it eventually achieved diamond status for selling more than 10 million domestic copies], and it really put me on the map as an “official” session drummer.

MD: Let’s go back to the beginning. You’ve said that you were immediately drawn to the drums.

Steven: When I was five my parents wanted me to take piano lessons, and I did, but my heart wasn’t in it. So they finally agreed to get me drum lessons at a local music store. They got me a practice pad and said that if I stuck with it, they’d eventually get me a real kit. Eventually I began taking lessons with Elaine Hoffman-Watts, who’s a highly respected teacher in the Philly area. I still have my copy of Jim Chapin’s book *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer* with her notes in it. She’s still teaching today. One of her first students was Gerry Brown, and I remember her telling me about him. Knowing that one of her students was a successful pro drummer was very inspiring to me. Gerry was one of my first drum heroes.

Toward the end of high school I began taking lessons with Carl Mottola, the house drummer in popular Atlantic City casinos. Any major act that came through A.C. hired Carl. He subbed on the road with Elvis and Sinatra. Carl was a really great guy and a monster drummer. Sadly, he passed a few years ago.

MD: Who were some of your earliest drumming influences?

Steven: My earliest favorite records were my father’s—the Beatles’ *Abbey Road* and *Meet the Beatles*, the Jackson 5’s *Third Album*. Those

are the records I remember holding in my hands. I picked up a lot of Ringo’s drumming subconsciously, just from listening to so much Beatles. But I never really focused on him back then; my appreciation for his drumming genius would come later. Ringo is the most important influence on me in terms of being a session musician on pop records. He wrote the book on creating simple but effective drum parts that completely support and uplift the song. John Bonham also had a huge influence on me later, as did Phil Collins—Phil is so underrated as a drummer. I didn’t realize just how important he was until I started making records for a living.

MD: Who was your first “Wow!” drummer?

Steven: The first drummer I got into strictly as a drummer was Keith Moon. When I was about ten I became a Who fanatic. The next drummer who caught my attention was Steve Jordan. I didn’t know his name at the time; my dad took me to see him play live with the Blues Brothers. It felt so good, and it had a feel I hadn’t really heard before. Then a friend of mine, Andy Kravitz [now an L.A. session

drummer and producer], turned me on to Steve Gadd. Around that time I also saw my first drum clinic, with Simon Phillips. I’d never heard a drummer play that way. I wanted to know about Simon’s influences, so I checked out Billy Cobham, and when I heard Billy, *that was it*.

Then I started appreciating all the top session guys, listening to the records they played on. Bernard Purdie is one of my all-time favorite drummers. The guy’s feel is untouchable. I also love Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, Al Jackson Jr., Benny Benjamin, Roger Hawkins, Greg Errico, Carlton Barrett, and Zigaboo Modeliste. I listened to all the jazz legends coming up as well, and I focused on all the chops guys. But now I really prefer listening to guys like Jimmy Cobb and Art Blakey. My jazz playing got way better when I stopped trying to emulate my heroes and just focused on grooving.

MD: Did you play along to records when you were coming up?

Steven: Yes, I’d get a Billy Cobham or Tony Williams record and put my hand on the vinyl to slow it down, and then learn the parts. I also began attending local drum clinics whenever possible.

MD: What was your practice routine besides listening to records and playing along?

Steven: If I wanted to fine-tune something, I’d isolate it. To get my double kick chops up, for instance, I’d put a metronome on and just play rudiments with my feet. To work on my hands I’d do a lot of pad work, sometimes focusing on particular exercises. After seeing Billy Cobham in person for the first time, I spent a lot of time working on finger control. Two books that really helped were *Stick Control* and especially *Accents and Rebounds* [both by George Lawrence Stone]—the conditioning my hands got from that book made it easier for me to play all kinds of subtle ghost notes.

MD: Did you play in local bands?

Steven: Yes, I did that throughout high school, until I left for Berklee, where I studied with Tommy Campbell, Skip Hadden, Joe Hunt, and Ed Uribe, who recently passed. I was very honored, by the way, to write the tribute to Ed in *Modern Drummer’s* May 2016 issue.

MD: How did you get involved in

RECORDINGS

Beyoncé Beyoncé /// **Pink** The Truth About Love, I’m Not Dead /// **Sugababes** Change /// **Kelly Clarkson** Stronger /// **Katy Perry** One of the Boys, Prism /// **Avril Lavigne** The Best Damn Thing /// **Natalie Imbruglia** Male /// **Annie Lennox** Medusa...Live in Central Park /// **Cher** It’s a Man’s World /// **Celine Dion** Falling Into You, These Are Special Times /// **Leona Lewis** Spirit /// **Bee Gees** Still Waters /// **Daniel Merriweather** Love & War /// **Rufus Wainwright** Want One, Want Two /// **Jennifer Hudson** I Remember Me /// **Daryl Hall** Can’t Stop Dreaming /// **The Veronicas** The Secret Life Of... /// **Will Young** Keep On /// **Hiram Bullock** Way Kool, Too Funky 2 Ignore /// **Oz Noy** Who Gives a Funk /// **Stevie Salas** Colorcode Be What It Is /// **Grover Washington Jr.** Soulful Strut, Grover Live, Breath of Heaven /// **Holly Cole** Holly Cole /// **Toninho Horta** Foot on the Road /// **Bo Bice** The Real Thing



Drums: vintage Ludwig

- A. 5x14 Acrolite snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x22 bass drum

Alternate sizes not in photo:

- 6.5x14 Acrolite snare, 8x12 tom, 14x20 and 14x24 bass drums

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 16" K Constantinople hi-hats (crash top, Suspended bottom)
- 2. 20" K Constantinople extra-thin crash (prototype)
- 3. 22" K Constantinople Overhammered Thin ride
- 4. 20" K Constantinople extra-thin crash with three rivets (prototype)

Heads: Evans G1 Coated snare and tom batters, EQ4 Coated bass drum batter and EQ3 Coated front head

Hardware: Gibraltar single bass drum pedal, hi-hat stand, throne, snare stands, and cymbal stands

Percussion: Rhythm Tech tambourine, Eggz, and Studio shakers

Sticks: Promark (various models)

Accessories: Humes & Berg cases, Sennheiser headphones, Mytek Private Q headphone mixer

programming?

Steven: I was born during what I consider the golden age of music, the late '60s. My adolescence coincided with the birth of hip-hop, and the sound of drum machines—and soon after, samplers—resonated with me. I wanted to be able to create those sounds and grooves in addition to playing acoustic drums. The first time I heard "Sucker M.C.'s" by Run D.M.C. and "P.S.K." by Schoolly D, I was hypnotized by the programmed drums. The first time I heard "I Know You Got Soul" by Eric B. & Rakim, I was hypnotized by the whole production, which was a combination of programmed drums and samples. The first time I heard "777-9311" by the Time, it was like hearing a different language. I thought the band's drummer, Jellybean Johnson, was playing what I was hearing, so I took it upon myself to transcribe the groove and play it on the kit. Then I realized it was a LinnDrum machine. On a side note, years later I met Jellybean and [Time leader] Morris Day, and they told me that David Garibaldi had done the programming on that beat!

So after that, when I was still in high school, I bought my first drum machine; it was a Yamaha RX-something—basically a poor man's Linn. My next drum machine was a Roland R-8, and I got every sound card they made for it. Then I got an Akai MPC60 from Hiram Bullock, and then I bought my first of three MPC3000s, and that was my programming workhorse for years. I had three because I was so busy that I needed one at my home studio, one to take to sessions at other studios, and one as a backup, because I usually had one in the repair shop.

I've always been into electronics. In high school I saved up and bought the first self-contained Simmons pad, the SDS1—it could only play one sound, so I loaded mine with the "Prince sound," which was a detuned

LinnDrum side-stick.

Later, when I was still at Berklee, I got my first name touring gig with Hiram Bullock, who was signed with Atlantic Jazz at the time. I got an advance on my pay and I bought a drumKAT, a sampler, some Daz pads, and shell-mount triggers, so my live setup was a full acoustic kit plus the sampler, a drum machine, and multiple pads, plus triggers on my kick and snare drums. This was in the late '80s.

MD: You've gone from being a touring and recording drummer on instrumental albums to playing on the biggest pop records of the day. What words of wisdom do you have for drummers who want to follow in your footsteps?

Steven: My advice is to practice and listen to *everything*. Play with people as good as or better than you, and spend time with drummer friends and shed together. Also, take care of your body. If you want to play your whole life, the better care you take of your body, the longer you'll be able to play. Pain can be an indication that your technique is off, so make sure your technique is okay, and if you're not sure, find a good teacher. Also, make sure that you're setting your kit up so that it's ergonomically practical for you. Take care of your overall health—not only your body, but your psychological health too. The life of a professional musician is full of ups and downs, and many well-known musicians have suffered from depression, anxiety, and more.

If you're interested in making a career out of session drumming, go into it with the understanding that the era of the studio musician is effectively over. That doesn't necessarily mean that you can't get work. It just means there's much less of it to go around. So you have to be exceptional, and you have to have the appropriate skill set for the times. I was lucky to catch the tail end of

the era of the studio musician, but I basically watched the entire recording industry change around me.

And remember that your primary role is to groove. Having a great pocket will *never* go out of style. If you have a great feel and you're musical, people will always love working with you. Chops are impressive, but a deep groove will give people an emotional reaction, and that's what will leave a bigger impression, especially when it comes to getting work.

I'd also recommend to anyone wanting to do session work that they should not only know how to program but also have some grasp of modern record production. Pro Tools is the industry standard, so you should know your way around it.

Know your sounds and feels from every era, and stay current. If you want to work on records in the pop world, then be prepared for producers and artists to reference certain things, from a particular snare sound to a specific fill or groove. One of the reasons I get work is because I know my sounds and I know how to achieve them. It really helps if you have a working knowledge of engineering as well, so that you can communicate with the engineer.

Back in the day I'd sit in every situation possible. I would take any and all gigs that came my way. The more people who are aware of you and dig what you do, the more work it'll lead to. Word of mouth is everything in this business. Social media didn't exist back in the day. Now there are multiple ways to make people aware of you, so definitely have some sort of Web presence.

And finally, be reliable, and be someone who people like working *and* hanging with. If you're difficult, eventually no one will want to hire you, no matter how great you are.



Great '80s Drum Performances

Part 1: New-Wavers and Classic Rockers

by Adam Budofsky

The era known as the '80s, roughly the period between the dawn of punk and rap in the late '70s and the rise of indie rock and hair metal in the middle of the next decade, was a time of great change in pop culture. Like the fashion of the day, the songs—and, by extension, the drumming on them—were largely about big, bold statements that were fun and memorable, and perhaps most important, sounded *new*.

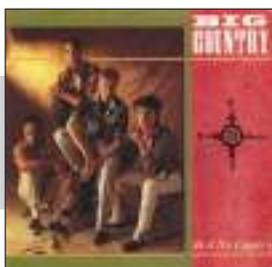
Though the '80s are still sometimes maligned as a time when music retreated creatively, the following tracks, and those in subsequent parts of this feature series, tell a different story. Many of the cuts we examine this month were hugely successful radio hits in their day, and nearly all of them are the work of top-level drummers successfully expanding upon, and in some cases brilliantly simplifying, the strides of

their '50s, '60s, and '70s predecessors. While future chapters will highlight tracks from R&B, jazz, metal, and other genres, here we focus on artists associated with the oft-misunderstood category dubbed new wave, as well as several already established acts that, in their own unique ways, successfully appropriated some of that style's artistic principles.

Big Country

"In a Big Country"

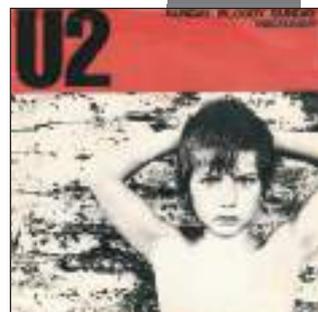
"Big Country's music was very Celtic and anthemic," **Mark Brzezicki** once said in a *Modern Drummer* interview, "and it stirred me to approach it in a slightly military way." Indeed, this leadoff track (and single) from the Scottish quartet's 1983 debut album, *The Crossing*, charges out of the gate with six measures of the drummer's unaccompanied beat, which goes far to set the tone, not only for the song but for the band's whole aesthetic. "My rudimentary playing might be quite bad if you judge it according to formal pipe band standards," Brzezicki explained, "but I adopted that kind of feel while incorporating some funk patterns on the bass drum. I had this idea for 'In a Big Country' to use a 'Let's Dance'-type bass drum pattern with a constant five-stroke roll happening on the snare, and getting the hi-hat in as well to produce a dance feel. Producer Steve Lillywhite was very open-minded; if it was different, he wanted it on a record. It was stirring and passionate to match Big Country's songs; it helped to give the band an identity."



U2

"Sunday Bloody Sunday"

Also in 1983, **Larry Mullen Jr.** had perhaps an even more explicit reason to take a "military" approach to this number-seven single from the Irish group U2's third album, *War*. The song, inspired by the decades-long conflict in Northern Ireland known as "the Troubles," also begins with a solo drumbeat, one of the most identifiable in rock history and a favorite among drummers. In the August 1985 issue of *MD*, U2 lead singer Bono said that Mullen's playing early on was "florid," in the mold of Keith Moon, but that he "devolved" in a sense, learning that less can mean more. "Sunday Bloody Sunday" is as good an example of that concept as any.



Blondie

“Dreaming”

And then there's this track, from the New York/New Jersey band Blondie, featuring the unabashed Keith Moon fanatic **Clem Burke**. Like many of Blondie's biggest hits, the lead single from the group's fourth album, *Eat to the Beat*, smartly updates elements of '60s music, in this case Brill Building girl-group pop and swinging-London-style blazers like “I Can See for Miles” and “Leaving Here.” Effectively a three-minute tribute to the nearly nonstop style that Moon was famous for, particularly in concert, “Dreaming” finds Burke spattering fills pretty much throughout the entire tune, except, somewhat perversely, during the fade-out, where drummers are often tossed a bone and “allowed” to do their thing. “Honestly, even I was surprised that one got through like that,” Burke told *MD* in June of '99. “But we were on a roll then, so producer Mike Chapman kind of gave us free rein on *Eat to the Beat*. So we were like, ‘Let's go for it!’”

Burke



Elvis Costello and the Attractions

“Lipstick Vogue”

“When I was young,” **Pete Thomas** told *Modern Drummer* in December of 1995, “I used to hitchhike out to Mitch Mitchell's house. He was my hero, and he lived in this house not too far from where I grew up. I used to stand by the gate, and eventually I got asked in and he showed me around. It was the greatest thing.” It's not hard to hear a little of the Jimi Hendrix Experience's legendary drummer in this track from Elvis Costello's second album, *This Year's Model*, which was the first to feature his long-running group the Attractions. Thomas fiercely attacks the snare and toms throughout the recording, providing an urgency that defined much of the post-punk music that flooded the American market in the wake of revolutionary bands like the Clash and the Sex Pistols.

the Knack

“My Sharona”

Speaking of urgency... This classic from L.A.'s the Knack is practically bursting at the seams with teenage angst, and the late, great drummer **Bruce Gary** communicates that vibe with an avalanche of full-set fusillades. Like many of the songs on this list, “My Sharona”—an iconic new-wave track if ever there was one—begins with the drums pounding out the main riff's rhythmic base sans accompaniment. Unlike most of the tracks in this roundup, however, “My Sharona,” from the group's debut 1979 album, *Get the Knack*, features an extended guitar solo. No navel-gazing '60s exercise here, though; the section is a steadily building, hugely exciting trip that Gary swings into bad health, double-timing it near the end and sending listeners into aural ecstasy. The Knack would never reach these heights again, artistically or commercially, but we should be wholly satisfied that the band gifted us with this much sheer energy—and provided such a timeless platform for Gary's talents.

Gary



the Pretenders

“Tattooed Love Boys”

The original lineup of American expat Chrissie Hynde's Pretenders was an endlessly adaptable ensemble. British drummer **Martin Chambers** slugs it out ferociously on the band's self-titled 1980 debut, even on tricky tracks like this one, which features alternating bars of seven and eight. New wave rarely sounds more adventurous or incendiary than it does here.

Adam and the Ants

“Antmusic”

Under the tutelage of Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren, the British new-wave band Adam and the Ants presented a highly stylized sound and appearance, a mix of punky guitars, chanted choruses, and faux-African rhythms. McLaren soon nicked the entire band—and its unusual sound—and began a new outfit, Bow Wow Wow. But lead singer Adam Ant simply hired new players, including dual drummers **Chris Hughes** (aka Merrick) and **Terry Lee Miall**. The pair's Burundi-inspired beats—all rimclicks and pounding floor toms—still sound fresh today, as evidenced by this popular track from 1980's *Kings of the Wild Frontier* album, which was reissued this year as a deluxe double CD package.



Hughes



Miall

the Icicle Works

“Birds Fly (Whisper to a Scream)”

You can still hear this track often on '80s-style radio, and for a number of good reasons. Not least is **Chris Sharrock's** gloriously pounding rhythm track, featuring timbale and backwards-sounding snare overdubs, gargantuan snare accents, and a continuous bed of tom singles and doubles. Like so many new-wave groups, Icicle Works hit the U.S. charts in a major way only once, but if you have to strike gold a single time, this is a noble way to do it. Sharrock went on to join several other notable acts, including the La's, World Party, Del Amitri, Robbie Williams, and Oasis.

the Cure

“Just Like Heaven”

When **Boris Williams** joined the legendary British band the Cure in time to record 1985's breakout album *The Head on the Door*, he brought a higher level of sophistication to the band's drum chair. By the time of '87's double album *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me*, he was fully integrated into the group's idiosyncratic style. The hit single “Just Like Heaven” features many of Williams' charms, including his stylish and integrated use of China cymbals, solid time sense, and fondness for a nimble floor-tom-to-crash-on-the-2 maneuver.



Simple Minds

“Don't You (Forget About Me)”



Gaynor

Another '80s band that can claim one gargantuan U.S. hit, Scotland's Simple Minds has in fact enjoyed a fruitful career of nearly forty years. Longtime drummer **Mel Gaynor** has left the group a couple times during its long run, but he's consistently manned the throne for the past fifteen-odd years now. He's also the drummer whose stomping beat and tasty fills largely define this track from the soundtrack of 1985's famous coming-of-age film *The Breakfast Club*. Gaynor can rightfully lay claim to one of the great air-drumming moments in pop history, the nimble snare-centric fill at the end of the tune's quiet breakdown section. Listen carefully for the subtle double crash at its conclusion—classy stuff.

Devo

“(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction”

Chances are, no one's ever described Devo as classy, but that doesn't mean the group from Akron, Ohio, didn't possess copious charms of its own. Before they crashed unexpectedly into Middle America's living rooms with the truly strange MTV video for 1980's synth-heavy megahit “Whip It,” drummer **Alan Myers** and crew were a more guitar-oriented punk band—if an extremely odd one with a singularly well-thought-out worldview that provided the basis for their lyrics, visuals, and sound. This take on the famous Rolling Stones hit, from 1978's *Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!*, is one of the great pop covers of all time, and a significant reason is Myers' choppy factory-floor drumbeat, which completely reimagines Charlie Watts' original groove to immensely fun effect.

Missing Persons

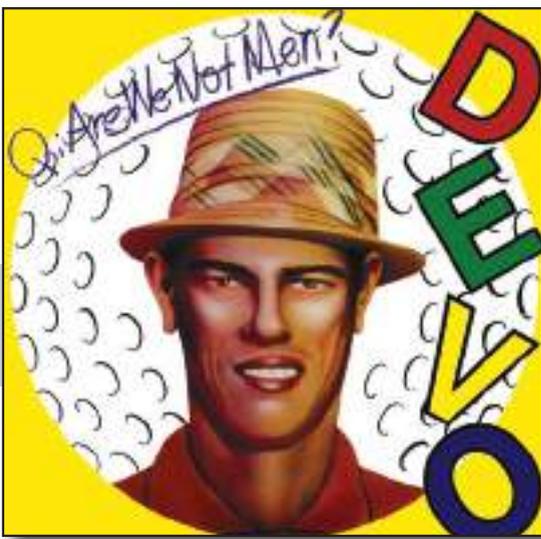
“U.S. Drag”

Missing Persons put the *new* in new wave more aggressively than most. Putting aside the band's avant-garde visual appeal, the music these musos concocted was, for a short time at least, utterly fresh,



Bozzio

matching singsong melodies, squeaky girl-group exclamations, and rhythmic sophistication far beyond your average pop band's. **Terry Bozzio**, a veteran of Frank Zappa and the Brecker Brothers' bands, as well as the modern-leaning prog supergroup U.K., was able to filter all his interests through MP's aesthetic, and this track is a classic example of how he applied his adventurous inclinations. The main 6/4 groove of “U.S. Drag,” from the band's 1982 debut LP, *Spring Session M*, deceives the ear: *Wait, where's the 1? Oh, there it is.* Odd turnarounds in the vocal sections further throw us off balance, but the darned thing still grooves like mad. Search YouTube for Bozzio playing “U.S. Drag” live, and marvel at how fully he throws himself into his performance—and *then* how he takes an over-the-top solo at the outro. Some kind of a drumming bar is raised here, some kind of a border moved.



Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

“Here Comes My Girl”

Hitting the charts in the late '70s just as new-wave bands began to draw attention in the States, Florida native Tom Petty's Heartbreakers melded a soulful vibe to heartland Americana, but with enough of a modern flavor that they still made sense in a scene that welcomed Elvis Costello and the Ramones. Drummer **Stan Lynch** was featured on all of the Heartbreakers' albums through the early '90s, and this track from the group's hit 1979 third release, *Damn the Torpedoes*, benefits greatly from his sensual groove, impeccable time, and song intelligence. Lynch plays it cool throughout but still manages to provide just enough tweaking at the fadeout that without even being aware of it, you look forward to his repeated snare fills and nudging crash cymbal hits every time the song comes on the radio.

New Order

“Age of Consent”

New Order consisted of the surviving members of Joy Division, the Manchester, England, band featuring singer Ian Curtis, who took his own life in 1980 on the eve of the group's first U.S. tour. The new act successfully shed the musical ghosts of Joy Division with its second album, 1983's *Power, Corruption, and Lies*. Much of this progress was aided by the increasing adventurousness of drummer **Stephen Morris**, who began to embrace electronics while continuing to challenge himself with double-handed multi-surface workouts like the one on leadoff track “Age of Consent.” Morris's hypnotic yet surprisingly nuanced beats can be great fun to play at the kit, and “Age of Consent,” with its brisk pace, alternating left- and right-hand snare hits, and pounding four-on-the-floor bass drum, is one of his best.

the Police

“Message in a Bottle”

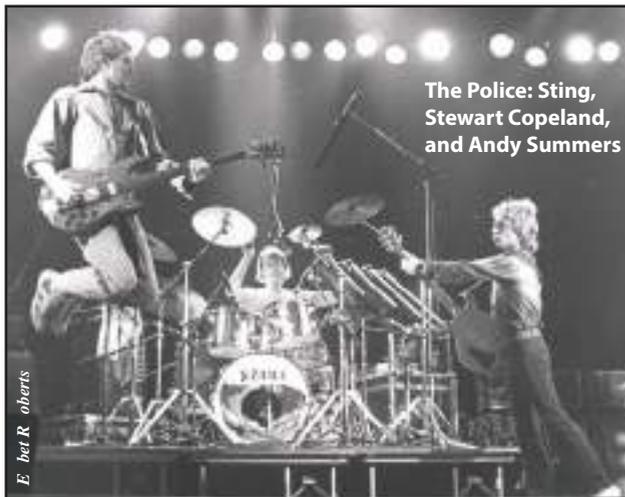
Ask drummers to tell you the first name they think of when you say “the '80s,” and it's a good bet **Stewart Copeland** will be the answer. The Police became one of the decade's most iconic bands by blending post-punk attitude with third-world rhythms—a subject that Copeland, the son of an American CIA officer and a Scottish archaeologist, was familiar with due to his having grown up in the Middle East. “Message in a Bottle,” the opening track on the

Billy Joel

“It's Still Rock and Roll to Me”



Another long-serving drummer to a '70s-into-'80s megastar, **Liberty DeVitto** came to prominence on elaborate Billy Joel tracks like “Captain Jack,” “Prelude/Angry Young Man,” and “Scenes From an Italian Restaurant.” Joel only got bigger in the '80s, adapting to the world of short haircuts and three-minute pop nuggets with a seemingly endless string of hits, including this track from 1980's *Glass Houses*. The lyrical sentiment is clear, but Joel has his cake and eats it too, arranging the song in a contemporary way, with DeVitto staying completely away from cymbals in the verses, even down to avoiding the common crash at the end of the super-dry, in-your-face tom fills. When Liberty enters the bridge section with sloshy hi-hat accents on the 2 and 4, it's that much more powerful due to the previous absence of bronze—but he doesn't linger long, pulling the hats right back tight in perfect service of the song's dynamic downshift. He then ends the section with a long, brash 16th-note fill, again avoiding the crash at the end.



The Police: Sting, Stewart Copeland, and Andy Summers

Police's 1979 sophomore album, *Reggatta de Blanc*, features many elements of Copeland's much-lauded style—a skittering and driving rhythm, offbeat snare and tom accents, playful rimclick work, and surprisingly timed fills like the classic one at 3:41 during the outro.

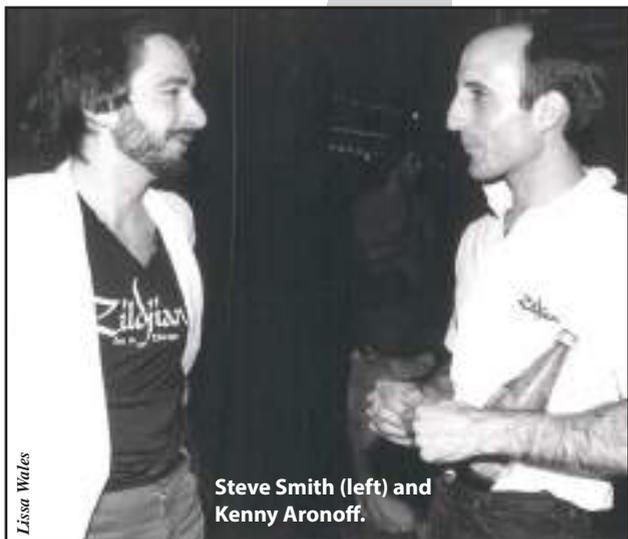
Bruce Springsteen “Born in the U.S.A.”



Yet another '70s icon who fared well in the following decade, Bruce Springsteen ruled the music world in 1984. The often misunderstood title track to his seventh album, *Born in the U.S.A.*, featured the E Street Band's "Mighty" **Max Weinberg** slamming out the kind of anthemic beat and cascading fills that earned him his nickname. As Springsteen moved past the wordplay and involved arrangements of his '70s records, his music became less self-consciously clever and more direct, and Weinberg reacted accordingly, finding inspiration in Bruce's workingman rock.

Journey “Don't Stop Believin'”

“When coming up with drum parts for the tunes we did in Journey,” **Steve Smith** says in part two of his self-titled Alfred instructional video, “I had the luxury of being in at the ground floor as the tunes were being written. I'd try to think of clever ways to make it sound more interesting for me, the song itself, and the listeners. [“Don't Stop Believin'”] is an example of a tune where I got to really put some of my own personality onto the drum part.” Smith did that by weaving the cymbal bell and the toms into the main beat while keeping the hi-hat going with his left hand. The result is a track that delivers the goods all the way to the back of the arena but also allows for a level of sophistication missing from many '80s anthems. The approach has placed the tune among drummers' all-time favorite tracks to cover.



Pete Townshend “Give Blood”

One of the most flexible and consistent drummers to come out of England in the '70s, **Simon Phillips** was an intriguing choice to support the solo work of Pete Townshend, whose long musical relationship with Keith Moon in the Who was perhaps the most explosive and unpredictable in rock history. Townshend's solo albums allowed him the opportunity to try things outside of the Who's comfort zone, though, and this track from 1985's *White City*, featuring Phillips' total control of ghost notes and penchant for elegantly dropping out backbeats at just the right times, is a highlight of the guitarist's post-Who work. “I'm always looking for something a little different to do,” Phillips told *Modern Drummer* in December of 1986. “[The drum part] needed to be something that wasn't too complicated, where the backbeat would cut through but there were other things happening that would chug it along. At clinics I'm always asked about the little notes that you *sort of* hear. I like that sort of playing, as well as keeping a good ‘crack’ going.”

the Power Station “Some Like It Hot”



Featuring soulful British singer Robert Palmer and members of the new-wave hit-makers Duran Duran, the Power Station—named for the famous New York studio where the group's self-titled 1985 debut was recorded—benefitted greatly from the wallop of ex-Chic drummer **Tony Thompson**. “Those rooms at the Power Station are so big and resonant that a 10" mounted tom ends up sounding like a big floor tom,” Thompson told *MD* in his December 1985 cover story. And sure enough, the drummer's explosive beats and tumbling hard-funk fills come on like mini explosions in the mix, making it a hugely powerful and appealing drum performance.

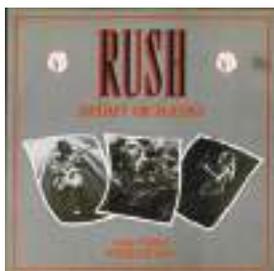
John Cougar “Jack & Diane”

John Cougar Mellencamp achieved his greatest artistic heights on 1985's *Scarecrow*, featuring the impossibly solid thumping of his regular drummer, **Kenny Aronoff**. But Aronoff had earned a permanent place in our hearts a few years earlier, on this hit from 1982's *American Fool*. Another '80s production that achieves a certain power precisely *because* of the exclusion of cymbals (there's a lesson there, kids), “Jack & Diane” is partially famous for Aronoff's classic air-drumming moment at 2:30, a tumbling two-bar fill that, sure, is nothing fancy on the surface of it but is brilliant nonetheless. And maybe that's Aronoff's genius—a highly educated musician, the drummer went on to become one of the most successful freelance musicians of all time by knowing the exact sweet spot where advanced technique and bald-faced hookiness meet.

Rush

“The Spirit of Radio”

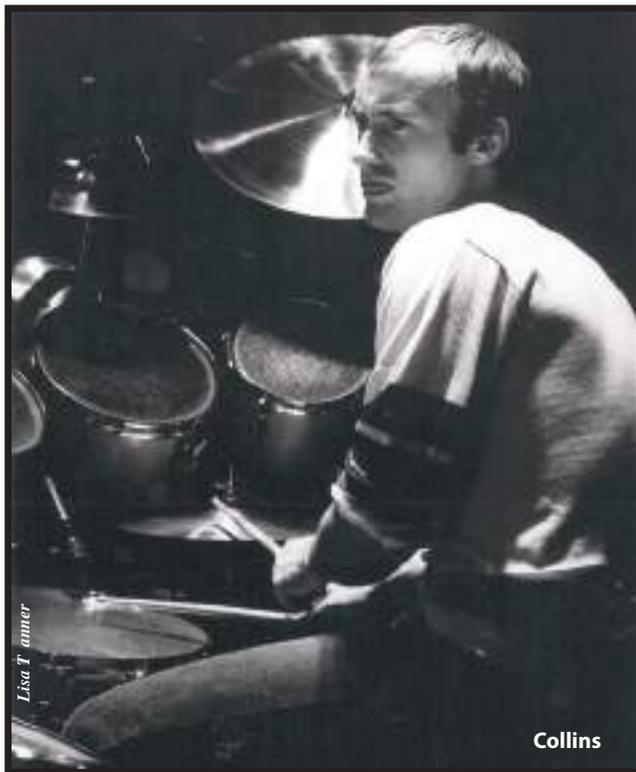
There are other cuts that **Neil Peart**—o-philos inevitably mention when asked for their faves. But it’s tough to overstate the level of appreciation that classic-rock fans have for “The Spirit of Radio,” from Rush’s 1980’s release, *Permanent Waves*. That album finds the progressive Canadian trio dabbling in new-wave flavors, and its opening track, which tore out of FM radios with its opening salvo of roundhouse fills, perfectly balances pop hooks with Rush’s famous sense of adventure. (It even clocks in a second or two under five minutes!) Peart is the expected picture of technical authority, from his pristine ride cymbal pinging to his turn-on-a-dime control during the feel shift at 3:36.



MD readers figure out his beloved drum part, saying that now we’d be able to “rip off” the same beats from John Bonham and Bernard Purdie that he’d borrowed years earlier. But as most of us are painfully aware, knowing *how* to play a famous beat and performing it as well as a legend like Jeff Porcaro are two very different things. But we can try. We can always try.

Phil Collins

“In the Air Tonight”



Van Halen

“Hot for Teacher”



Song intros don’t get much wilder or woolier than this one from the legendary L.A. band Van Halen’s sixth album, *1984* (named, naturally, for the year it was released). The song begins with **Alex Van Halen** pounding out a fairly complex floor tom pattern featuring the ever-popular hairta rudiment, played over shuffling double bass drums. Add some tom hits and then a driving ride cymbal, and you’ve got one of the most classic drum tracks of the ‘80s—or any decade.

Slithering along ominously for nearly four minutes before the drumkit finally kicks in, Genesis drummer/lead singer **Phil Collins’** debut solo single, from 1981’s *Face Value*, is to many ears *the* iconic drum track of the decade. After a slow build featuring a tricky Roland CR-78 drum machine loop and some ominous synths and lead guitar, Collins brings his vocal to a boil and gives way to “the fill.” You know the one. Made up of a three-note grouping between the toms and bass drum, and ending with two thunderous floor tom hits, it breaks the tension with a bang, ushering in a groove of just kick and snare with some spicy ghost notes thrown in. It’s actually only the first of many wicked fills, a succession of variants that blur the downbeats with the hippest kick, tom, and snare combos you’d likely hear on Top 40 radio then or today. And the sound of the drums was almost as shocking as the part itself. The “gated reverb” approach actually originated a year earlier, when Collins and engineer Hugh Padgham were both working on former Genesis singer Peter Gabriel’s third album. Gabriel, who famously eliminated cymbals for the recording, noticed how cool Collins’ drums sounded through the control room talkback mic in Townhouse Studios’ “stone room.” Besides inspiring a million air-drumming moments, “In the Air Tonight” led legions of engineers down a path to re-create the song’s unique sonic properties.

Toto

“Rosanna”

“When I first heard [Toto keyboard player] David Paich play ‘Rosanna,’” **Jeff Porcaro** told *Modern Drummer* in February of 1983, “the Bo Diddley groove was very obvious. Because the tune was a shuffle feel, I felt that the half-time shuffle thing would feel the best. The tune also reminded me of New Orleans-type second-line drumming.” Porcaro went on to share written exercises to help



Thanks to Modern Drummer contributor Ilya Stemkovsky and Howard Massey’s excellent book The Great British Recording Studios on the “In the Air Tonight” entry.





Naven Koperweis

After taking time away from doing the band thing to focus on his solo electronic project, Naven K, the multi-instrumentalist is relishing the struggle of leading a group again.

by Ben Meyer

Naven Koperweis is used to getting a lot done in relatively little time. The multi-instrumentalist has been a respected member of the progressive metal community since he was in his teens, most notably as the drummer with acts like the Faceless, Animosity, and Animals as Leaders. Recently he's been making waves with the quartet Entheos.

Soon after being founded in late 2014, Entheos released the *Primal* EP, landed a deal with Artery Recordings, and toured North America with Veil of Maya, Oceano, Monuments, the Contortionist, and sleepmakeswaves. This past April the band released its debut album, *The Infinite Nothing*, which it supported this past summer on a domestic tour with Intronaut and Moon Tooth.

After focusing on his demanding electroacoustic one-man-band project, Naven K, which produced two EPs and several singles and toured Europe opening for Tesseract and Animals as Leaders, Koperweis was ready to get back to playing some good ol' metal in a band situation. "I'm always going to be striving for some sort of goal," says the thirty-one-year-old West Coast native, whose far-reaching talents behind the board could conceivably enable him to make his mark in the production world. "If there's no struggle, I don't think I'll play drums. I thought that I wanted to [follow a production career path], but the same amount of passion is not there. It took everything I've made and everywhere I went to realize that the thing I'm best at is operating in a band as the

drummer. Whether I like it or not, it is what it is!"

Entheos's rise to self-sustainability has been meteoric, progressing from just an idea among friends to a full-blown band with its own van, trailer, merch, record deal, and packed touring schedule. "It has happened remarkably fast," Koperweis agrees. "We've only been a band since December of 2014. The *Primal* EP came out in March of 2015, and then *The Infinite Nothing* came out this past April 1. So the band formed, there was an EP two months later, and then an album a year later. The whole thing has been moving really quickly. It's territory that we're all familiar with, so it's easy to do what we want to do."

In addition to composing much of Entheos's material, Koperweis produced

and mixed the band's releases—surprisingly, with the exception of the drum tracking. "The sessions for both records were done at the same place," Navene explains. "I don't like to be the engineer on the drum side, so I go to a guy named Zack Ohren, who produces projects at Sharkbite Studios in Oakland, California. It's a beautiful studio.

"For Entheos, I take learning the material very seriously—I learn all of it before I track it. I think a lot of modern recordings are done in a way [where the music is] hodgepoded together. The technology is so advanced that you don't really need to know how to play your songs. You can kind of play with it and program. Our songs are all written and arranged piece by piece through email. But when it comes time to record the drums, I want to make it a realistic representation of what I actually play, not do it all through programming and then try to learn it later."

Koperweis, who's known for being efficient and highly driven in the studio, ripped through his parts for both of Entheos's releases in record time. "For the drum tracking for *Primal*," he says, "I just booked one day in the studio. For *The Infinite Nothing* I booked three days but did it all in two. I just think where my head is going now, with modern metal being so sterile—with everything being quantized and sound-replaced and all that—I just want to get back to live performance more and more. That's pretty much what I dedicate all my practicing to. I brought my practice-pad kit on tour, and I practice all the time. My main goal is to get back to live takes, or as close to them as we can do. All of the drum tones on the *Primal* EP are acoustic except for the kick drum, which is a blend of acoustic and trigger. Then it's edited to be exactly on time. I'm personally getting tired of the 'perfect' sound. It's almost come full circle."

Carrying over from his time working on Navene K, Koperweis has laced both of Entheos's releases with rich, highly detailed electronic elements that help to create something different from other technical and progressive metal acts. Featured both in song intros and within the dense textures of the material on *The Infinite Nothing*, Koperweis's electronic ideas go well beyond offering mere bleeps and blips with a beat

Tools of the Trade

Koperweis plays Tama drums and Meinl cymbals and uses Promark sticks, Evans heads, 2box electronics, and Gator cases.

behind them. "There are fewer electronic beats on *The Infinite Nothing*," Navene says. "I was trying to use more noise and create scarier interludes. I did a few electronic intro things that were more similar to what's on *Primal*, but I'm leery of repeating myself, so I always try to think of new things to do. There are two intros on *The Infinite Nothing* that I spent more time on, and there's more synth work within the songs than there was on *Primal*."

When *MD* spoke with Koperweis, who was touring with a stripped-down four-piece kit, only a few cymbals, and a modest track-playback rig, he said that his attitude regarding triggering his kick live was on the verge of change. "I'm tired of dealing with it," he explains. "I think I like playing without it more. It's more fun—but you have to write material that accommodates playing without it. I can't say, 'I'm not going to use triggers anymore,' and then try to do 16th notes at 220. You have to write different parts."

Koperweis employs a 2box DrumIt Five sound module triggered from his 18" acoustic bass drum, and uses a sample from Superior Drummer (Toontrack) for his live kick sound. "It's multi-sampled," he says, "which is cool. The 2box allows you to put as many samples as you want in there, and it cycles through them all. It's a cool feature. It sounds great. When I watch videos of us live, the kick is just ripping. If I'm going to ditch it, I need to really think it through and get something really good going."

Driven through the mundane realities of touring North America in a van by the ecstatic response Entheos has received both online and at shows over the past year and a half, Koperweis says, "It's that sort of thing that really keeps me going personally, as cheesy as it sounds. People like the band, and it's encouraging to me to keep going. The reaction that we're getting off our first album is really great. People come to the show and they tell me how long they've been listening to my drumming, and it makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing with my life.

"I don't think I've put this much work into anything else I've done in my whole life," Koperweis adds. "I feel responsible for the band. I write a lot on guitar, so it's cool to have an outlet for that stuff again. We're playing the long game. We know our day is coming—but it's not right now. Right now, it's just put your head down and do the work."



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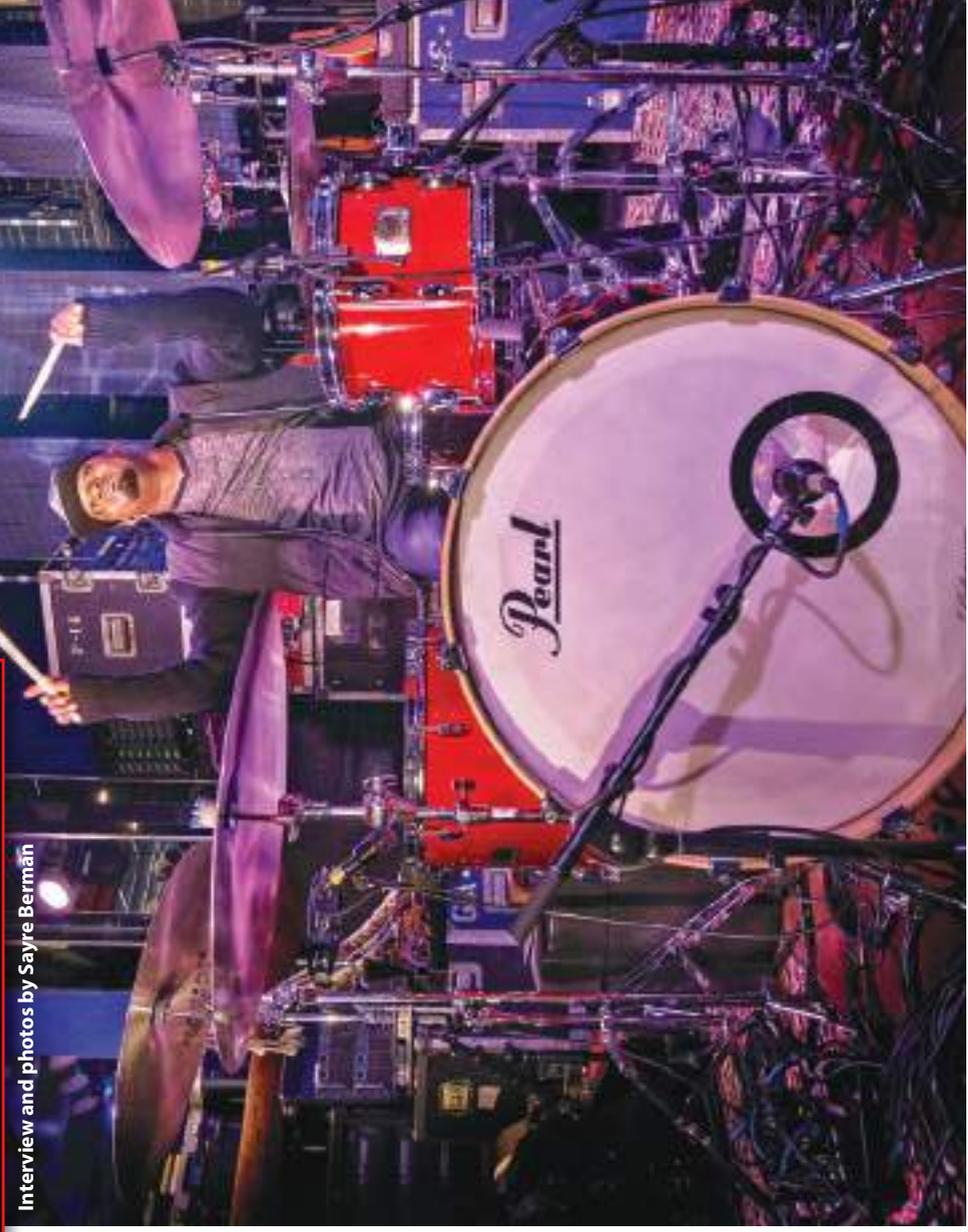
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GEARING UP ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interview and photos by Sayre Berman



Ani DiFranco's Terence Higgins

Drums: Pearl Session Studio Classic in sequoia high-gloss red lacquer finish
A. 7x14 Dunnett titanium snare with custom top wood hoop
B. 6.5x14 Pearl Masters snare
C. 7x10 tom
D. 14x16 floor tom
E. 15x24 bass drum

Heads: Remo Coated Vintage Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, Coated CS snare batters, and Powerstroke 4 bass drum batter

Hardware: Pearl BC-100 cymbal stands, H-2000 hi-hat, H-1030 and H-930 snare stands, and Pearl Eliminator pedal

Sticks: Vic Firth 5A and 85A sticks, mallets, beaters, and brushes

Percussion: RhythmTech Hat Trick G2 hi-hat tambourine, LP Mountable Cyclops tambourine, Russ Miller Groove Wedge, Pearl trap table, African seed rattles, various shakers, and an Indian ghungroo bell string

Electronics: Audix D series microphones, Ultimate Ears in-ear monitors, and a Shure 600 belt pack for in-ears

"I think my ears matured as I got older," says Terence Higgins. "I started demanding more warmth and clarity from my cymbals. I also needed a wider range of cymbals for all the different genres I play. One day I might head over to my storage facility to pick up some jazz hats for a jazz gig. Another day I might have to switch them out for a more rock 'n' roll sound."

"Sabian recently introduced the HH Remastered line, and I really love them. The hand-hammering gives me short decay, warm crashes, and crisp accents. They consistently cut through, regardless of the genre. I've gravitated to bigger cymbals overall, and I'm really digging the Big and Ugly ride. I use that with Ani DiFranco because when I crash it, it gets out of the way. Ani's ears are super-sensitive—she picked up on the fact that I was using 17" hi-hats the moment she heard them! I think she likes them because they aren't abrasive. They have a really warm foot chick, and when I open them they have a really quiet, dark sound. This cymbal combination is perfect for folk music; they're warm, quiet, and dark, but they can still cut through."

"I use a variety of different Pearl sets," Higgins continues. "For this gig, I'm using the Session Studio Classic, and I like the shorter toms and the shallower bass drum. The bass drum isn't as boomy, but it's still big and warm, and it cuts through really well. Ani's music doesn't require a lot of bombastic drumming. When I record with her, I use a 26" bass drum with a fluffy beater to get a more pillowy, warm thump. For live gigs, I use a 24" bass drum, which isn't as plucky [as a 22"] but still gives me a pillowy, warm sound that complements my cymbals and snares."

Higgins adds that his side snare is tensioned super-loose for a contrasting tone to his warm and more traditionally tuned main drum. "I play that on some of the slower songs," he says, "and it sounds massive."

Notably absent from Higgins' current setup are electronics. "Everything we do on this gig is organic," he explains. "It's live and in the moment. We don't use tracks, and we aren't using any samples. We may do one rehearsal before a tour, and then hit the road. Ani keeps it interesting. She'll throw us some curveballs every night, but she trusts us as a band. It's a blessing to still be able to play real music."

Education Through a Different Lens

Drumming Is More Than Doubles and Paradiddles

by Martin Urbach

As music educators, we have the duty of teaching our students all the technical and rudimentary things that pertain to our particular instruments. But as artists, we have the gift to go above and beyond the basics to teach our students the more intangible and magical aspects of music.

By luck or fate, most of the teaching I've done in the past ten years has been with young students. I currently teach children as young as two, and the bulk of them are between five and eleven. In this article I'll share a few things that I've learned through my journey.

The Fun Factor

Drumming is fun! I'm interested in teaching kids how to play the drums, but it's more important to me for them to learn to love the drums. I feel that if kids have fun doing whatever they're doing, they'll grow to love it and will want to do it often. I often remind myself of how excited I was when I received my first drumset for my twelfth birthday or how proud I felt the first time I was able to play a basic rock beat for more than one bar at a time. When we associate drumming with those kinds of fun thoughts, it's pretty hard to *not* want to spend time at the kit. I strive to create a fun environment for my students to learn the wonderful art of drumming, whether we're engaging in rhythmic call-and-response games, shedding paradiddle-diddles, or simply letting our inner crazy monkey go wild.

The Connection

The relationship between a student and a teacher is unique. A good teacher has the ability to adjust his or her attitude to reach many kinds of people. Of course it's not possible to like or be liked by everyone, but we can at least try to be open-minded, warm, respectful, and giving. I believe that as a teacher, it's important to connect with kids at their level and listen to what they have to say. When you do that, a channel of trust can be built and information will flow in a more organic way.

In this quest to better connect with our students, we must learn how to explain the same information in many different ways. A teacher's job is not to simply pass along the information; that's what instructional videos and method books are for. Our job is to make sure that the information we're sharing is assimilated in the most organic way.

Questioning

During my lessons, I tend to not play very much. I feel that the student will benefit most from having as much first-hand experience as possible. I only demonstrate things if I really feel that I need to in order to reinforce the ideas that I'm teaching. But I do ask a lot of questions to get the students to think and make decisions.

For example, I might ask students to come up with a beat and a small drum fill. I then ask them to explain the difference

between them. What would happen if you played a very long drum fill while the singer is singing lyrics? Now what would happen if you play the same drum beat throughout quiet and energetic parts of the song without changing it in any way? Then I ask them to put the beats and fills together in a way that makes sense—like in a song.

I don't ask yes-or-no questions. My questions allow room for interpretation, so there are often no wrong answers. Even if students answer with something that's not what I expected, I can usually find a way to make their response relate back to what I'm trying to teach them.

I strive to create a fun environment for my students, whether we're shedding paradiddle-diddles or simply letting our inner crazy monkey go wild.

Sparking Exploration

I believe that a very important part of being an artist is developing your own voice, which is achieved by exploring all possibilities instead of being spoon-fed stock ideas. Most kids aren't required to do any kind of self-exploration in their day-to-day life. Phrases like "Don't do that," "You'll break it," and "That's too loud" are used too often when adults interact with children.

I think drumming is a great vehicle for anyone, young or old, to learn how to express whatever he or she wants. Sometimes in my lessons we'll counter the "That's too loud" response by exploring super-soft playing and everything in between. That type of exploratory practice prepares students for when the time comes to make music and they have to make informed decisions on how loud or soft they should play.

In my journey as a musician who spends lots of time working with children, I've found an immense stream of inspiration. Once I asked a four-year-old student what he thought about music. He said, "Music is magic." When I asked him to explain that, his answer was, "Music is magic because when you play an instrument, music comes out." When I think of music through that lens, I don't sit at the drums wondering what I should practice. Music flows much more freely from my inner self when I think of it like a rabbit jumping out of a magician's hat.

Another perspective-changing answer came from an eight-year-old student. I was struggling to find a way to teach her about upbeats and syncopation. As an activity, I asked her to stomp and clap in a steady beat. Then I asked her to explore other sounds that fit between the steady stomping and clapping. Shortly after, she said, "I get it! Syncopation is what makes you want to dance!" Had I tried to explain to her that syncopation is when you play an upbeat instead of a downbeat and use rests to offset some notes against the pulse, she would still be wondering what syncopation is. Instead, she figured it out in a way that made sense to her, and in turn she reminded me, in the most perfectly simple way possible, what syncopation is really all about.

Martin Urbach holds a BA in jazz performance from the University of New Orleans, an MA in jazz arts from the Manhattan School of Music, and an advanced certificate in music education from Brooklyn College.



It's Time to Retool!

Adjusting Your Business Plan for Optimal Success

by Russ Miller

I came to the realization a few years ago that to maintain success, I have to constantly adjust, retool, forecast, and create new business plans.

This is true in any business. People in other industries do it all the time. We musicians, however, often hate to change our approach. I've seen many friends and colleagues (who are very successful musicians) struggle with this. They kept the same attitude and approach for twenty-five years, and when business started to wane, they got depressed and declared, "This business is dead." But in reality it's the business *plan* they've been using that's dead.

There isn't just one path to success. Drumming is artistry, not sport, and there is subjectivity to art. Many times the best players aren't the most successful in music. In fact, it's quite often the opposite. Now, to be clear, I'm defining "success" in this context

"Don't get stuck on a business plan just because it was your business plan."

— Ryan Kavanaugh (film producer)

as fame and money. But having fame and money doesn't mean someone is a great musician. For me, fame and money are *byproducts* of my skillset—they're not my goal. Fame and money come and go, but your musicianship does not. When I had nothing, I was playing drums and making music. When I had a beautiful home and cars, I was playing drums and making music. When nobody knew me at all, I was playing my drums and making music. When I was signing hundreds of autographs, I was playing drums and making music. But along the way, I made sure to maintain a business plan.

Observe, Assess, and Adapt

Many businesses fail because they continue to implement the same plan for too long. I've seen this happen for players, labels, and instrument manufacturers. Many drum companies that haven't taken steps to change with the marketplace are now gone or much smaller than they used to be. It's the same with individual drummers. It's easy to get to a point in your career where things are semi-comfortable and you can just let it ride. But often when you do that, your business ends up heading backwards. You have to continually adjust your plans to stay ahead of the curve.

I'm writing this column from a hotel room in Hong Kong. I'm here with my touring band, Arrival. We're recording the shows in Asia for a future release. To do this, I had to bring quite a few cases of gear with me. I was talking to a friend about all the gear the day before we left. He said, "Why are you spending all that bread? Records don't sell enough to do that anymore." My response was, "I've never made records simply to profit." They've all ended up profiting, but that was never my initial goal. My albums create a musical legacy and push me to be better. They give me an outlet to continually develop my production and writing skills. They are great business cards to supply to clients, and they provide material that I can use for promotional videos, clinics, and lessons. The recordings also provide content for social media and marketing purposes, and are still viable to sell at gigs.

My friend is right about one thing, though: the era of having a business plan that involves making records, selling a bunch of them

in stores, and then going on tour to sell more is over. But there are new business plans now.

Define Your Own Path

There have been several times in my career when I caught myself thinking, "Unless I get that gig with so-and-so, I'll never be as successful as that drummer." But you can't force other people's business plans into your life. Of course there are scenarios that I would love to be in, like playing in my favorite band or working as a sideman with an amazing artist. But you have to be in a position to achieve those dreams, and you have to have a business plan designed to allow you to accomplish those goals.

There's a great quote by the business philosopher Jim Rohn: "Your life doesn't get better by chance; it gets better by change." If you want to get gigs with top artists, then you need to have a plan to execute that goal. Do you live in the area by those artists? Do you know anybody in those bands?

I have many goals that I've been working on for years. Some of them are lofty, and I've been cultivating them for a long time. I'm continually setting new goals, and I regularly adjust my plans for the previous ones. I ask myself questions like: Are these goals still worth working on? Has technology or an unseen circumstance rendered that goal unrealistic? Technology changes industries all the time. I often see artists doing huge shows where the main drum parts are being played back via Pro Tools. The live drummer is barely in the mix. So does that artist need an amazing (and expensive) drummer? Apparently not. Regardless of how successful that artist may be, being the drummer on that gig will never yield the same income and prestige as that sort of position did years ago.

So what will the new plan be? It's up to you. People create new business plans and succeed at them all the time. Look at Mike Johnston, of mikeslessons.com. His position as a teacher of thousands of students via the Internet didn't exist ten years ago. He retooled his business plan as a drum teacher and achieved great success. I started doing sessions in Los Angeles in the early '90s and was blessed to catch the end of the previous business model. I had three drumkits rotating between major studios around town five days a week. But technology changed that business model, and I adapted by building a studio of my own so that I was in position to compete in the new marketplace.

The great clinician/educator Dom Famularo once said something to me that really resonated: "We're both successful businessmen. Our business is drumming. We need to be constantly investing in our playing, musicianship, relationships, and our overall personal brand." I also carry a quote by Talking Heads singer David Byrne in a journal that reads, "Why not invest in the future of music instead of building fortresses to preserve its past?"

Keep growing and changing!



Russ Miller has recorded and/or performed with Ray Charles, Cher, Nelly Furtado, and the Psychedelic Furs and has played on soundtracks for *The Boondock Saints*, *Rugrats Go Wild*, and *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*, among others. For more information, visit russmiller.com.



Fundamental Fills

Part 3: Right-Hand Lead

by Donny Gruendler

During the 1980s and '90s, fusion monster Dave Weckl and session master John "JR" Robinson, among others, revived the silky smooth right-hand-lead 16th-note fills that were previously made famous by studio greats Steve Gadd and Bernard Purdie. Today these fundamental yet sophisticated fills have regained popularity in the playing of contemporary drummers like Anika Nilles, Chris Coleman, and Daru Jones.

This month's installment of Basics will help you develop right-hand-lead fills on the snare and around the drumset. The following exercises build upon part one of this series and should open many creative doors for your own ideas.

Right-Hand Lead

Let's work through a series of 16th-note right-hand-lead fill ideas alongside our 16th-note ostinato. Here's the main pattern.



The following one-measure fill fragments show the accent pattern that the right hand will be playing once we start creating our phrases.



Fill Creation

Here's a demonstration of how to work through each fill fragment alongside the main pattern. First, pick one measure from Exercise 2. In this case we'll use bar 1.



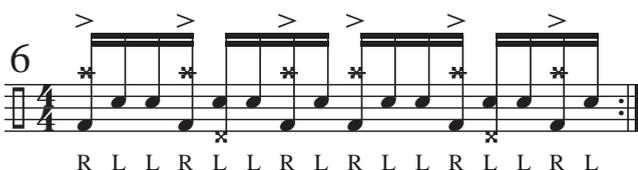
Using a metronome set to 80 bpm with an 8th-note subdivision, play snare rimshots for each of the six accented 16th notes, and fill in each unaccented 16th note with the left hand. Continue the quarter-note pulse from the main ostinato with the feet. Put together, the exercise looks like this.



Once the previous steps are comfortable, freely move each of the six accented 16th notes around the drums. Here's one voicing.



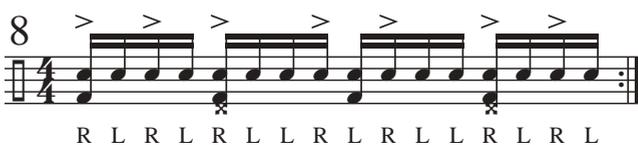
Also try playing the accents with the cymbals and bass drum. The hi-hat foot will continue playing beats 2 and 4 as it did in the main ostinato.



Follow this same procedure with another fill fragment. In this case we'll use measure 4 from Exercise 2.



Again, using a metronome set to 80 bpm with an 8th-note subdivision, play snare rimshots on each accent, and fill in unaccented 16th notes with the left hand. Remember to continue the main ostinato's foot pattern.



Once that's comfortable, move the accents around the drums.



Here's another voicing.

10

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

Finally, place the accents on the cymbals along with the bass drum. The hi-hat remains on beats 2 and 4. Repeat this process for each fill fragment.

11

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

Fill Practice

Once you're comfortable with the previous exercises, pick any groove within your repertoire and practice fills using the method below. To start, play three bars of time and then a fill in measure 4. The following exercise demonstrates this method using the fourth measure of Exercise 2.

12

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

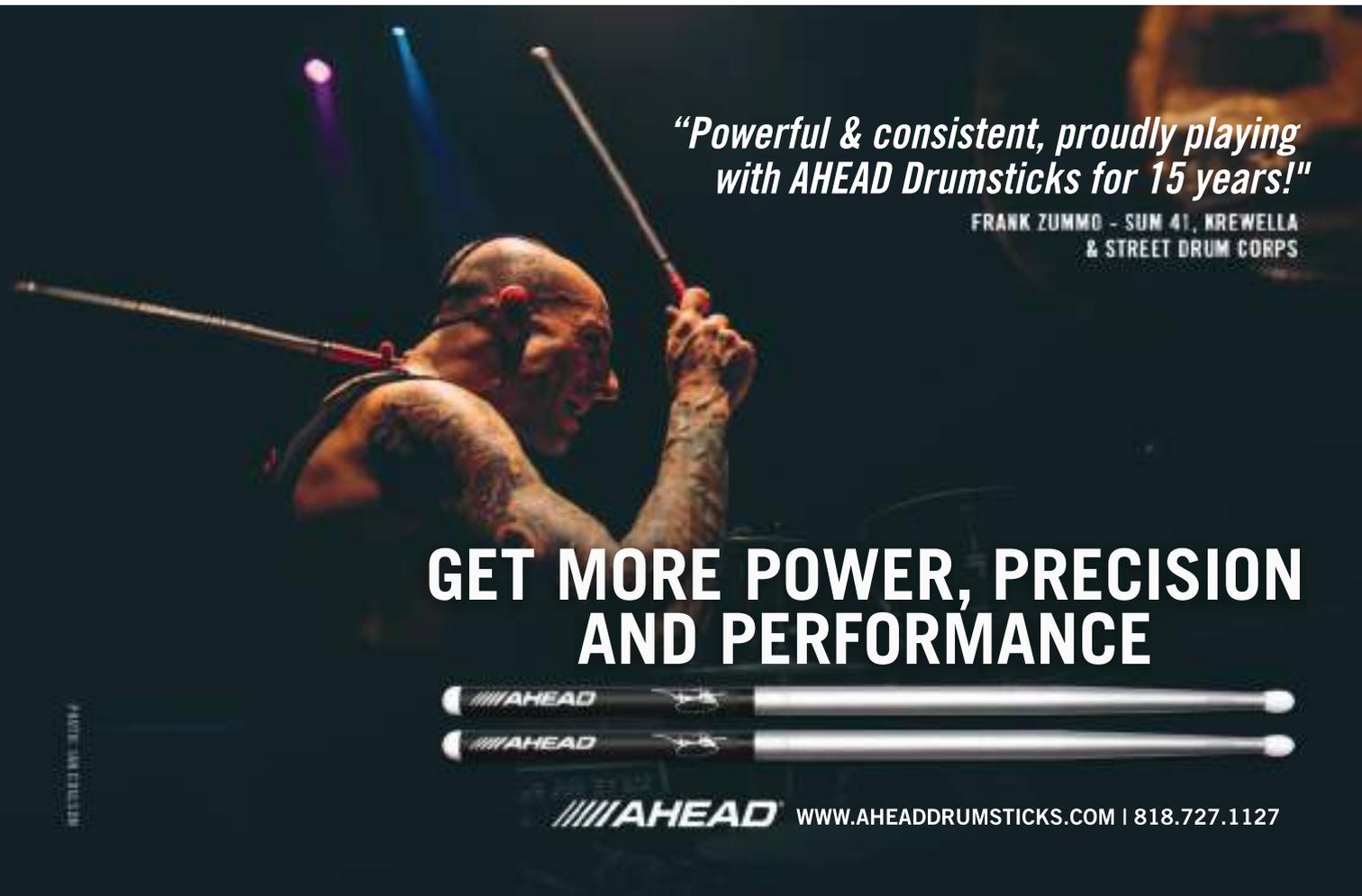
Once that's comfortable, orchestrate the exercise around the drums. Here's an example. Repeat this process for each fill fragment.

13

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

Although the orchestrations and variations you can create using these ideas are endless, try to remain within the confines of the concepts discussed in this lesson. The goal is to develop commanding, confident, and consistent fills. Best of luck, and have fun!

Donny Gruendler is a Los Angeles-based drummer and president of Musicians Institute in Hollywood. He can be reached at donny@donnygruendler.com.



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Swiss Rudiments

Part 1: Basel Drumming Basics

by Claus Hessler



Welcome to the first of a four-part series on Swiss rudiments and Basel drumming. In this lesson I'll focus on some specialties of the Basel style that aren't usually included in the standard list of forty Percussive Arts Society rudiments. The accompanying video, available at moderndrummer.com, demonstrates this style's feel and includes some additional explanations.

To increase authenticity I'm using a notation method, developed by the late, respected Basel instructor Dr. Fritz Berger, that's similar to how the Swiss might write these patterns. In this lesson's key, notes above the staff line indicate right-hand strokes, while notes below the staff line indicate left-hand strokes. The small lines attached to the tops of some note heads indicate flams.

One major difference between U.S. and Swiss traditional rudimental drumming is the prevalence of a pattern known as the doublé (pronounced "doo-blay"). This figure is basically an inverted flam tap but with a special phrasing. Exercise 1 will help you develop a better understanding of this pattern. In this exercise, I'm using a strategy Jim Chapin developed in which he collapsed rudiments by changing the distance between a rudiment's strokes without altering the sticking.

MUSIC KEY	
	Flam
R.H.	
L.H.	

1

Here are some additional ideas for mastering the doublé phrasing. Measures 1 and 2 demonstrate a straight approach while bars 3 and 4 offer a more stylistic interpretation.

2

Exercise 3 incorporates a common accent variation and a pataflafla at the end of the phrase.

3

Exercises 4 and 5 introduce another typical Swiss pattern: the flammed five-stroke roll. In this rudiment, a grace note is placed before the first double stroke of a five-stroke roll, and we also have to watch out for some dynamics. Here's a flammed five-stroke roll and pataflafla combination pattern with a right-hand lead.

4

And here's a flammed five-stroke roll, doublé, and patafla combination that focuses on the left hand.

Exercise 5: Musical notation in 2/4 time. It begins with a flammed five-stroke roll marked *mf*. This is followed by a *p* (patafla) and a *f* (flammed five-stroke roll). The notation includes a quintuplet bracket under the first five notes of the second phrase.

Exercises 6 and 7 cover another rudiment known as the complete final stroke of 7. This figure is more difficult to phrase into a regular grid of 16th notes, so using a quintuplet subdivision helps get closer to the authentic feel. As with the doublé, accents may vary. Exercise 6 is useful for developing this phrase, while Exercise 7 puts it into a musical context.

Exercise 6: Musical notation in 2/4 time. It features a complete final stroke of 7 with various accents and a quintuplet subdivision. The notation includes a quintuplet bracket under the first five notes of the second phrase.

Exercise 7: Musical notation in 2/4 time. It features a complete final stroke of 7 with various accents and a quintuplet subdivision. The notation includes a quintuplet bracket under the first five notes of the second phrase.

Finally, I present a short piece called the “Morgenstreich,” which is usually the first tune played at 4 A.M. during a three-day Swiss festival called Carnival of Basel. This reveille is based on an old military signal for assembly and includes all of the aspects covered in the previous exercises.

“Morgenstreich”: Musical notation in 2/4 time. It features a complete final stroke of 7 with various accents and a quintuplet subdivision. The notation includes a quintuplet bracket under the first five notes of the second phrase.

For more on the history and background of European rudimental drumming, check out the international version of my latest book, *Camp Duty Update*. If you have any questions, feel free to email them to iq@moderndrummer.com.

Claus Hessler is an active clinician in Europe, Asia, and the United States. For more, visit claushessler.com.

Check out a video demo of these examples at moderndrummer.com.

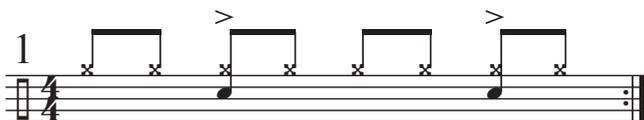


Groove Construction

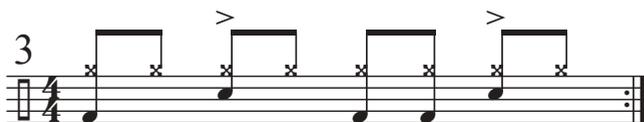
Part 6: Ghost Notes Using an Intertwined Approach

by Jost Nickel

In this month's lesson we'll continue working with **ghost notes** by incorporating them into grooves using an intertwined approach. When using this method, the ghost-note phrasing is interlocked with the bass drum pattern. Let's introduce the four-step approach. We'll start with a hand pattern using 8th notes on the hi-hat and snare drum accents on beats 2 and 4.



Now add a bass drum pattern taken from the rhythms notated at the end of this lesson. For this example, we'll use the first measure of Exercise 11. Here's our isolated bass drum pattern followed by its placement in the groove.



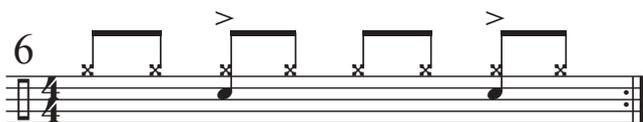
Next add ghost notes on all of the remaining 16th notes.



Playing all of the 16th notes as ghost strokes can sound good at slower tempos (60–85 bpm) and can be a great challenge when playing at faster tempos. But in general, I suggest omitting some of the quieter strokes to produce a clearer sound. In our final step, we'll omit any ghost note that occurs directly before or after an accent. In addition, we won't play more than two consecutive 16ths in a row, as demonstrated in Exercise 5.



Next we'll utilize the intertwined approach using the first measure of Exercise 13. Here's our primary groove with the hands.



Now take the first measure of Exercise 13 (notated in Exercise 7) and apply it to the bass drum (Exercise 8).



Play ghost notes on all of the remaining 16ths.



Next omit the ghost notes before and after the snare accents. Again, the left hand doesn't play more than two consecutive strokes.



Here are three sets of one-measure reading exercises that you can use for your bass drum patterns.



The intertwined approach is applicable with any bass drum pattern and works as well with grooves where the snare doesn't accent beats 2 or 4, so apply this method to your own phrases. If you're interested in checking out more groove ideas, check out my book, *Jost Nickel's Groove Book*.

For a video demo of these examples, visit moderndrummer.com.

Jost Nickel is a top session and touring drummer in Germany, and he endorses Sonor, Meinl, Aquarian, Vic Firth, and Beyerdynamic.



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The Notes We Don't Play

Incorporating Rests Into Odd Subdivisions

by Aaron Edgar



Adding rests to complicated subdivisions can be an intimidating endeavor. But just like when you're learning how to play a 16th-note rest on beat 1, or an accent on the middle partial of a triplet, it's only tricky at first. After some diligent practice, you'll find that you've internalized an exciting new rhythmic tool.

To count quintuplets, I like to use an Indian counting system with the syllables "ta, ka, din, ah, gah." It's imperative to hear "ta" as the dominant note, as it represents the quarter-note pulse. Before jumping into Exercise 1, make sure you're comfortable counting and playing quintuplets on a practice pad.

To practice the following example, count out loud and alternate between a measure of quintuplets and the first measure of Exercise 1. In bar 1, we're only skipping three notes: "din" in beat 3, "ta" in beat 4, and "ka" in beat 5. The goal is to make the partials on either side of the rest feel as solid as they do when you're playing all five notes. Tapping quarter notes with your foot helps solidify the pulse, but be careful not to become reliant on it. After you've mastered measure 1, repeat the same process for bars 2, 3, and 4.

Once you're ready to put all four bars of Exercise 1 together, experiment with voicing the rhythms on the drumset. Start simply with a pair of surfaces, such as the snare drum and floor tom, and improvise the rhythm's orchestration between the two. Eventually expand into improvising over the entire kit. The more comfortable you are with the rhythms, the more creatively you'll be able to apply them to the drums.

When experimenting with Exercise 1, don't be afraid to modify it. You don't need to use the entire four-bar phrase; you can use pieces of it to fit into different musical contexts.

Exercises 2, 3, and 4 show some of the many ways we can apply these rhythms to the drumset. In Exercise 2, the first four quarter notes of the second measure of Exercise 1 are used as a drum fill.

Here's a groove that applies measure 4 of Exercise 1 to the hi-hats.

This next example uses the rhythm from bar 3 of Exercise 1 as a syncopated bass drum pattern in the context of a progressive-metal groove.

We'll close out the quintuplet portion of this lesson with one of my favorite grooves—the main beat I use in the song “Van Halien,” the closing track on Third Ion’s *13/8Bit* record. [You can hear the song on the October 2016 playlist at *Modern Drummer’s* Spotify page.] This groove uses a twenty-one-note bass drum pattern within quintuplets across four bars of 4/4. There are twenty quintuplet partials in a single bar of 4/4, which means each measure of this groove has essentially the same kick pattern displaced forward by one quintuplet partial. The pattern has six note groupings (one, two, three, two, five, and two), and each grouping is followed by a single rest. Just like we did with Exercise 1, make sure you practice slowly and count out loud. You may want to isolate the bass drum rhythm on a practice pad first.

Exercises 6 and 7 incorporate rests into septuplets. Just like we did with Exercise 1, practice each of these into and out of full septuplets. Make sure you go slowly and count out loud. The syllables I like to use for counting septuplets are “ta, ka, din, ah, ge, na, gah.” Again, make sure to feel “ta” as the dominant pulse.

After mastering Exercises 6 and 7 on the practice pad, work on applying the rhythms to the drumset. You’re only limited by your imagination. Here are some ideas to help kick-start your creativity. Exercise 8 applies the last four beats of Exercise 6 across two pairs of hi-hats in the context of a four-on-the-floor groove. Using this bass drum pattern emphasizes the quarter-note pulse. Keep practicing the example until your septuplet rhythm feels comfortable and fluid over an unwavering snare and bass drum groove.

In Exercise 9, the right hand plays the first four beats of Exercise 7 while the left hand and bass drum fill in the spaces. Be mindful of your dynamics. Playing ghost strokes and unaccented notes too loudly in a busy pattern like this can end up sounding barbaric rather than tight and funky.

These rhythms are often considered odd only because we don’t hear them often. But with diligent practice they won’t feel strange at all. I recall the tipping point in my own progress where phrases like these started to feel so natural that I thought I was actually playing them incorrectly. Beats with odd subdivisions can feel just as good as any other groove if you allow yourself to become immersed in them.

For additional rhythmic material to experiment with, check out one of my all-time favorite books, *Rhythm & Meter Patterns* by Gary Chaffee.

Aaron Edgar plays with the Canadian prog-metal band Third Ion and is a session drummer, clinician, and author. He teaches weekly live lessons on Drumeo.com. You can find his book, *Boom!!*, as well as information on how to sign up for private lessons, at aaronedgardrum.com.

For a video demo of these examples, visit modern drummer.com.



Thrift-Shop Finds

Restoring a Vintage Snare Drum

by Chris Lee



After

You're walking through a thrift store, and sitting on a shelf among old flower vases and juice glasses is a horribly neglected vintage snare. Although everyone else might see nothing but a weathered piece of junk, your mind is going wild with all of the possibilities.

It's always exciting to restore a vintage drum to its former glory, whether it's a bass drum, floor tom, rack tom, or snare drum. But the restoration process for old snares is an especially unique experience, since they tend to have a mystique of their own.

I've dealt in antiques for years, and I rarely come across a complete drumset at a basement bargain price. But old snare drums are relatively plentiful and can often be found at thrift stores, rummage sales, and yard sales at very reasonable prices. The vast majority of the secondhand snares that you encounter will have a metal shell and can be easily revived with some new heads, a set of replacement wires, and an afternoon spent detailing with steel wool and chrome polish. Once in a while I do come across a snare with a wood shell, though, and in these cases there are additional things to consider before deciding to purchase and restore such an instrument.

Inspect Before You Buy

Whenever you buy something secondhand, it's best to first take a deep breath and consider what you're looking at before making the transaction. Closely examine the shell and look for any mold



Before

or water damage, since those are nearly impossible to repair. The resonant head should be translucent, or non-existent, so examine the inner shell from the bottom. You should also gently feel around the outside of the shell and look for any give in the wood. Constant exposure to moisture and temperature changes can lead to the separation of the inner plies. If the drum is covered in a plastic finish, examine the seam and make sure it's still tight.

The next step is to examine the muffler, throw-off, and butt plate. With a modern entry-level snare, these parts can often be replaced with aftermarket items fairly easily. But with a vintage drum, you should avoid using modern parts, since that affects the drum's

resale value. If any parts are missing or damaged, then that's another consideration when negotiating the sale price.

Finally, note any pitting in the metal components. Small scratches and tarnish can be dealt with, but pitting can't be buffed out.

Research Before Rebuilding

In the days before the Internet, drummers who needed information about a newly acquired drum were often at the mercy of their local shop owners. But these days, social media has changed everything. There are numerous online groups with members who are more than happy to share knowledge and offer advice on the restoration. When I posted a picture of my newly acquired Ludwig Pioneer, I made it clear that I wasn't interested in selling the drum, but I was wondering if anyone had any information about it. One of the members had a picture of the drum in a Ludwig catalog from 1966. This model was an entry-level group drum at the time it was made, but it's a prized collectible today. Knowing that guided every decision I made in the restoration process.

Keep Calm and Organized

When I first started restoring drums in high school, I would take a drum apart and place all of the nuts, bolts, tension rods, washers, and other various metal bits in an old coffee can. This made sense at the time, since all of the parts were in one place, thus minimizing the possibility that anything would be lost. When I later reassembled the drum, I'd often end up with some extra parts. But that didn't matter to me; the drum was in working order again, and that was all I wanted.

Thirty years later, I now take steps to ensure that I will be able to reassemble a drum properly. First, I take several close-up pictures of the drum and all of the hardware, in case I have trouble recalling which washer goes where. I then work in a careful manner as I remove the tiny nuts and screws. These parts can be extremely delicate, so loosening them too quickly can cause them to break.

As I remove each part, I keep everything organized by placing the parts on paper plates or in plastic bags. My method is to place the parts for the throw-off, butt plate, and lugs in three different places. If the muffler on a vintage drum is in perfect working order, then I typically leave it in place and give the handle a few swipes with steel wool.

Cleaning the Shell

I've recovered many drums, but unless the covering is already falling off, I don't recommend trying to remove it. A thorough cleaning of the original shell is always the preferred method, but even a seemingly simple cleaning can ruin the finish if you're not careful.

I always begin by cleaning the shell with glass cleaner. Then I treat it with petroleum-based wax to bring out the shine. If there's residue on the shell, I recommend using natural substances, such as mineral oil or olive oil, and slowly scrubbing the residue away with light steel wool. If the natural oil isn't strong enough, you can try a chemically based solvent. The solvent should only be used on a specific area, and you'll want to thoroughly clean the area with glass cleaner once the residue has been removed.

Someone had applied masking tape to the shell of my Pioneer. Burgundy sparkle drums are notorious for fading, so I was reluctant to use anything other than oil. As the lighter options weren't working, I had no choice but to use a heavy solvent. This thankfully did the trick, and the finish made it through the procedure just fine.

The inner shell should be cleaned with warm water and bleach or with bleach wipes. Just be careful not to clean away date stamps. I also caution against painting the inner shell, as that can also affect the resale value.

Heavy Metal

There are numerous ways to clean old metal parts, but my preferred method is to first run the larger metal parts through a cycle in the dishwasher. The lug casings will need to be placed in the silverware basket, but make sure you remove the springs and nuts.

The dishwasher might eliminate the need for any further cleaning, but you will probably have to do a second cleaning with steel-wool soap pads in the sink. Once the parts have dried thoroughly, I treat them with chrome polish to ensure that they look beautiful for years to come.

Don't Throw Out the Throw-Off

The throw-off is the vulnerable part on a snare since it sticks out from the shell. The brackets on my drum were bent, but I was able to bend them back into shape with needle-nose pliers. The original holes of a wood-shell snare shouldn't be tampered with for any reason, so I try to make every effort to use the original throw-off, or I locate a comparable vintage replacement.

Save Miscellaneous Parts

Most of us would never hesitate to discard old heads and snares. In the past I thought that these parts were like belts and hoses on a car, and that if they were heavily worn they were completely useless. But these days any part from an old drum can be considered collectible. The same goes with old snare wires. Even a rotten shell will have some collectability if the original badge is intact. As they say in practically every thrift shop around the world: "One man's trash is another man's treasure."



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CRITIQUE

RECORDINGS Taking the Reins

Matt Wilson's *Big Happy Family* *Beginning of a Memory*

The drummer/leader offers a diverse rumination on life and community, with a tinge of the bittersweet.



The raucous, bluesy opener "Lester" suggests the spirit of a New Orleans farewell, reflecting a tone of deep loss mixed with grateful celebration that defines *Beginning of a Memory*. This inspired jazz outing commemorates the 2014 passing of Wilson's wife, Felicia, following her bout with leukemia. A violinist, Felicia performed with the Matt Wilson Quartet Plus Strings. The "Big Happy Family" band is a stellar gathering of closely knit members from Wilson's various ensembles, performing new renditions of his previously recorded compositions with an emphasis on Felicia's favorites. There are throat-tightening moments, such as the gorgeous "Flowers for Felicia (Orchids-Wildwood Flower)," during which Wilson plays moving, expressive solo brush passages. But amidst the sorrow is plentiful joy; Wilson's characteristic humor and high-spirited drumming remain unbridled. From the traditional to the subversive, the rascally drummer swings, grooves, rocks, and thoroughly thrives on the unpredictable. (Palmetto) **Jeff Potter**



John Abbott

Ferit Odman *Dameronia With Strings*

The Turkish drummer's third outing as a leader bursts with melody, wit, and rhythmic joy.

Ferit Odman has made the jazz rounds in New York City, but he's best known as an in-demand drummer in his native Turkey. For this, his most ambitious disc as a leader, Odman returned to the Big Apple, assembling a topflight quartet augmented by a string sextet for a tribute to the legendary yet under-recognized pianist/composer/arranger Tadd Dameron. Reinterpreting Dameron's idiosyncratic orchestrations, arranger David O'Rourke skillfully utilizes the strings as an active jazz component. The core quartet is sensitive to the shifting string lines, leaving space in all the right places. Odman drives the irresistible set with a smooth, classic swing undercurrent while spiritedly prodding the soloists. On ballads, his brushwork is lush and painterly, while on "Look, Stop & Listen" he busts out a dazzling solo. Trumpeter Terell Stafford, pianist Danny Grissett, and bassist Peter Washington lend a warm, full-bodied aura to the smartly sculpted tracks. (Equinox) **Greg David**

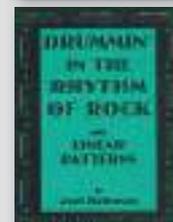
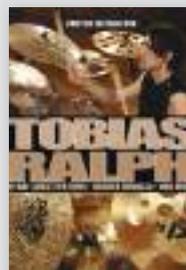


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Tobias Ralph *Hi-Hat Substitutions, Broken Doubles, and More*

An instructional DVD gets us closer to a unique player's perspective.

Tobias Ralph (Adrian Belew, Lauryn Hill) steers clear of the usual licks-and-tricks fare on his DVD, instead choosing to break down certain key components of his own style and their drumset applications to open up your playing. Of note is a variety of cool warm-up exercises that get the blood flowing and the mind working. Ralph brings these to the entire kit, and while your hands alternate between the toms, snare, and kick, you actually end up playing a hip metric-modulation pattern that's musical while also serving its purpose. There's informative stuff on breaking up double strokes across different sources, such as a groove Ralph lays down with his right hand playing a double on the ride and quickly moving to play a double on the floor tom, and a chapter on hi-hat substitutions where he subs a stepped hi-hat for a kick drum, which is subtle but wild. Freeform solos and live performances with a fusion trio show many of the concepts at work. (\$19.99, tobiasralph.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



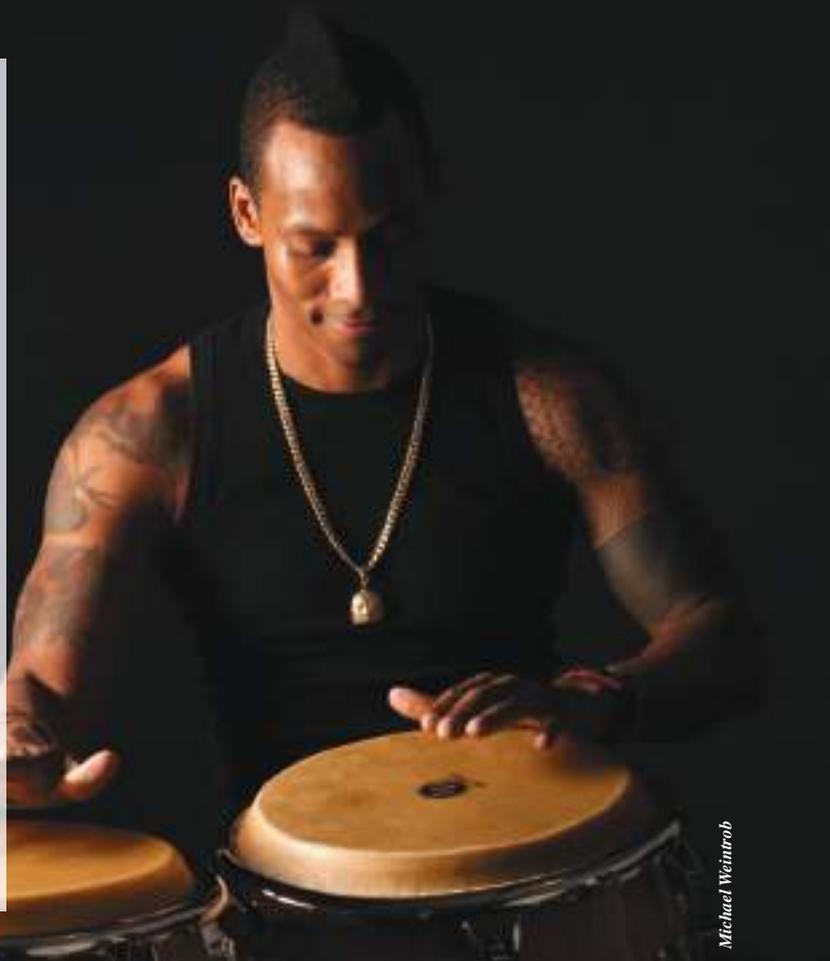
The Pedrito Martinez Group *Habana Dreams*

Following up on his band's Grammy-nominated debut, the percussion wonder keeps the groove-o-meter pinned to the red.

In a set recorded in Cuba, Pedrito Martinez's rhythm-exploring unit once again intersects tradition with the cutting edge, mixing Afro-Caribbean styles, jazz, funk, R&B, and pop. A concern for this sophomore release was the absence of former pianist Trujillo, whose diva-level lead vocals complemented Martinez's own strong voice. But current keyboardist Edgar Pantoja-Aleman fills Trujillo's shoes impressively, and Martinez ups the vocal ante with numerous guest stars, including Rubén Blades, Isaac Delgado, and Descemer Bueno. The music's heart and soul remains the astounding interplay between Martinez's conga, batá, and cajon polyrhythms and **Jhair Sala's** masterly bongo/percussion work. The tightly locked duo astonishes with sudden gearshifts into rhythmic orbits

beyond. Some will want to analyze their complexity. Others will just want to dance deliriously. (Motéma)

Jeff Potter

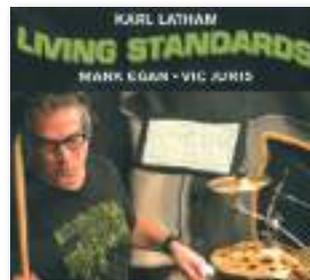


Michael Weinrob

Karl Latham *Living Standards*

A funky and fun electric jazz date with musicians who love to play.

We've heard grooving jazz arrangements of classic-rock staples before, so drummer Karl Latham and his guitar/bass/drums trio aren't reinventing the wheel here. But the sensitivity with which they approach the material makes for an enjoyable listen. "Cinnamon Girl" gets a 3/4 reading, as Latham caresses his ride before taking an understated solo with some rolling snare and cymbal work. The drummer brings a spacious second-line flavor to the opening of "It's Your Thing" before shifting gears into a light medium funk for the rest of the tune. He and bassist Mark Egan sound great together, not only providing a thick bed for the guitar solos but themselves stretching out in the trio format—though this isn't an aggressive fusion date by any means. Looking for some well-executed small-group jazz that has more heart than notes? Here's your stop. (Dropzone) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Linear Jazz Drumming and *Drummin' in the Rhythm of Rock* by Joel Rothman

Author and educator Rothman adds two titles to his deep catalog of nearly a hundred methods, this time focusing on linear drumming.

A simple and effective, if somewhat formulaic, methodology complements these books' abundant linear exercises. In *Rhythm of Rock*, Joel Rothman introduces a set of one-beat 16th-note cells constructed around the ride cymbal's placement in the subdivision before diving into a series of linear patterns built around a predetermined ride cymbal melody. Two-, three-, and four-beat phrases are covered while generally emphasizing the 2-and-4 genre-defining snare backbeat. The method splits three- and four-limb grooves between its two parts.

Similar to its rock parallel, *Linear Jazz Drumming* largely deals with building patterns around a ride cymbal melody in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meters—only this time with a triplet subdivision. Once again, the book begins with three-voice independence before adding the fourth limb in its second half.

Rothman employs an almost mathematical yet musical approach to instruction in both methods. Covering the entire spectrum of unique 16th- or triplet-based four-beat linear patterns would be nearly impossible in one book, an acknowledgment the author himself makes. Instead, by predetermining ride cymbal patterns and building grooves around them, Rothman provides usable, real-world ideas. Students would be wise to explore the concept further with their own linear grooves based around the ride cymbal foundations. (\$19.95 each, JR Publications) **Willie Rose**

CRITIQUE continued

IAMTHEMORNING *Lighthouse*

Gavin Harrison weaves in and out of this prog duo's intense sonic world.

IAMTHEMORNING is a Russian progressive rock duo featuring Gleb Kolyadin's piano and Marjana Semkina's vocals in a rich tapestry of odd times and soaring melodies. **Gavin Harrison** appears on about half of *Lighthouse*, providing smooth percussive embellishments and vibe; along with his Porcupine Tree mate Colin Edwin on bass, he steers the ship with precision. Check out the linear hi-hat work on "Too Many



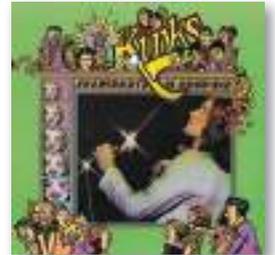
Years" and the perfect snare ghost notes on the half-time shuffle of "Matches" for a taste of Harrison's contributions. Mixed by Marcel van Limbeek (Tori Amos), the music is balanced and sharp, and the prominent vocal/piano blend is reminiscent of Amos's compositional nature. The detail is there to hear in the drums, and the only complaint is that there isn't more Harrison on the rest of the album. (Kscope) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

The Kinks *Everybody's in Show-Biz* (Reissue)

Founding Kinks drummer Mick Avory never sounded as suitable for the band as he does here. Totally in-tune playing from one of the unsung greats.

In a July 2015 feature highlighting some of his finest recorded moments, longtime Kinks drummer Mick Avory told *MD*, "If it never got beyond the hard-hitting things, I wouldn't have been very suitable." This expanded reissue of 1972's half-studio, half-live album *Everybody's in Show-Biz* finds the Kinks and Avory several years removed from the proto-punk teen angst of "You Really Got Me" and "All Day and All of the Night," channeling American roots music in Ray Davies' road-weary tales. Admitted jazzier Avory's versatility

shines, with dropped snares and flipped beats adding soulful shades to "Here Comes Yet Another Day," "Maximum Consumption," and "Unreal Reality." Avory's easy shuffle brings a joyful bounce to "Hot Potatoes," and his dynamic lifts add elegance to the classic "Celluloid Heroes." As for the hard-hitting stuff, the fills on a previously unreleased live take of "Till the End of the Day" (one of seventeen bonus live and studio tracks) are wonderfully unclinical, and the garage-rock spirit is infectious. (Sony/Legacy) **Patrick Berkery**



David Fiuczynski *Flam! Blam! Pan-Asian MicroJam*

Bird songs? Pan-Asian harmony? Just another day at the office for these jazz mavericks.

Guitarist David "Fuze" Fiuczynski's recent experiments with microtonal music culminate with this latest release, which pushes the boundaries of jazz past the beyond. Inspired by composer Olivier Messiaen's work with bird songs and by hip-hop producer J Dilla's flammed beats, the material ranges from the call of the Carolina chickadee as transcribed for fretless electric guitar to slamming drums you'd hear underneath modern rap tracks.



Drummer **Alex "BisQuiT" Bailey** (Marcus Miller) goes along on the adventure with enthusiasm, laying down a drunken, stumbling swing on "Loon-Y Tunes" and some attitude on "Flam" that's all huge snare backbeats, 16th-note hi-hat work, and jarring, syncopated crashes. On "Waldstimmen," Bailey throws down a wicked gospel-chops solo over a walking vamp, and on "Loon-Ly Solitaire" he engages with guest saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa with some over-the-top interplay. This stuff is way out there, but the attention to detail from the kit is a wonder to behold. Your brain tells you that harmonically and rhythmically things aren't quite lining up. And your brain might be right. (RareNoise) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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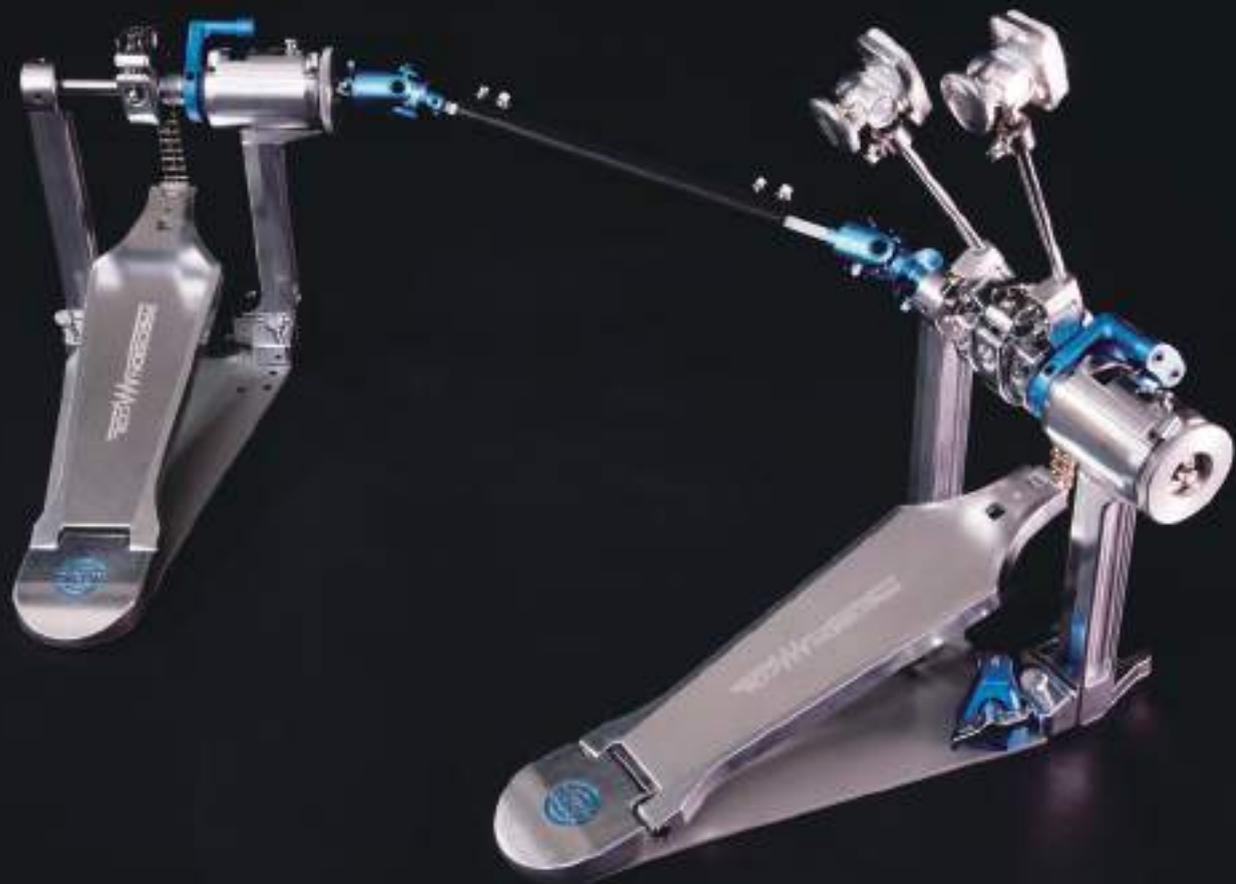
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Hal Leonard's Drum Play-Along Series

by Michael Dawson

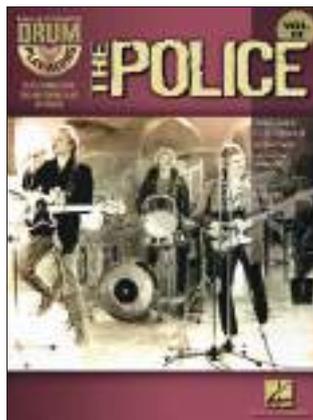
One of the most effective and time-tested ways to absorb the language of drumming is to play along to classic recordings. You can learn so much by studying what the top drummers played and then jamming along. Touch, time, feel, and fills are just a few of the crucial skills that get developed naturally and organically when you practice that way.

When you're ready to see if you can make it through a classic song without relying on the original drummer's tracks as a crutch, consider picking up one of Hal Leonard's Drum Play-Along book/CD packages. To date, the company has released thirty-six volumes, with each containing an average of eight note-for-note re-creations (with and without drums) and full transcriptions of the original drum parts. The collection includes hit pop, rock, funk, punk,

metal, blues, reggae, and swing songs.

"We publish titles in the series based on the artists and songs we represent, and of course we also consider what we think we can effectively sell," says Hal Leonard executive vice president of product development Jeff Schroedl. "We've had success with play-alongs based on individual artists, such as Jimi Hendrix and Nirvana, as well as mixed collections with titles like *Funk* and *Songs for Beginners*. We put a lot of thought into which tracks are best. Sometimes we have to avoid epic tracks that are more than ten minutes long, due to the cost of creating the sound-alike recording and the sheer number of pages required for the transcription. But we try to fill each volume with songs people want to play on the drums."

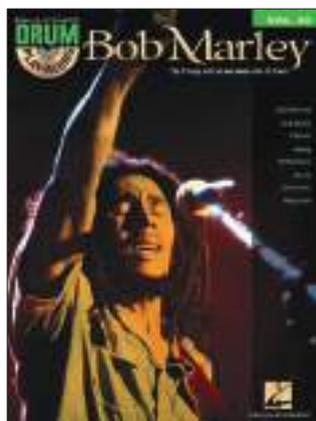
The transcriptions, which



were notated and recorded by Schroedl's brother, drummer/producer Scott Schroedl, are incredibly detailed, and the audio quality of the remakes is equally accurate. "Scott records all the drums for the audio at his home studio," Jeff explains. "It's a meticulous process that's the backbone of the entire publication. We also have editors and proofreaders who check each note after we receive the manuscripts from Scott."

The rest of the audio (guitars, bass, keyboards, etc.) is often recorded at Paradyme Productions in Madison, Wisconsin, which is located near Hal Leonard's headquarters. "We have a regular group of session musicians," Jeff Schroedl says. "They've recorded thousands of songs for us over the years. And they've had to re-create some incredible sounds, from the coins at the beginning of Pink Floyd's 'Money' to the crazy beginning of 'Won't Get Fooled Again' by the Who."

According to Schroedl, the most popular title in the series is *Classic Rock*, which includes "Come Together" by the Beatles, "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith, "Radar Love" by Golden Earring, and other legendary tracks. One of Hal Leonard's newest titles was also one of the most challenging to produce. "I know the team is really proud of the Slayer book and recording," Schroedl says. "That was insanely difficult." Other choice volumes are those featuring the music of Bob Marley, the Police, Steely Dan, and James Brown, as well as the *Blues* and *Motown* volumes, which contain many classic R&B hits. Future titles are in the works for the music of Ozzy Osbourne, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Guns n' Roses, so be sure to check out halleonard.com for the most current list.



Study Suggestions

Hal Leonard doesn't include vocals in its Play-Along series, so you have to be very confident with the drum parts in order to get through the songs without losing your place. Also absent is a metronome, which means you must rely heavily on your internal pulse to keep the groove solid while also keeping your ears locked

on the backing tracks, which often ebb and flow just like the original recordings.

"Several years ago, we had to redo a recording because the artist said it was too slow," Jeff Schroedl explains. "In reality, the original recording sped up and slowed down—the tempo was all over the place. From that point forward,

we decided to map the moving tempos and lay a varying click beforehand [for recording purposes only]. It's unorthodox, but it's really the only way to authentically re-create some older songs where the chorus needs to be a little faster than the verse."

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The Beach Boys

Pet Sounds

Earlier this year Capitol/UMe commemorated the golden anniversary of this masterpiece of pop arrangement with an expansive reissue campaign, reminding us what a wonderland of rhythm it is.

Wow. *Pet Sounds* turned fifty this year. Fortunately, the album that evaded the commercial heights of previous Beach Boys releases in its day has gained legendary status over time. Even Beatles producer George Martin famously noted, “Without *Pet Sounds*, *Sgt. Pepper* wouldn’t have happened.”

Indeed, it was the excellence of the Beatles’ 1965 LP *Rubber Soul* that fired the competitive spirit of the Beach Boys’ leader and resident musical genius, Brian Wilson, to attempt to create “the greatest rock album ever made.” As career pressures mounted, the fragile Wilson retired from touring in late ’64 to sharpen his focus on a forward-looking vision for his hit-making group in the studio. He dropped symphonic hints along the way, pointing to the musical invention that would later fully flower on his masterpiece.

By the time recording began for *Pet Sounds* in mid-’65, Wilson had already forged a sympathetic creative relationship with Hollywood’s Wrecking Crew (which also helped build the Wall of Sound for Wilson’s hero, Phil Spector). Together they crafted a song cycle that reverberated with rich sonic textures. Each selection conjured a different world, yet they all stacked up to a cohesive whole. Many fans—understandably—had difficulty processing the colossal artistic leap from late ’65’s unplugged *Beach Boys’ Party!* and its number-two blockbuster, “Barbara Ann.”

Numerous luminaries hit and shake things on *Pet Sounds*, but the main man on drums is the redoubtable Hal Blaine. The LP starts off with a bang, literally, as three bars into an aromatic guitar intro, Blaine blasts off the monolithic hit “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” by walloping the big backbeat on snare and floor tom in tandem. Guitars, keyboards, accordion, and mandolin fill the sonic space typically taken by the ride cymbal or hi-hat. Breathtaking builds and dynamics lead into and out of the bridge, and a ritard signals a final B-section before a head-turning timpani/snare call-and-response cues the outro.

The landscape is sometimes colored

by unorthodox elements, and a full-on drumset isn’t always the primary beatkeeper on the reverb-drenched album. For “You Still Believe in Me,” the harpsichord-driven groove is punctuated by timpani, finger cymbals, and the bell and horn from a bicycle! (All were holdovers from the composition’s original incarnation as “In My Childhood.”) A rolling floor tom, a tambourine, and a mysterious wooden instrument breathe life into “That’s Not Me,” the lone track on *Pet Sounds* to include drummer Dennis Wilson and other Beach Boys as instrumentalists.

An air of stillness and intimacy floats with tremolo guitar and Fender bass as a brushed cymbal carries the pulse on the stunning “Don’t Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder).” Session great Jim Gordon drums on “I’m Waiting for the Day,” fashioning ground-shaking dynamics against Gary Coleman’s timpani. It’s possible that many aspiring musicians unwittingly gained a sense of playing orchestrally from this number and the Spartan tone poem “Let’s Go Away for a While,” even if it was the number-three smash “Sloop John B” (a trippy take on the folk standard) that helped sell the LP to thousands of kids.

Paul McCartney has been quoted as saying, “*Pet Sounds* blew me away,” and he cited the pocket symphony “God Only Knows” as one of his favorite songs. The clip-clops played on plastic juice bottles are joined by sleigh bells, muted piano, and guitar that play against the graceful tug from the kick and bass guitar and incidental snare.

Solid verse/chorus dynamics frame the cosmic-cartoonish “I Know There’s an Answer,” where tambourine and timpani ground the feel, and “Here Today,” with cascading snare/tom runs played by jazzman Nick Martinis.

Blaine’s pounding 4/4 snare and floor tom, along with timpani and an arresting temple blocks/wooden cups pattern served by another studio heavy, Frank Capp, stir the dreamy confessional of “I Just Wasn’t Made for These Times,” whose theme regrettably befits both the album and its creator.



Pet Sounds (1966)

Wouldn’t It Be Nice • You Still Believe in Me • That’s Not Me • Don’t Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder) • I’m Waiting for the Day • Let’s Go Away for a While • Sloop John B • God Only Knows • I Know There’s an Answer • Here Today • I Just Wasn’t Made for These Times • Pet Sounds • Caroline, No

Brian Wilson: piano, organ, bass, vocals

Dennis Wilson: drums, vocals

Carl Wilson: guitar, vocals

Al Jardine: rhythm guitar, vocals

Mike Love: vocals

Bruce Johnston: bass, vocals

Hal Blaine, Frank Capp, Jerry Williams, Julius Wechter, Jim Gordon, Gary Coleman, Terry Melcher, Steve Korthof: drums and/or percussion

Steve Douglas, Bill Green, Plas Johnson: horns, percussion

Produced by Brian Wilson

Pet Sounds’ 007-inspired exotica title track rings with a percussive orgy of Coke cans (through a Leslie), tambourine, bongos, and guiro, with Ritchie Frost (Ricky Nelson’s late-’50s/early-’60s drummer) on kit. An overturned plastic Sparkletts water bottle answers gentle tambo hits to send “Caroline, No” aloft with a delicate tension that’s broken by a tumbling snare fill before the longing lament for the loss of innocence fades. A coda emerges with the Doppler effect of a passing train and the barking of Brian Wilson’s dogs Banana and Louie to signify that a transforming journey has ended for the artist and listener.

Later in ’66, Wilson set out to concoct his epic *Smile* (which he wouldn’t complete until 2004), and the Beach Boys would again top the charts with the groundbreaking “Good Vibrations,” a cut originally initiated and intended for inclusion on *Pet Sounds*. But that album still sounds unlike anything that preceded or followed it. **Dennis Diken**





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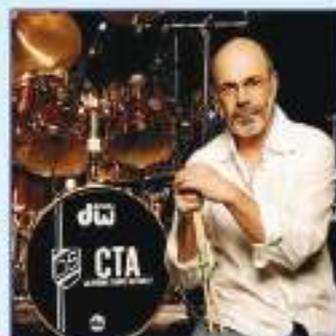
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The 2016 Chicago Drum Show

This past May 21 and 22, the Chicago Drum Show brought more than 140 exhibitors, an international crowd of drum enthusiasts, and a slew of vintage and state-of-the-art drums, cymbals, and accessories to its new location at the Odeum Expo Center in Villa Park, Illinois.

Household-name manufacturers such as Ludwig, Dixon, Sonor, Yamaha, Alesis, Sabian, Zildjian, and Remo displayed their newest wares, and leaders in the boutique drum industry such as Acoutin, Craviotto, Dunnett/George Way, Goodman, Holland, Infinity Drumworks, Jenkins-Martin, Joyful Noise, Kumu, Trick, Unix, and WFL III exhibited their unique custom products.

Newcomer A&F Drum Company, which produces modern drums with a vintage look and feel, sported some remarkable-sounding raw brass snare drums (in 12", 14", and even 18" diameters), as well as maple and mahogany kits with raw brass hardware. Ornate products from 37 Cymbals, made by Heather Stine, adorned the drums in the Dunnett/George Way booth.

For drummers shopping for vintage and collector-quality drums, exhibitor Joe Luoma had a pair of highly prized and extremely scarce Ludwig Silver Anniversary Black Beauty snares, including a Super-Ludwig in an all-gold finish. One attendee, after bringing an unknown vintage snare to renowned collector Mike Curotto for identification, was delighted to hear that it was one of only half a dozen Ludwig New Era Sensitive Black Beauty models in existence.

Master classes and clinics scheduled throughout the show were

full of chops, playing tips, and career advice. A performance by the Masai Ensemble opened Saturday's events, which also included an informative tuning workshop led by Jeff Davenport, a Youth Rhythm Jam led by Chicago percussionist JoVia Armstrong, and a presentation by Gary Astridge, who has diligently catalogued all of the equipment that Ringo Starr used with the Beatles.

Among the world-renowned drummers performing over the weekend were John Blackwell (Cameo, Prince, Patti LaBelle), who mesmerized attendees with his solid groove, backhand China crashes, and stories of touring with Prince. Kofi Baker, son of the legendary Cream drummer Ginger Baker, entertained the audience with creative playing and spoke about growing up under the tutelage of his father. Kimberly Thompson (Beyoncé, the 8G Band on *Late Night With Seth Meyers*, Kimberly Thompson Quartet) dazzled with graceful, fluid strokes and a dynamic touch. Thompson proudly showed off her new album, *Treasures Abound*, a tribute to jazz greats such as Bill Evans, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. Benny Greb closed out the clinics by demonstrating creative ways to produce sounds from the kit interspersed with flurries of technical prowess.

"The cafe, clinics, and master classes were all well attended," says event founder, organizer, and emcee Rob Cook. "We have room to continue growing now, and have contracted the Odeum for May 20 and 21, 2017."

Story and photos by Robert Campbell

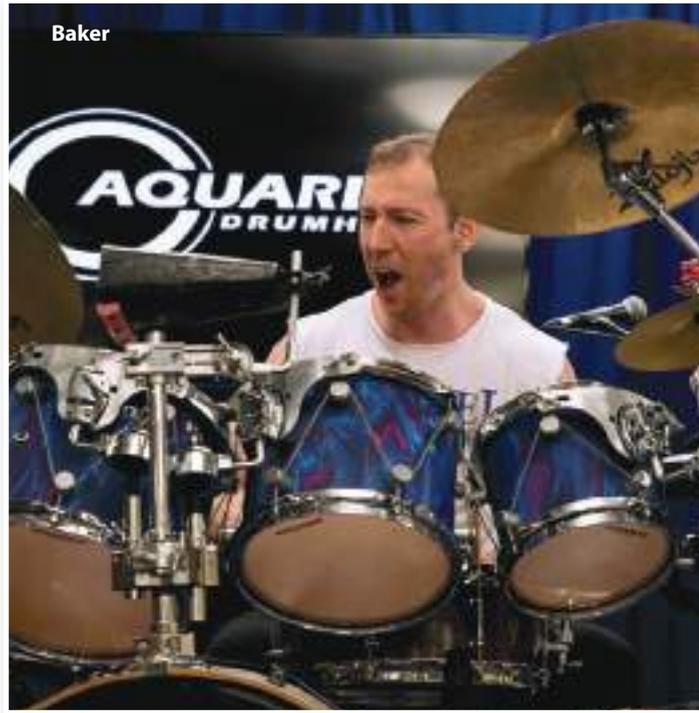




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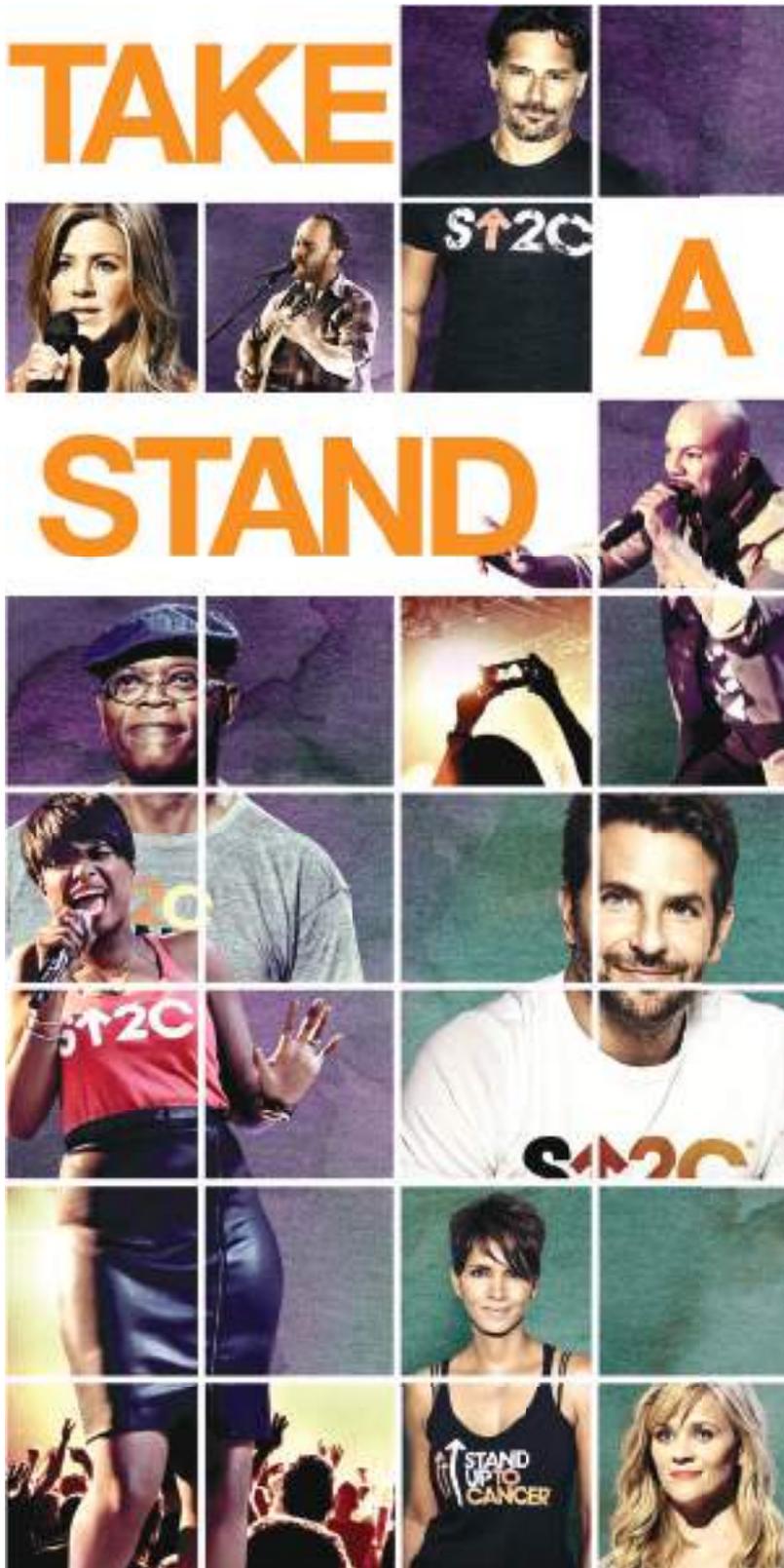


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Nigel Olsson Replica

"These drums are a little out of the ordinary for us," says Mat Duniam of the Australia-based company Red Rock Drums. "We were commissioned by the creator of an Elton John tribute show to build a replica of Nigel Olsson's drumset shown on the record sleeve of Elton John's 1976 album *Here and There*."

Duniam says that in order to pay homage to Slingerland's mahogany/poplar shells used between the '50s and the '70s, the company used Fijian mahogany, their standard round-over bearing edges, and internal reinforcement rings on all shells except the 6" and 8" toms. "Of the four local timbers that are our staple selection," Duniam says, "we felt Fijian mahogany would be best. The sound of our mahogany stave drums is somewhat equal to recording to tape, and the warm, big, and round low end with rolled-off highs made it the perfect choice for our '70s recreation."

"This kit is a modern stave adaptation, so we needed to choose where to take liberties and where not to," Duniam continues. "We

felt that using replica Slingerland Sound King-style lugs would be a nice tribute to the original, especially because they were easy to source. We also planned to use replica '70s claws, but they didn't sit correctly on our shallower hoops. Instead we chose butterfly claws, which give a subtle nod to the earlier Slingerland construction.

"Instead of using the Slingerland Set-O-Matic-style tom mounts," Duniam adds, "which are mounted centrally into the bass drum, we opted to mount the toms independently, as we normally do on our drums. Our stave shells are a quarter-inch thick, so aside from the structural concerns of using a bass drum tom mount, we found that the toms produce much more resonance and sustain when mounted with a suspension ring. We used heavy-duty DW double tom mounts, which have an air lift function. Although the drums aren't heavy, they make positioning the larger toms a dream."

For more information about Red Rock Drums, go to redrockdrums.com.au.

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



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